



# Goldenseal Root

**Benefits and uses:** Immune enhancer, antibiotic, ulcers, stomach, blood cleanser, uterine stimulant, stops internal bleeding.

**Information:** Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong, consequently, if each one is not tailored to your specific needs, then you can risk more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at [www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Botanical:** *Hydrastis canadensis*

**Family:** *Ranunculaceae* (peony/buttercup)

**Other common names:** Eye Root, Indian Dye, Yellow Indian Paint, Yellow Puccoon, Yellowroot, Ground Raspberry, Orange Root, Indian Turmeric, Eye Balm, Jaundice Root

**Goldenseal** is immensely popular as an *immune booster and antibiotic* that is taken at the onset of a cold to help prevent further symptoms. Often called echinacea's partner, Goldenseal, is said to help stimulate the body's resistance to infection and is another "must have" herb for your home.

## History:

Goldenseal is a hardy, herbaceous, North American woodland perennial that grows under two feet in height with a thick, yellow root and a single, erect stem producing leaves and a flower. The flowers are small, white, and a patch of *Hydrastis* will not remain in blossom longer than a week or ten days. From the flower, a single, red, inedible fruit emerges, but it is the roots, dug from three-year-old plants, that are used in herbal medicine. Its botanical genus, *Hydrastis*, is said to be derived from two Greek words signifying "water" and "to accomplish," probably attributed because of its active effect on the body's mucous membranes secretions. Western knowledge of Goldenseal begins about two hundred years ago, when Benjamin Smith Barton's *Essays Towards a Materia Medica of the United States* was published with information about the herb. In 1798, he observed that the Cherokees used it as a folk cancer remedy, which is also one of the earliest observations of the occurrence and treatment of cancer among American Indian groups. Few wildflowers were as important to the American Indians as the versatile Goldenseal. The roots supplied the Cherokee and Iroquois with a brilliant yellow dye for their weapons and clothing, a paint for

their faces (giving the plant one of its common names, Yellow Indian Paint) and medicinal remedies for indigestion, inflamed eyes, mouth ulcers, cancer, tuberculosis and edema. It may not have been effective for all those ailments, but its efficacy as an antiseptic and in stopping bleeding was well noted. Pioneers quickly adopted Goldenseal, and it became a mainstay of American folk medicine, frequently sold as an ingredient in patent medicines in traveling medicine shows. The root is an ingredient in many herbal remedies, as it not only possesses medicinal virtues of its own, but it also appears to enhance the potency of other herbs. Goldenseal has also found its way into modern medicine as a treatment for inflamed eyes, and some drug manufacturers include an alkaloid extracted from the root in their eye drops. Once common in eastern North America, Goldenseal has almost become extinct in many places by commercial harvesting, and the plant was cited on the CITES list for protection and conservation, making it a rare and expensive commodity. Some of Goldenseal's constituents include alkaloids (hydrastine, berberine, canadine and hydrastanine), tannins, beta-carotene, fatty acids, resin, albumin, essential oil, calcium, iron,

magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium selenium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C and E.

## Beneficial Uses:

Goldenseal root has a reputation for being a natural antibiotic. Used at the first sign of a cold, flu or sore throat, it may stop further symptoms from developing. The berberine content in Goldenseal possesses strong antibiotic and antiseptic activity against a wide variety of bacteria, including staph, and fungi, combating vaginal inflammations, sore throat and bladder and intestinal infections.

As an antibacterial, Goldenseal is thought to further fight skin infections, including boils, and skin ulcers (when used topically and internally) and is also an antiseptic mouthwash (fighting sore throat). In treating periodontal disease, Goldenseal destroys the bacteria that cause the disease and relieves inflamed gums.

Goldenseal is an immensely popular herb that has long been used as an immune enhancer and a body cleanser that promotes healthy glandular functions. In laboratory studies, the berberine in Goldenseal was thought to increase blood flow to the spleen and stimulate the activity of macrophages, blood cells that are an important part of the immune system. The berberine may also increase the secretion of bile. In regulating healthy glands, the herb is said to be of overall benefit to the liver, pancreas, spleen, thyroid and lymphatic system.

Because Goldenseal is thought to increase the flow of digestive enzymes and is considered an effective herb for improving overall digestion and easing disorders of the digestive tract, including heartburn (particularly when it is associated with emotional tension), inflamed peptic ulcers, constipation and indigestion. Several early Native American tribes also used Goldenseal extensively for treating digestive problems.

Goldenseal, sometimes called "King of the Mucous Membranes" is thought to have a soothing effect on inflamed mucous membranes and, as such, has been thought to help the respiratory system (by easing congestion), chronic inflammation of the colon, rectum and hemorrhoids.

In laboratory experiments the alkaloids, hydrastine and berberine, in Goldenseal are said to lower blood pressure. Goldenseal is sometimes used in the treatment of "female problems" and helps to regulate the menses.

It has been used to arrest bleeding from the uterus and profuse menstruation, and it is also believed to cause uterine contractions. The berberine content in Goldenseal is thought to be effective in treating diarrhea due to toxic pathogens such as cholera.

Historically, Goldenseal was an eyewash with mildly antibiotic and astringent qualities helping to reduce inflammation of the eye, but this application is not recommended because of the herb's natural grittiness.

Berberine (found in Barberry, Goldenseal, Oregon Grape and the roots and bark of a number of plants) is now the focus of attention for use in diabetic care. In a report from *Medical News Today* (Diabetes News/August, 2006), a collaboration of Chinese, Korean and Australian scientists at Sydney's Garvan Institute revealed that berberine could be a valuable new treatment for this disease, giving scientific backing for its glucose lowering effects that were documented in Chinese literature and used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Garvan scientist, Dr. Jiming Ye claimed that in lab tests, the berberine activates an enzyme in the muscle and liver that is involved in improving sensitivity of the tissue to insulin, which, in turn, helps lower blood sugar levels. Moreover, the berberine might help to reduce body weight. Professor James, the head of Garvan's Diabetes and Obesity Research Program added that despite berberine's widespread use in Traditional Chinese Medicine, it would have to be evaluated following the defined clinical trials process.

## Contraindications:

Pregnant or nursing women should not use Goldenseal nor any other herb containing berberine. Goldenseal may limit the efficacy of anticoagulants (aspirin, blood thinners, Coumadin, etc.), and may also interfere with tetracycline antibiotics. Excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may cause vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, skin, eye or kidney irritation, nosebleed, lowered blood pressure and lowered heart rate. Because Goldenseal may lower blood sugars, people with diabetes should use it only under the supervision of a physician. Do not use Goldenseal if you have a glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency without consulting a doctor. Those who suffer hyperthyroid conditions, glaucoma, high blood pressure, gallbladder or cardiovascular disease or epilepsy should avoid this product, unless under a doctor's care. Goldenseal should not be taken for prolonged periods; it can be poisonous if used too much. Do not take goldenseal on a daily basis for more than one week at a time.

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