



# Marshmallow Root

**Marshmallow Root** aids the body in expelling excess fluid and will soothe the mucous membranes and a dry, hacking cough. The herb is good for easing bladder infection, digestive upsets, fluid retention, intestinal disorders, kidney problems, sinusitis and sore throat, and it is a natural source of beta-carotene, amino acids, minerals and vitamins.

**Information:** Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do 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:** *Althaea officinalis*

**Family:** *Malvaceae* (mallow/hibiscus)

**Other common names:** Althea Root, Wymote, Mortification Root, Sweet Weed, Marsh Mallow

**History:** Marshmallow Root is a rich source of healing mucilage, and its botanical name, *Althaea*, is derived from the Greek, *althe*, which means "to cure." The use of Marshmallow originated in traditional Greek medicine and later spread to Arabian and Indian Ayurvedic medicine. Long used as a healing and soothing herb, Marshmallow was eaten by the Egyptians and Syrians and also mentioned by Pythagoras, Plato and Virgil. The plant was enjoyed as a highly nutritious food by the Romans in barley soup and in a stuffing for suckling pig, while classical herbalists praised its gentle laxative properties. It was used in Persia to reduce inflammation in teething babies, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (A.D. 800-814) insisted that it be planted throughout his kingdom. In the nineteenth century, some doctors made a meringue from the plant's root juices, egg whites and sugar that hardened into a medicinal candy that was used to soothe children's sore throats. Marshmallow Root is a hardy perennial that is native to Europe and is also found in the western part of the United States, thriving along riverbanks and in waste places and roadsides in wet, marshy areas. The plant bears hibiscus-like blossoms of light red to white or purple

in color and may grow to a height of four to six feet. All parts of the plant are used in various ways, i.e., medicinal, decorative, culinary, and cosmetic purposes, but the root is mainly used for medicinal purposes. Marshmallow Root is rich in mucilage, paraffin, pectin, lecithin, quercetin, salicylic acid, tannins, amino acids, beta-carotene, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, vitamins: B-1, B-2, B-3 and C.

**Beneficial Uses:** Marshmallow Root's particular excellence involves soothing irritated tissue, and it relieves various forms of inflammation, especially of the mucous membranes, since it is high in mucilage, which is very soothing to the membranes. It aids the body in expelling excess fluid and mucus. The herb is used in many lung preparations and cough syrups to alleviate a dry, hacking cough, whooping cough and laryngitis. It soothes the membranes, frequently preventing cough.

Because it contains salicylic acid (the natural forerunner of synthetic aspirin), Marshmallow has been used to relieve the pain of headaches and

muscle aches; and along with its ability to expel excess fluid and mucus, it also helps to ease sore throat and sinusitis.

Marshmallow Root is an old-time remedy for gastrointestinal disorders and strengthening the digestive system, because it contains polysaccharides that form a protective layer on the stomach lining and will lower stomach acids. The herb has frequently been used to ease ulcers, peptic ulcers, Crohn's Disease, Irritable Bowel Syndrome and colitis.

As a diuretic, Marshmallow Root increases the flow of urine and rids the body of excess fluid. It has been used to improve kidney function, soothe the urinary tract and relieve cystitis and bladder infections.

Marshmallow improves the functioning of the immune system, since it is known to stimulate phagocytosis,

the immune process in which cells called macrophages engulf and digest infectious microorganisms that attack healthy cells and cause serious disease.

Used externally, Marshmallow Root may be used in an ointment as an emollient to soften and soothe skin and dry hands. The mucilages form a protective layer on damaged skin and heal. Used internally and externally, the high mucilage content will also promote rapid healing of diaper rash, skin ulcers, sunburns, psoriasis, eczemas and problem skin.

**Contraindications:** Currently, there are no known warnings or contraindications with the use of Marshmallow Root; however, taking Marshmallow and iron together may reduce the absorption of the iron.