



Black Cohosh Root

Nourish the respiratory system, women's health issues, mostly by balancing hormone levels, menstrual cramps and the pains of childbirth, dysmenorrhea, offset the decline of estrogen with phytoestrogens, lessen hot flashes, blurred vision, vaginal dryness, headaches, dizziness and other hormone-related symptoms, sixty one percent lower risk of breast cancer, relaxant and mild sedative, stimulate the secretions of the liver, kidneys, spleen and lymphatic system.

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 (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Cimicifuga racemosa*

Family: *Ranunculaceae* (buttercup/peony)

Other common names: Bugbane, Black Snakeroot, Bugwort, Cohosh, Rattle Root, Richweed, Rattleweed

History: Native Americans used Black Cohosh for menstrual cramps and the pains of childbirth, and they also made a topical poultice from it to remedy snakebites. The early colonists used it for yellow fever, malaria, fevers, bronchitis, dropsy, uterine problems and nervous disorders. By the nineteenth century, Black Cohosh was also considered helpful in the treatment of rheumatism, and many of the earliest patent medicines contained high concentrations of Black Cohosh. It was the main ingredient in "Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound," an over-the-counter remedy promoted in the early nineteenth century for relieving stress and nervous tension in women. Black Cohosh has become the best-selling herb in the world for treating menstrual problems and "female complaints," and it is a "women's-health" bestseller in Australia, Germany and the United States. Black Cohosh contains several ingredients, including triterpene glycosides (e.g., acetin and 27-deoxyactein) and isoflavones (e.g., formononetin), and other constituents include aromatic acids, tannins, resins, fatty acids, starches and sugars.

Beneficial Uses: Black Cohosh has been used as a traditional and long-time treatment for women's health issues, mostly by balancing hormone levels. It is used to relieve stress-related problems associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS), including headaches and depressed mood. The herb has also been used as a remedy for dysmenorrhea that will induce menstruation, relieve menstrual cramps and regulate its flow. When used at the end of pregnancy, Black Cohosh is said to be a uterine stimulant that will promote labor and facilitate delivery.

Long regarded as a tried-and-true remedy for "women's complaints," Black Cohosh is still considered a wonderful support for menopause-related problems. The herb is said to offset the decline of estrogen with phytoestrogens that mimic the hormone's effects and lessen hot flashes, blurred vision, vaginal dryness, headaches, dizziness and other hormone-related symptoms. It has been known to be a good substitute for estrogen replacement therapy (ERT), as it appears to maintain the therapeutic response to ERT when ERT is gradually withdrawn. An additional benefit is its apparent lack

of bad side effects that frequently accompany synthetic hormones, i.e., breast malignancy, etc.

There is some research that claims Black Cohosh may even prevent malignant growths in the breast by keeping the body's own estrogen from stimulating breast cells. A study, published in the *International Journal of Cancer*, April 1, 2007, provided preliminary evidence that an herbal medicine including Black Cohosh used to help women cope with menopausal symptoms may reduce breast cancer risk. In the study, women who reported taking Black Cohosh were at sixty one percent lower risk of breast cancer, the researchers found. Studies have shown that the herb can block cell growth, and it is also an antioxidant with anti-estrogen effects as well. The researchers added that additional research must be undertaken before it can be established that Black Cohosh, or some compound found in Black Cohosh, is, in fact, a breast cancer chemopreventive agent.

Black Cohosh is believed to balance the hormone levels in both men and women, and one of its constituents, ferulic acid, increases the viability of sperm cells by protecting their cell walls from oxidation caused by environmental toxins; consequently, use of the herb may help to promote fertility.

One of the primary uses of Black Cohosh has been as a relaxant and mild sedative. It is considered a "nervine," a tonic that helps to calm the entire central nervous system. As such, it has been thought to be effective in treating anxiety, nervous tension and hysteria.

Black Cohosh is said to nourish the respiratory system. It is believed to help relax bronchial tubes, soothe sore throats and quell the urge to cough. It also works to break up mucus and phlegm deposits,

and herbalists have used it to treat persistent coughs in cases of asthma, bronchitis and whooping cough.

Used as an anti-inflammatory, Black Cohosh is said to be beneficial for easing the pain associated with neuralgia and for relieving the inflammation, swelling and the soreness that is typical of rheumatism. Black Cohosh has been thought to slightly lower the heart rate, while increasing the force of the pulse, and it may have mild cardiac tonic effects, especially on fatty hearts. As an antispasmodic, Black Cohosh is said to be helpful in relieving muscle spasms, cramps and St. Vitus Dance. Black Cohosh is thought to stimulate the secretions of the liver, kidneys, spleen and lymphatic system.

Contraindications: Black Cohosh is not recommended for nursing mothers, and it should not be used during pregnancy, as it may provoke miscarriage. When labor is imminent, it may be used, but *only* under the supervision of a physician. This product should not be used for prolonged periods of time (longer than six months) nor excessively (many times the recommended dosage), as it may irritate the nervous system, cause nausea and symptoms of poisoning. Very large doses of this herb may cause abdominal pain, headaches and/or dizziness. Those with known heart conditions should avoid this product, as large doses may cause low blood pressure. Speak to a physician before combining it with any other medications, as it may interfere with the efficacy of birth control pills and blood pressure medication. It should not be combined with tranquilizers, as Black Cohosh has a sedative effect. There are some reports that indicate Black Cohosh may be associated with liver disorders. Discontinue use and consult a healthcare practitioner if you have a liver disorder or develop symptoms of liver trouble, such as abdominal pain, dark urine or jaundice.