



St. John's Wort

Benefits and uses: Anti viral, antidepressant, antispasmodic, sedative, bed wetting.

Information: Herbs/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 herbs/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.

Details

St. John's Wort is powerful natural medicine for temporary depression. It has become the world's most popular herbal supplement for banishing the blues and controlling stress and has also been used to treat chronic fatigue syndrome, anxiety and a host of other ailments.

Some of the chemical constituents in St. John's Wort include carotenoids, anthraquinones (naphodianthrones including hypericin and pseudohypericin), phloroglucinols: (hyperforin and adhyperforin), chlorophyll, volatile oils (methyl-2-octane, limonene, caryophyllene, humulene), flavonoids (hyperin, hyperoside, quercetin, kaempferol, rutin and hyperoside), acids (caffeic, chlorogenic, para-coumaric, para-hydroxybenzoic), saponin, tannins and vitamin C.

The most common and popular use of St. John's Wort is for the treatment of temporary depression, although the exact way it works is not entirely clear. Some tests have revealed the ingredient, hypericin, to be an antidepressant, and further systematic exploration into the clinical and pharmacological effects of St. John's Wort indicate that the chemical, hyperforin, works as a monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor. MAO is an enzyme that destroys certain mood regulating brain chemicals, such as serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine, and this action serves to calm the nerves and lift the spirits. St. John's Wort generally is also thought to be effective for helping those who experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and studies also show possible efficacy in the management of anxiety and premenstrual syndrome, although additional research is necessary.

Because St. John's Wort appears to be able to fight temporary depression, this quality also makes it useful in treating chronic fatigue syndrome and the mood swings associated with menopause and PMS. It is also considered a mild sedative and when used in the treatment of insomnia, St. John's Wort does not actually increase the total sleeping time but may increase the time spent in deep sleep by helping to produce melatonin, a sleep-regulating hormone.

St. John's Wort is believed to be good for nerve pain and is sometimes used to improve the long-term nerve damage caused by uncontrolled diabetes. This herb's ability to help the median nerve in the wrist facilitated pain relief in some carpal tunnel syndrome tests.

As an analgesic, St. John's Wort may be used externally for burns, bruises, injuries (especially deep or painful wounds involving nerve damage), sores, sciatica, neuralgia, cramps, sprains and tennis elbow. Analgesic and pain relieving activity is believed to be due to the bioflavonoid content. The pain relieving properties of St. John's Wort have been beneficial in easing the vocal pain and laryngitis associated with fibromyalgia. It is said to relieve tension headaches, because the herb relaxes blood vessels and increases blood circulation. St. John's Wort may relieve those headaches that accompany hay fever.

St. John's Wort is an effective antiseptic and when used topically, it helps to heal wounds, prevents skin infection, and keeps open wounds from becoming infected. The essential oil is strongly antibacterial (even more so than sulfa drugs) and counteracts staph infection. St. John's

Wort is an antiviral and anti-inflammatory and has been beneficially used for herpes virus, cold sores, shingles and fever blisters. The antiviral process triggered by St. John's Wort appears to be enhanced when the user is exposed to sunlight. This same activity applies when the herb is used topically for vitiligo, and beneficial results are favorably affected by exposure to sunlight.

St. John's Wort is said to possess calming effects on the digestive system and is believed to be effective in treating Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome and a variety of digestive ailments. St. John's Wort is a bittersweet, astringent herb and an anti-inflammatory that promotes healing, reduces inflammation and swelling and may help to relieve hemorrhoids. In some lab studies, St. John's Wort was shown to protect bone marrow and intestinal mucosa from X-Ray damage.

Contraindications:

There are many warnings associated with the use of St. John's Wort, as it may have potentially dangerous interactions with prescription drugs, and one should always consult a physician when taking prescription

medication of *any sort* before using this herb. Pregnant women should avoid this product, and those who are photosensitive to light may experience an allergic reaction when exposed to sunlight or may become sunburned. Some people may experience stomach upset, restlessness, mild allergic reactions or fatigue when using this herb. Although St. John's Wort is called nature's Prozac, it should not be taken by those who have chronic or clinical depression and should never be used with prescription anti-depressants or any medication that interacts with MAO inhibitors. Those who take anticoagulants, oral contraceptives, sedatives, antidepressants, anti-seizure medications, high blood pressure medication (with ACE) inhibitors, drugs to treat HIV or drugs to prevent transplant rejection should not take St. John's Wort. Significant interactions include decreased efficacy of antiretrovirals, cyclosporin, tacrolimus and other chemotherapeutic agents. Do not take St. John's Wort if you are planning to undergo any type of surgical procedure. Aside from its blood-thinning properties, the herb can intensify the effects of anesthesia, resulting in oversedation.

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