

Black Cohosh

Actaea racemosa

Other Names: Black Bugbane, Black Snakeroot, Rheumatism Weed

Description: A stout, bushy perennial with tall spires of starry white flowers that is highly attractive to insects.

Part Used: Root, Rhizome

Action: Oxytocic, Antispasmodic

Category: Stimulating Tonic

Systems: Hormonal, Urinary, Reproductive

Taste: Sweet, Acrid, Bitter

Energy: Cool

Uses: Rheumatism, Menopause, Sciatica



Caution: Can cause such symptoms as dizziness, nausea, and headache in sensitive individuals, or with high doses; so it is recommended to start with a low dose and work up to a full dose after several days. Best to avoid during nursing and pregnancy, except for the last 2 weeks before parturition under the supervision of a qualified herbalist. Do not use this herb for longer than six-month intervals.

Preparation: Tincture; Decoction; Powdered extract

Dose: 10-60 drops 2-3 x daily; 1 cup 2 x daily; 1 tablet 2 x daily

Products: Tinctures, Bulk Herb, Powder, Capsule, Tablet

Health Benefits: Black cohosh is commonly used for women's ailments, such as menopause disorders, PMS, dysmenorrhea, and to facilitate labor in the last 2 weeks of pregnancy (best to consult an herbalist before using). It is also a remedy for rheumatism, bronchitis, tinnitus, and hysteria and is a known muscle relaxant. In Chinese medicine it is used for organ prolapses, headaches, measles, and sore gums due to superficial heat. Recently black cohosh has become popular as an OTC remedy for relieving hot flashes in natural remedies for menopause.

Saw Palmetto

Serrenoa repens

Other Names: Sabal palm
Description: A small scrubby palm with fan-shaped leaves and purple berries.

Part Used: Fruit
Action: Antiseptic, Tonic
Category: Nutritive Tonic
Systems: Reproductive, Urinary

Taste: Pungent, Sweet
Energy: Warm
Primary Uses: Orchitis, Irritated Bladder, Prostate Imbalances, Urine Retention

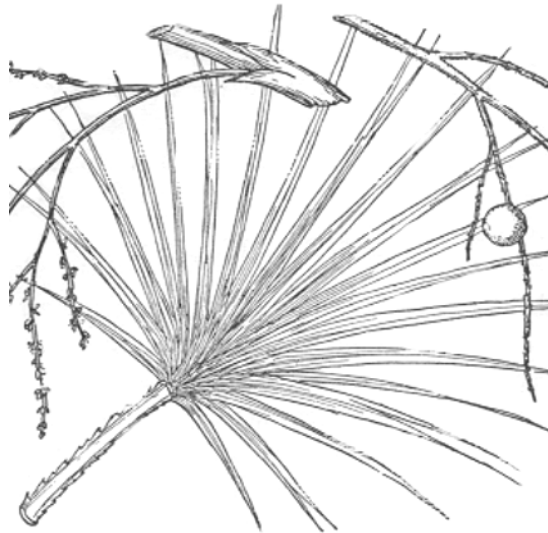
Caution: None noted, although a few rare cases of stomach problems are reported.

Preparation: Decoction; Extract
Dose: 1 cup 2-3 x daily; follow label instructions (you can take up to twice the amount stated on the label if needed)

Products: Capsule, Tincture, Powder

Health Benefits: Saw palmetto is a male tonifying herb, especially beneficial to the prostate gland and urinary tract. Several studies have proven it effective in reducing the frequency of nocturnal urination and as a remedy for benign prostatic hypertrophy with symptoms such as burning or incomplete urination and reduced flow. It has also been used for chronic congestive conditions. It is often considered a good tonic for the sexual and urinary systems of both men and women.

The most effective kind of extract of saw palmetto may be what is called a supercritical CO₂ extract. This uses CO₂ as a solvent to extract the active fatty acid fraction, preserving freshness because it is a cold process. These extracts do not contain the solvent hexane, as other types of extracts may. A tincture might also be effective.



Notes:

Vitex

Vitex agnus-castus

Other Names: Agnus-castus, Chasteberry, Monk's pepper
Description: A shrub or small tree from the Vervain family with abundant purple or lavender flowers and small brown fruit.

Part Used: Fruit
Action: Galactagogue, Hormonal Specific, Stimulating Tonic
Category: Hormonal, Reproductive
Systems: Hormonal, Reproductive
Taste: Acrid, Bitter
Energy: Warm
Primary Uses: Amenorrhea, Deficient Menstruation, Dysmenorrhea, Endometriosis, Excess Menstruation, Fibroid Cysts, Hormonal Imbalance, Menopause, Menorrhagia, Metrorrhagia, PMS, Skin Eruptions, Sore Breasts, Uterine Cysts, Vaginal Dryness



Caution: Avoid if you are pregnant or are taking birth-control pills.
Preparation: Tincture; Powder; Extract
Dose: 1-2 droppersful first thing in the morning; 2-4 capsules 2 x daily; follow label instructions
Products: Tincture, Capsule, Tablet, Bulk Herb

Health Benefits: Vitex, one of the best-known women's herbs, was recommended by Hippocrates in 450 B.C. and is still used today to help ease undesirable symptoms associated with menstrual imbalances, hormonal difficulties (PMS and menopause), and to increase the supply of mother's milk. It is also used for male teenage acne.

Fibroid cysts

Recommended Herbs:

Castor	Oil	Apply externally
Dong Quai	Tincture	25-40 drops 2-3 x daily
Prickly Ash	Tincture	10-20 drops 2-3 x daily
Vitex	Tincture	1 dropperful 2-3 x daily

Medical Description:

Fibroid cysts are tumors of muscle and connective tissue that develop within or are attached to the wall of the uterus.

Holistic Program:

Fibroid cysts can be viewed as a disruption in the smooth flow of energy and blood within the smooth muscles of the uterus. Blood-moving herbs (dong quai, motherwort, ginger, prickly ash) and treatments (hydrotherapy, massage) are indicated. Hormone-balancing herbs (vitex, black cohosh) are also important to add to an herbal program. Herbalists also recommend castor oil packs, which stimulate the local activity of the immune system within the uterus, encouraging the breakdown of the cyst.

Removing a fibroid cyst with natural medicine and herbs is a slow process (it can take from 2-8 months), but it should always be tried first before surgery. Be persistent and consistent with the program—avoid sugar and caffeine and eat a cleansing, then building whole foods diet.

Adjunct Therapy: Clay packs and/or castor oil packs and Vitamin E.

Menopause

Recommended Herbs:

Black Cohosh	Tincture	10-60 drops 2-3 x daily
Dong Quai	Tincture	25-40 drops 2-3 x daily
Menopause Formula	Tincture	1-3 droppersful 2 x daily
Vitex	Tincture	1 dropperful 2-3 x daily

Medical Description:

Menopause or the "change of life" is the time of a woman's life where the ovaries stop producing eggs, resulting in the cessation of menstruation. Associated with this natural process is a reduction of blood and tissue estrogen and other sexual hormones. Many symptoms are associated with menopause, including hot flashes and vaginal dryness.

Holistic Program:

While this time of life can signal a transformation to a more spiritual phase of life accompanied by its own joys, the modern emphasis on youth has sometimes created a feeling in our society that menopause is to be feared or avoided. Thus, synthetic estrogen and other hormones are used to extend sexual youthfulness. The use of these hormones is controversial—it is still not known for certain, though it is suspected, that they can increase the risk of breast cancer. Though studies show that the hormones can lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis, this can be accomplished with natural methods, like increased exercise and proper diet and herbs, with less risk and more benefit to overall health.

The most widely used herbs for easing undesirable symptoms, such as hot flashes, depression, and vaginal dryness that often accompany menopause are hormone regulators (vitex, black cohosh—especially for hot flashes), herbal estrogen support (female willow buds, pomegranate seeds and date seeds), and uterine blood moving herbs (dong quai).

Blood building herbs (yellow dock, nettles, rehmannia), digestive stimulants, as the blood comes from digestion according to traditional medicine (Bitters Formula, artichoke leaf), and tonics for the nervous system (wild oats, reishi), adrenal system (eleuthero, American ginseng) and immune system (echinacea, shiitake) are also helpful, when there are deficiencies of these systems.

Diet: Building Diet, Blood-Building Diet, Hormone-Balancing Diet.

Morning sickness**Recommended Herbs:**

Ginger	Powder	2-3 500 mg capsules 2 x daily
Peach	Infusion: 2-6 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
Perilla	Decoction: 3 -9 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily

Wild Yam	Tincture	10 drops to 2 droppersful, 2-3 x daily
Peppermint	Infusion: 3-12 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily
Perilla	Decoction: 3 -9 grams	1 cup 2-3 x daily

Medical Description:

Morning sickness is a condition during the first few weeks or months of pregnancy where a woman experiences nausea and vomiting, especially in the morning. It is probably hormone-related.

Holistic Program:

Herbal anti-nauseants are often recommended (ginger, lavender, peppermint), along with stomach heat-clearing herbs (licorice, marshmallow, dandelion), and antispasmodics (wild yam).

Note: Goldenseal and other herbs containing the yellow alkaloid berberine (coptis, phellodendron, barberry, Oregon grape root) should be strictly avoided during pregnancy.

Recommended diet: Calming Diet, Kitcharee.