

Ginkgo

Ginkgo biloba L.

[Fam. *Ginkgoaceae*]

OVERVIEW

Ginkgo, the oldest living species of tree on earth, is more than 225 million years old. A standardized extract of ginkgo leaf is presently one of the most frequently used plant-based medicines in Europe. In the U.S., it has been one of the 10 best-selling herbs for more than five years. In Germany, ginkgo is also an approved therapy for the treatment of memory loss in conditions such as Alzheimer's, ringing in the ears, dizziness, and poor circulation in the lower legs resulting in pain during walking (intermittent claudication).

USES

Poor memory, poor concentration, depression, and headache occurring with dementia diagnosed by a healthcare practitioner; attention and memory loss in Alzheimer's; ringing in ears (tinnitus); dizziness or whirling sensation (vertigo); peripheral vascular disease including poor circulation to the lower legs (intermittent claudication).

OTHER POTENTIAL USES

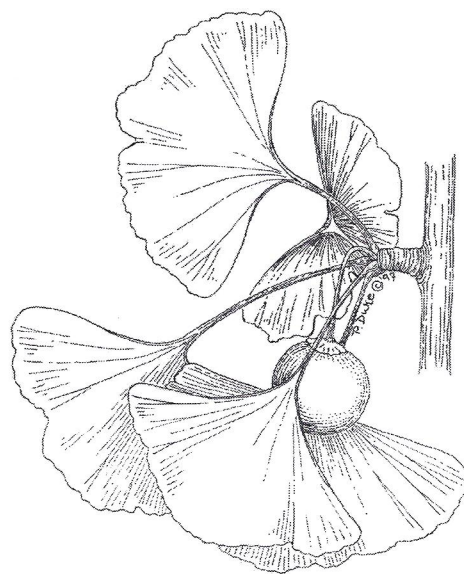
Sexual dysfunction associated with use of SSRI drugs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors); control of acute symptoms of altitude sickness and vascular reactivity to cold exposure; protective action in hypoxia (insufficient oxygen in the body); acute deafness related to the cochlea (part of the inner ear).

DOSAGE

DRY EXTRACT (STANDARDIZED): a total of 120–240 mg per day, taken in dosage forms (e.g., tablets or capsules) of 40–60 mg each, 2 or 3 times daily to treat dementia; or a daily total of 120–160 mg, taken in 40–60 mg doses, 2 or 3 times daily to treat intermittent claudication, vertigo, and ringing in the ears (tinnitus).

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Ginkgo should not be used before elective surgery or in persons who are allergic to ginkgo or have a bleed-



ing disorder. The 120 mg dosage should not be used in children under 12 years.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: No known restrictions.

ADVERSE EFFECTS

Stomach or intestinal upsets, headaches, or allergic skin reactions occur rarely. Dizziness and pounding heartbeat may also occur. Isolated cases of bleeding (subdural hematoma, subarachnoid hemorrhage, intracerebral hemorrhage, anterior chamber bleeding in the eye [hyphema]) have been reported, but these reactions are extremely rare.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

Ginkgo extract may possibly increase the effects of monoamine oxidase inhibiting (MAOI) drugs. Ginkgo preparations may increase the effect of blood-thinning drugs such as aspirin and warfarin. Ginkgo may also enhance the effect of thiazide diuretics.

Comments

When using a dietary supplement, purchase it from a reliable source. For best results, use the same brand of product throughout the period of use. As with all medications and dietary supplements, please inform your healthcare provider of all herbs and medications you are taking. Interactions may occur between medications and herbs or even among different herbs when taken at the same time. Treat your herbal supplement with care by taking it as directed, storing it as advised on the label, and keeping it out of the reach of children and pets. Consult your healthcare provider with any questions.



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