

# Ginseng, Asian

*Panax ginseng* C.A. Meyer (syn. *P. schinseng* T. Nees)

[Fam. *Araliaceae*]

## OVERVIEW

Asian ginseng is one of the most economically important medicinal herbs in world trade; in the U.S., ginseng ranks second in total sales in food, drug, and mass market retail stores with sales in 2000 totaling \$62.5 million. Ginseng root is indigenous to northern mountainous regions of China, Korea, and parts of the Russian Federation. In Asia, the medical use of ginseng dates back thousands of years, and it has remained an important drug in the health care systems of China, Japan, and Korea.

## PRIMARY USES

May increase athletic performance and endurance; immunomodulating effects; fatigue.

## OTHER POTENTIAL USES

Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus; menopausal symptoms; erectile or fertility problems; improves cognitive function and mental performance; possibly reduces risk of gastric, lung, ovarian, larynx, esophagus, and pancreas cancers; improves lung function; increases antibiotic effect for respiratory tract infection.

## DOSAGE

Ginseng can generally be used for up to three months followed by a repeated course of treatment.

DRIED ROOT, POWDERED: 1–2 g daily for up to three months.

DECOCTION: Simmer 3–9 g dried root in 720–960 ml water for approximately 45 minutes.

INFUSION: Pour 150–250 ml boiling water over 1–2 g finely cut or powdered root, steep covered for 10 minutes, then strain.

FLUID EXTRACT: 1–6 ml daily [1:2 (g/ml)].

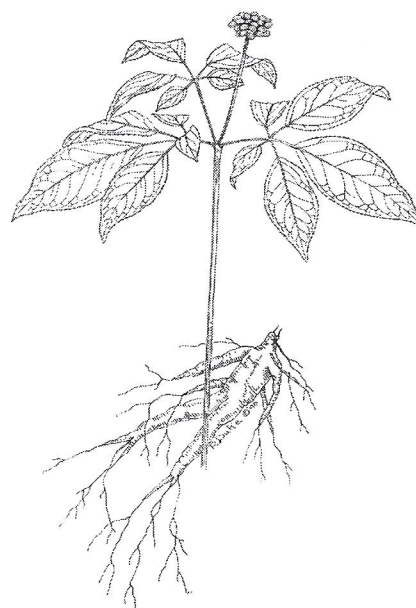
DRY EXTRACT: Take 2, 100 mg capsules daily with liquid at breakfast; or 1 capsule with breakfast and 1 capsule with lunch [standardized to 4% ginsenosides].

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

Consult with a healthcare provider before using Asian

### 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.



ginseng in cases of acute illnesses, high blood pressure (hypertension), and when using large amounts of stimulants like caffeine-containing beverages.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: No known restrictions although some authorities say that ginseng root should not be used during pregnancy. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, ginseng root is used during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum, in combinations containing other herbs.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS

None known.

## DRUG INTERACTIONS

Patients taking phenelzine (an MAO inhibitor), warfarin (an anticoagulating drug), or zidovudin (an HIV drug) should consult with a healthcare provider before using ginseng. Diabetic patients may need to adjust their insulin dosages because ginseng may lower blood glucose levels. Use with caution when taking with significant amounts of stimulants such as coffee, sugar, and caffeine-containing teas.



The information contained on this sheet has been excerpted from *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs* © 2003 by the American Botanical Council (ABC). ABC is an independent member-based educational organization focusing on the medicinal use of herbs. For more detailed information about this herb please consult a qualified healthcare provider. To view updates and corrections to *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs*, to order a copy, or become a member of ABC, visit [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org).