

Black Cohosh

Actaea racemosa L. (syn. *Cimicifuga racemosa* [L.] Nutt.)
[Fam. *Ranunculaceae*]

OVERVIEW

Black cohosh, a plant commonly found in the Eastern U.S. and Canada, was a botanical remedy of Native Americans. It has been used in Europe for over 40 years. Today, black cohosh root is approved by the German government as a treatment for premenstrual discomfort, painful menstruation, and menopausal symptoms.

USES

Menopausal complaints including hot flashes, heart palpitations, nervousness, irritability, sleep disturbances, ringing in the ears (tinnitus), whirling sense or dizziness (vertigo), perspiration, and depression; premenstrual discomfort; painful menstruation.

DOSAGE

The German Commission E monograph recommends taking black cohosh for a period of six months, after which a check-up with your healthcare practitioner is advised before resuming further use.

AVERAGE RECOMMENDED DOSE: 40mg–80mg (or oral dose equivalent) of black cohosh per day (available in tablet and liquid form).

DRIED RHIZOME AND ROOT: 40–200 mg.

DECOCTION: Pour 240 ml boiling water onto 40–200 mg black cohosh root, simmer for 10–15 minutes.

FLUID EXTRACT: 0.3–1.0 ml, 0.3–2.0 ml, 5–30 drops [1:1 (*g/ml*), 90% alcohol].

TINCTURE: 0.4–2.0 ml, 2–4 ml, 40 drops twice daily [1:10 (*g/ml*), 40–60% alcohol].

CONTRAINDICATIONS

None known.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: Patients who are pregnant and/or lactating should not use black cohosh. It is not recommended during pregnancy because it may promote menstrual flow or stimulate the uterus. Black cohosh is not recommended during breastfeeding.

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.



ADVERSE EFFECTS

Occasional gastrointestinal discomfort has been reported. Overdose may cause vertigo, headache, nausea, vomiting, impaired vision, and impaired circulation.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

None known. Minimal side effects were noted when standardized black cohosh extracts and estrogen-replacement therapy (hormone-replacement therapy, HRT) were taken at the same time.



AMERICAN
BOTANICAL
COUNCIL

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.