

Goldenseal

Hydrastis canadensis L.

[Fam. Ranunculaceae]

OVERVIEW

Goldenseal is ranked among the top herbal supplements sold in natural food stores in the U.S. and is often combined with the herb echinacea (*Echinacea* spp.). In 1998, sales of products that contain both goldenseal and echinacea ranked 5th in mainstream stores at \$69.7 million. In 2000, sales of goldenseal ranked 12th in the natural food trade. Goldenseal's medicinal actions are thought to be due to its primary active constituents, berberine and hydrastine. Goldenseal is often used by consumers for self-medication of upper respiratory tract infections associated with cold and flus although there is no scientific data to support this use.

PRIMARY USES OF

BERBERINE

Internal

Diarrhea

External

Ocular (eye) trachoma infections (in special preparations usually in developing countries).

POTENTIAL USES OF

GOLDENSEAL

[EDITORS' NOTE: Since there are no published clinical trials scientifically documenting the safe and effective use of goldenseal preparations in humans, despite significant *empirical* data, the editors have refrained from suggesting any primary uses.]

Internal

Stomach upset (dyspepsia, gastritis).

External

Eyewashes (using water or glycerine-based, diluted non-alcoholic preparations).

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.

DOSAGE

NOTE: It may take up to a few days to a week for the herb to produce benefits.

DRIED RHIZOME AND ROOT: 0.5–1.0 g, 3 times daily.

TINCTURE: 2–4 ml [1:10, 60% ethanol].

FLUID EXTRACT: 0.3–1 ml [1:1, 60% ethanol].

EYEWASH: 2 drops in each eye, 3 times daily [0.2% sterile aqueous (non-alcoholic) berberine solution, or non-alcoholic, water-based goldenseal liquid preparations].

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Goldenseal should not be used in cases of kidney disease, including kidney failure due to inadequate urinary excretion of its alkaloids. It should be avoided in acute inflammation of the stomach. It is contraindicated in cases of jaundice in newborns.

PREGNANCY AND LACTATION: Not for use during pregnancy. Berberine can increase bilirubin in newborn babies, possibly leading to neonatal jaundice. It may have a stimulant effect on the uterus. Although there are no known contraindications during breast-feeding, use of goldenseal and berberine should be avoided during

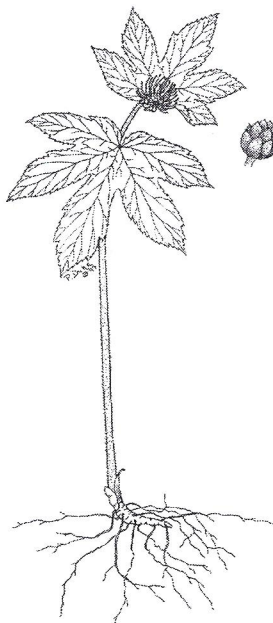
breast feeding until further research has been conducted.

ADVERSE EFFECTS

At recommended doses, goldenseal is considered nontoxic; berberine has also been well-tolerated in therapeutic doses.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

Goldenseal may antagonize the anticoagulant (blood-thinning) activity of heparin.



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