

KOREAN GINSENG

(Panax ginseng)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Adaptogen
- Tonic
- Immunostimulant
- Anticancer
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Antiproliferative
- Antiallergic
- Antiemetic
- Antidepressant
- Demulcent
- Stomachic
- Aphrodisiac
- Stimulant
- Diuretic
- Neuroprotective
- Cardioprotective
- Antihypertensive

Indications

- Support cognitive function and/or reduce mental fatigue (in cases of mental stress), enhance physical capacity/performance (in cases of physical stress), cancer related weakness, cardiac insufficiency, anxiety accompanied with heart palpitations
- Lowered immunity; impotence, menopausal symptoms
- Cold extremities; lack of appetite, weakness and wasting after long duration of illness and during convalescence
- Diabetes and supportive therapy for the promotion of healthy glucose levels
- Short term to improve stamina, concentration, healing processes, stress resistance, vigilance and work efficiency in healthy individuals
- Long term (up to three months – a repeated course is feasible) to improve wellbeing in debilitated and degenerative conditions especially those associated with old age

Traditional Use

The man-shaped root was initially taken as a whole body treatment according to the 'doctrine of signatures'.

Energetics

Sweet, slightly bitter and slightly warm. Tonifies the 'primal qi' and the 'qi of all organs', especially that of the lungs and spleen.

Constituents

Contains terpenoids (ginsenosides or panaxosides), volatile oil, polyacetylenes, sterols, polysaccharides, starch, β amylase, free sugars, vitamins, choline, fats and minerals and phenolic compounds.

Use in Pregnancy

While use in TCM formulas in Asia is common during pregnancy and lactation, caution is advised.

Contraindications and Cautions

Older literature suggests ginseng is contraindicated during acute illness, haemorrhage and the acute period of coronary thrombosis. It's also recommended that people who are highly energetic, nervous or schizophrenic should avoid it, and it should not be taken with stimulants, including caffeine (coffee), antipsychotic drugs or during treatment with hormones. The scientific basis for many of these statements is not clear.

Drug Interactions

Caution with caffeine, digoxin, imatinib, insulin, midazolam, monoamine oxidase inhibitors, nifedipine, oestrogens, raltegravir, anticoagulant/antiplatelet, antidiabetic, immunosuppressant and stimulant drugs. May be beneficial with cancer therapy (chemotherapy and radiotherapy) under medical supervision.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:2 in 60% alcohol
10 to 80mL weekly