

WHITE WILLOW

(Salix alba)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Analgesic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Antipyretic
- Astringent
- Bitter Tonic
- Vermifuge
- Diuretic

Indications

- Pain associated with inflammatory issues and conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system such as rheumatism, osteoarthritis, gout, joint pain, tendinitis, sprains, chronic backache, lower back pain
- Pain and fever from autoimmune diseases, urinary tract inflammation, viral infections such as colds and influenza, sore throats, mouth infections
- Symptomatic relief from pain including headaches, toothache, neuralgia and dysmenorrhea
- Digestion disorders including diarrhoea (especially associated with opiate withdrawal) and parasites
- Topically wounds and warts

Traditional Use

Bark from the white willow tree is one of the oldest herbal remedies for pain, reducing fever and inflammation, dating back more than 3500 years.

Energetics

Cool, dry, pungent.

Constituents

Glycosides: salicylates (salicin, salicortin, populin, fragilin, tremulacin); polyphenols including flavonoids and tannins; aromatic aldehydes and acids: salidroside, vanillin, syringin, salicylic acid, caffeic and ferulic acids; salicyl alcohol (saligenin).

Use in Pregnancy

There is no data evaluating white willow's safety during pregnancy or lactation. It is generally not advised to recommend salicylate containing medicines during pregnancy or lactation although no restrictions are known for white willow directly.

Contraindications and Cautions

People known to be allergic to aspirin, and salicylate sensitive individuals, should avoid white willow.

Drug Interactions

People using white willow bark may find they have lowered requirements for traditional anti-inflammatory medicines such as NSAIDs and opioid analgesics. This combination may be beneficial. Tannins may interfere with absorption of other medications. Use with caution in patients taking anticoagulant and antiplatelet medication such as warfarin.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 25% alcohol
20 to 60mL weekly