

COMFREY

(Symphytum officinale)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Anti-inflammatory
- Vulnerary
- Demulcent
- Astringent
- Haemostatic
- Emollient

Indications

- Externally for the treatment of:
 - Inflammation
 - Bruises and sprains
 - Dislocations
 - Pulled ligaments and muscles (sprains)
 - Fractures
 - Arthritis, osteoarthritis
 - Psoriasis, eczema
 - Glandular swellings
 - Slow healing wounds and boils
 - Varicose veins
 - Burns
 - Hernias

Traditional Use

Before the potential for toxicity was known comfrey was taken internally for ulceration, and erosion, of the gut wall, internal bleeding, haemorrhoids and for dry, irritated lungs and coughs.

Energetics

Sweet, moistening, cooling.

Constituents

Mucilage, allantoin, tannins, pyrrolizidine alkaloids (symphytine, lasiocarpine), resin, volatile oil, organic acids (including rosmarinic acid).

Use in Pregnancy

Professional supervision recommended for external use. Contraindicated internally.

Contraindications and Cautions

External use only. May be safe to apply to skin or closed wounds for short periods. Care should be taken with deep wounds. Comfrey has been shown to contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids some of which, when taken internally, are potentially toxic to humans by causing liver damage. There is a rare, but real, risk when using comfrey leaves internally. Avoid in people with a history of liver disease.

Drug Interactions

None known for external use.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:5 in 40% alcohol
For external use only