

CAT'S CLAW

(Uncaria tomentosa)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Antimutagenic
- Immunomodulatory
- Immunostimulant
- Antiviral
- Antibacterial
- Emmenagogue

Indications

- Rheumatism and as an adjunct therapy to conventional treatment (helps reduce the number of painful and swollen joints), inflammation of the joints, arthritis (all kinds), muscle pains, strains and injuries
- Other inflammatory conditions such as cystitis, Crohn's, colitis, diverticulitis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), gastric ulcers, gastritis or other disturbances in the gastrointestinal system
- For strengthening the immune system and as an adjuvant therapy in acute and recurrent infectious diseases particularly viral infections including human papilloma virus (HPV), herpes zoster, herpes simplex and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and dengue
- Adjunctive therapy for cancer (reduces side effects of chemotherapy, radiation and protects cells)
- A general daily tonic (to tone, balance and strengthen all body functions), convalescence, debility, chronic fatigue syndrome and Lyme disease
- Externally for acute and chronic skin inflammation such as cuts, bruises, burns or insect bites
- Reputed to be contraceptive

Traditional Use

Used in traditional and cultural practices in South America for centuries, especially in Peru where the Ashaninka Indians classified it as a 'powerful plant' and used it to restore health. Its significance in

traditional medicine is emphasised by its exclusive use by priests to influence the communication between the physical and spiritual in people.

Energetics

Warming.

Constituents

Oxindole and indole alkaloids (pentacyclic and tetracyclic), pyroquinovic acid glycosides, organic acids, proanthocyanidins, flavonoids, polyoxygenated triterpenes, sterols, coumarins and tannins. While early studies focused on pentacyclic oxindole alkaloids as the primary active components more recent studies report that activity is well spread over a range of polar constituents.

Use in Pregnancy

Owing to its traditional use as an emmenagogue and as a contraceptive at high dose, its use during pregnancy and lactation is not recommended.

Contraindications and Cautions

Based on the belief that cat's claw is an immunostimulant it is not advised for patients awaiting bone marrow or organ transplant, persons with medically-induced immunosuppression (e.g., patients with organ transplants), autoimmune disease, multiple sclerosis or tuberculosis. However, some researchers disagree with this view and suggest that it may be helpful for transplant patients.

Drug Interactions

Caution with protease inhibitors (e.g. antiviral drugs such as atazanavir, ritonavir, saquinavir) and anticoagulant/antiplatelet (such as warfarin) and immunosuppressant drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 60% alcohol
15 to 40mL weekly