

MUGWORT

(*Artemisia vulgaris*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Emmenagogue
- Antispasmodic
- Anthelmintic
- Antioxidant
- Bitter Digestive Stimulant
- Nervine
- Cholagogue

Indications

- Delayed or irregular menstruation, amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea, to hasten labour and help expulsion of the placenta
- Poor appetite, weak digestion, nervous dyspepsia
- Intestinal parasites
- Oxidative stress and infection

Traditional Use

Mugwort has been used traditionally in European folk medicine for aiding digestion and as a general tonic. The herb was often used amongst the peasants as a tea substitute and sometimes used in culinary dishes being included in recipes for poultry stuffing. Mugwort was traditionally used medicinally as an emmenagogue, antispasmodic, stimulant and vermifuge. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) mugwort has been used as an analgesic agent and, in conjunction with acupuncture therapy, to treat neonatal jaundice, gastric ulcers, hepatitis and convulsive crisis. In TCM the downy underside of mugwort is used in moxibustion therapy for different conditions including hypertension and breech pregnancy.

Energetics

Cool and dry.

Constituents

Volatile oil (up to 0.3%) with camphor, borneol, alpha-thujone, germacrene, camphene, 1,8-cineole, linalool and beta-caryophyllene, and numerous other monoterpenes and sesquiterpenes (depending on the source). Phytochemical studies have identified more than 20 flavonoids in mugwort extracts. The most abundant compounds are eriodicyol and luteolin. Also present are sesquiterpene lactones (including vulgarin and psilostachyin), alkaloids, saponins, sterols (stigmasterol and sitosterol), tannins, terpenes, acetylenes, flavonal glycosides and coumarins, phytol fatty acid esters and squalene.

Use in Pregnancy

Due to the emmenagogic action mugwort is not recommended during most stages of pregnancy – except in the last weeks to aid delivery. It should be avoided during breastfeeding because it tends to dry up secretions.

Contraindications and Cautions

Allergic reactions to mugwort pollen have been commonly reported, including cross reactivity to other daisy family species. One study found that using oral doses of the herb medicinally (in immunotherapy) could reduce allergic responses to the airborne pollens in the skin.

Drug Interactions

None known.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 30% alcohol
10 to 40mL weekly