

SAFFRON

(Crocus sativus)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Nervine Tonic
- Antidepressant
- Anxiolytic
- Adaptogen (TCM)
- Neuroprotective
- Cognitive Enhancer
- Sedative
- Antioxidant
- Anti-Inflammatory
- Anticarcinogenic
- Antinociceptive
- Analgesic
- Anticonvulsant
- Expectorant
- Emmenagogue
- Aphrodisiac
- Cardiotonic
- Hypotensive
- Antispasmodic
- Diaphoretic
- Hypoglycaemic
- Hypolipidaemic

Indications

- Low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, insomnia, cognitive disorders, to improve brain function, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease
- Respiratory issues including cough, asthma
- Liver disease
- To support normal menstruation and for menstruation problems such as dysmenorrhoea, PMS, chronic uterine haemorrhage
- Pain, spasms, osteoarthritis, traditionally used for seizures
- Colic, bedwetting
- Cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, weight loss, obesity, metabolic syndrome
- To support healthy retinal function, eye health, macular degeneration
- Fevers
- Potential role in the treatment of cancer

Traditional Use

Saffron, one of the world's costliest substances, is a spice known by many ancient civilisations

for its various properties especially the medicinal uses. Though saffron is best known for its use in traditional Persian medicine it was also used by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, as well as in the Ayurvedic tradition of India. Its traditional medical indications were many and included cramps, asthma, menstrual conditions, liver disease and pain. In Ayurveda, saffron is said to support the tonic action of other herbs (such as shatavari) and when used as a spice promotes assimilation of food into deeper tissues.

Energetics

Sweet, neutral.

Constituents

Crocin and crocetin, carotenoid oxidation products (mainly safranal and the bitter glucoside picrocrocin), zeaxanthin, lycopene, carotene and vitamins particularly riboflavin (vit B2) and thiamine (vit B1).

Use in Pregnancy

Saffron has been used as a spice and food colouring agent for centuries and is likely to be safe when consumed in the usual dietary doses. Whether high dose saffron is safe in pregnancy remains to be confirmed.

Contraindications and Cautions

Saffron should be used under professional supervision in the treatment of any mental health condition to promote safety.

Drug Interactions

Caution with antihypertensive drugs and calcium channel blockers.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:20 in 50% alcohol
5 to 25mL weekly