

BACOPA

(Bacopa monnieri)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Nootropic
- Anxiolytic
- Sedative
- Nervine Tonic
- Adaptogen
- Neuroprotective
- Antioxidant
- Antidepressant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Vasodilator
- Antinociceptive
- Mild Anticonvulsant

Indications

- Improving cognitive function, learning, memory, intelligence, mental health and assist with exam performance and studying
- Prevention and treatment of age-related cognitive decline, menopausal cloudy thinking
- Dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders
- Chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia syndrome
- Memory problems and mood disorders associated with epilepsy and migraine
- Ischaemic stroke rehabilitation
- Anxiety, depression, stress, insomnia, nervous exhaustion, debility, mental overwork
- Prophylactic reduction of oxidative damage (oxidative stress is one of the most important factors in aging and age-related illnesses)
- Cerebral atherosclerosis
- Hypothyroidism
- Chronic pain
- To speed up recovery from head trauma
- Gastric ulcer treatment, irritable bowel syndrome
- Possible use in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Traditional Use

Bacopa is a very important plant in Ayurvedic medicine where it has been used for almost 3000 years for its memory enhancing properties and for reducing anxiety.

Energetics

Cooling, bitter.

Constituents

Triterpenoid saponins (bacoside A, bacoside B), flavonoids (apigenin), alkaloids, glycosides, D-mannitol, stigmasterol.

Use in Pregnancy

Bacopa is recommended as a tonic for anxiety in pregnancy according to traditional Ayurvedic medicine however insufficient information is available to confirm safety during pregnancy.

Contraindications and Cautions

Bacopa is well tolerated however in trials using standardised bacopa the most common side effects are minor gastrointestinal disturbances, nausea, abdominal cramps, increased stool frequency and diarrhoea. Caution is advised in hyperthyroidism as bacopa has been shown to significantly elevate thyroxine levels in vivo. The clinical significance of this finding is unknown.

Drug Interactions

Bacopa appears to affect acetylcholine levels so theoretical and speculative interactions include acetylcholinesterase (AChE) inhibitors (used in Alzheimer's disease), anticholinergic drugs (used for conditions such as urinary incontinence, asthma and Parkinson's disease. Benadryl has this effect.) and serotonergic drugs for depression such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), antidepressants such as citalopram (Celexa), fluoxetine (Prozac), fluvoxamine, paroxetine (Paxil) and sertraline (Zoloft).

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 50% alcohol
15 to 40mL weekly