

HORSECHESTNUT

(Aesculus hippocastanum)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Astringent
- Circulatory Tonic
- Antioxidant

Indications

- Chronic venous insufficiency such as pain, night cramps, itching or swelling and sensation of heaviness in the legs, varicose veins, haemorrhoids, bruising, preventing postoperative oedema, venous leg ulceration

Traditional Use

The dried seeds and bark of the horsechestnut tree have been used medicinally since the 16th century. Traditionally the seeds are used to treat conditions affecting the veins, including haemorrhoids, phlebitis and varicose veins; bruising, diarrhoea, fever, enlarged prostate, eczema, menstrual pain, painful injuries, sprains, swelling and spinal problems.

Energetics

Cooling, drying.

Constituents

Triterpene saponins referred to as aescin (escin), flavonoids (glycosides of quercetin and kaempferol), lipids, sterols.

Use in Pregnancy

Not recommended. Safety in pregnancy has not been well established.

Contraindications and Cautions

Avoid use in the presence of hepatic or renal impairment. Oral use may cause gastric irritation so take with food. Horsechestnut can also cause hypersensitivity reactions which occur more commonly in people who are allergic to latex. It is suggested that it should be avoided by people with infectious or inflammatory conditions of the gastrointestinal tract, including coeliac disease and malabsorption disorders, and should not be applied topically to broken or ulcerated skin.

Drug Interactions

Caution with lithium, anticoagulant/antiplatelet (such as warfarin) and antidiabetic drugs.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 40% alcohol
5 to 20mL weekly