

CORDYCEPS

(*Cordyceps militaris* (L.) Fr.)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Immunomodulator
- Adaptogen
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Antihyperglycaemic
- Antitumour
- Neuroprotective
- Anti-aging
- Antimicrobial
- Hypolipidemic
- Tonic
- Antifatigue

Indications

- Fatigue, support energy levels, convalescence after infection or illness, stress, improved vitality, general daily health prophylaxis regime, including healthy aging
- Lung support, asthma, upper respiratory infections, coughs
- Kidney support, diabetes
- Cardiovascular health, high blood pressure, hyperlipidaemia
- Inflammation, arthritis

Traditional and Empirical Use

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), cordyceps is understood to tonify both yin and yang. Due to this balance it can be taken safely over long periods and is commonly used as a tonic herb. In the energetic understating of TCM the action is related to the kidney and lung channels.

Energetics

Sweet, warm

Constituents

Polysaccharides (e.g. beta-glucans), adenosine, cordycepin, cordycepic acid, ergosterol, fatty acids, phenolic compounds

Use in Pregnancy

There is insufficient reliable information available on the use of the hydroethanolic extract of cordyceps in pregnancy. Avoid using.

Contraindications and Cautions

Theoretically cordyceps might alter the management of autoimmune diseases by either stimulating or suppressing immune function. Advise patients with autoimmune diseases to avoid or use cordyceps with caution. Advise patients to discontinue cordyceps at least two weeks before elective surgical procedures.

Drug Interactions

These interactions come with the caveat that some of these warnings are based on research using *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* (formerly referred to by its synonym *Cordyceps sinensis*).

Avoid combining with cyclosporin unless under strict medical supervision as there are theoretical decreased drug effects. Concomitant use with other immunosuppressant drugs may potentially be beneficial under strict medical supervision. Caution with combining cordyceps and anticoagulant/ antiplatelet drugs due to a theoretical increased risk of bleeding. Monitor with testosterone as there are theoretical additive effects, although the clinical significance is unclear. Concomitant use with chemotherapy may be beneficial.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:5 in 30% alcohol
20 to 100 mL weekly