

BARBERRY

(Berberis vulgaris)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Hypotensive
- Hepatoprotective
- Hepatic
- Cholagogue
- Choleric
- Antiemetic
- Mild laxative
- Bitter
- Anthelmintic
- Vermifuge
- Antimicrobial
- Antipyretic
- Antirheumatic
- Depurative
- Immunomodulant

Indications

- Liver dysfunction, hepatitis, jaundice (when there is no obstruction of the bile ducts), biliousness, inflammation of the gallbladder, gallstones, cirrhosis of the liver, autism, autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder where liver support is required.
- Acute gastrointestinal infection with non-viral diarrhoea, digestive stimulant, irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhoea, peptic ulcer, constipation (in larger doses), haemorrhoids (due to the secondary effects of vascular congestion), dyspepsia, gastritis, parasitic infection or giardiasis
- Malaria, leishmaniasis including topically
- Adjuvant therapy for type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, hyperglycaemia
- Debility during convalescence, history of dietary or alcohol abuse or excessive exposure to drugs, chemicals or industrial pollutants, loss of appetite
- Autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, possibly prophylactically for cancer
- Urinary tract infections
- Skin inflammation, such as acne and mild eczema, including topically

- Prevention of hypertension, tachyarrhythmia, to lower peripheral vascular resistance, heart disease, including arrhythmia.
- Topically as a gargle to relieve mild mouth ulcers

Traditional and Empirical Use

Barberry has played a prominent role in herbal healing for more than 2500 years and has a rich history of use in traditional eastern and western herbalism.

Energetics

Bitter, cooling.

Constituents

Isoquinoline alkaloids (including berberine), flavonoids, tannins, phenolic compounds, triterpenes, sterols, flavanols.

Use in Pregnancy

Contraindicated during pregnancy, lactation and in neonatal jaundice.

Contraindications and Cautions

Do not take excessive doses or give to jaundiced neonates. Caution may be warranted in patients with gallstones due to the potential for impacted gallstones and obstructed bile ducts.

Drug Interactions

Avoid using with cyclosporin. Until more data becomes available caution is advised with anticoagulant/antiplatelet, antidiabetic and central nervous system depressant drugs. Monitor with anticholinergic, cholinergic and antihypertensive drugs. See the monograph for details.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 25% alcohol
20 to 60mL weekly