

TURKEY TAIL

(Trametes versicolor)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Immunomodulator
- Antioxidant
- Prebiotic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antimicrobial
- Adaptogen
- Hepatoprotective

Indications

- Immune support in individuals with compromised immunity, autoimmune or allergic conditions and during and after cancer treatment.
- Adjunctive cancer therapy: Used alongside conventional treatments to reduce side effects and improve outcomes in cancers such as gastric, colorectal and breast cancer.
- Recurrent and chronic infections: Chronic viral infections, recurrent respiratory infections.
- Chronic fatigue and post-viral syndromes.
- Inflammatory bowel conditions including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.
- Hepatic support: For toxic exposure or recovery from hepatitis.

Traditional and Empirical Use

Traditional Chinese Medicine has utilised hot water extracts (including soups) of the whole turkey tail fruiting body for centuries, primarily as a tonic for strengthening the lungs, spleen and liver, for dispelling 'dampness' and 'phlegm', for anorexia, fatigue, lack of strength, influenza, the common cold and stomach issues.

Energetics

Neutral to slightly warm, with some cooling properties depending on its application.

Constituents

Polysaccharides including beta-glucans, polysaccharide-krestin (PSK) and polysaccharide-peptide (PSP), sterols, phenols, flavonoids, triterpenoids, sesquiterpenoids, ribonucleotides, glycosides and furans.

Use in Pregnancy

Insufficient reliable information available so avoid using.

Contraindications and Cautions

Orally, turkey tail and its PSK component are generally well tolerated. There have been reports of gastrointestinal side effects, haematological abnormalities, liver dysfunction and palpitations, but these are in patients who received PSK in addition to standard chemotherapy. It is not known if these are due to PSK, the chemotherapy, or both.

Drug Interactions

Caution with antidiabetic medications. Theoretically, taking turkey tail with antidiabetic drugs might increase the risk of hypoglycaemia.

Caution with immunosuppressants. Theoretically, the PSP component of turkey tail might increase exposure to cyclophosphamide.

Caution with selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs). Theoretically, the PSP component of turkey tail might interfere with the absorption of tamoxifen.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:5 in 30% alcohol
35 to 80mL weekly