

BLACK COHOSH



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What is Black Cohosh?

- ❑ Black Cohosh is a plant native to North America. The underground stem and root can be used fresh or dried.
- ❑ Alternative names include Black snakeroot, Macrotys, Bugbane, Bugwort, Rattleroot, and Rattleweed.
- ❑ It has been used for centuries to treat many different ailments including:
 - ❑ Relief of PMS symptoms
 - ❑ Inducing labor
 - ❑ Reducing period irregularities
 - ❑ Reducing Muscle pain
 - ❑ Relieving arthritis pain
 - ❑ Lowering blood pressure

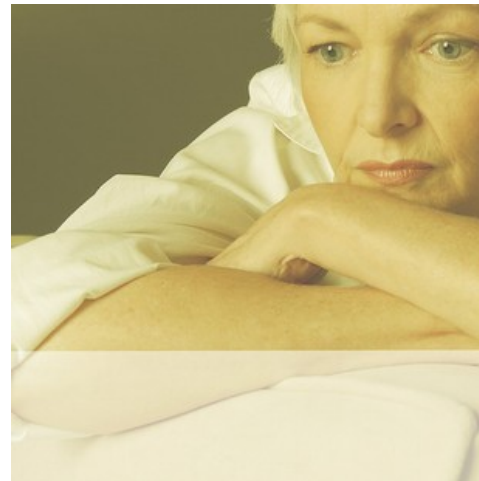


- ❑ Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, . (2010, September 13). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69140.cfm>

Other Uses

- Most recently, it was thought to have estrogen-like activity and has been used to treat Menopause symptoms such as:

- Headaches
- Mood changes
- Hot flashes
- Vaginal dryness
- Sleep problems
- Night sweats



- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, . (2010, September 13). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69140.cfm>

Where is Black Cohosh Found?

- It can be found in:
 - ▣ Supplement Form
 - Capsules
 - Solid extracts
 - Liquid extracts or tinctures
 - ▣ Natural Form:
 - Teas
 - The plant itself
- Cost:
 - ▣ About \$16-\$23 for 60 tablets
- Kligler, B. (2003, July 1). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2003/0701/p114.html>
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, . (2010, July 9). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/blackcohosh/ataglance.htm>



Safety and Handling

- While taking this supplement, ensure the product is
 - ▣ In a dry place
 - ▣ In a cool area
 - ▣ Away from humidity
 - ▣ Out of direct sunlight
- Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), a more risky supplement, should not be confused with Black Cohosh
 - ▣ The plants grow in the same areas, but are not related.
- WebMD, . (2009, September 19). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-lifestyle-guide/supplement-guide-black-cohosh>

Dosage

- For Menopausal studies, the typical dosage was a 20mg – 40mg tablet taken two times per day.
- An overdose of the supplement was determined to be 900mg taken daily.
- Experts suggest using the product for more than 6 months at a time could be risky.
 - ▣ Studies of the product are usually not more than 6 months; therefore, long-term effects are unknown.
- WebMD, . (2009, September 19). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from [http://www.webmd.com/](http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-lifestyle-guide/supplement-guide-black-cohosh)
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Studies: Efficacy

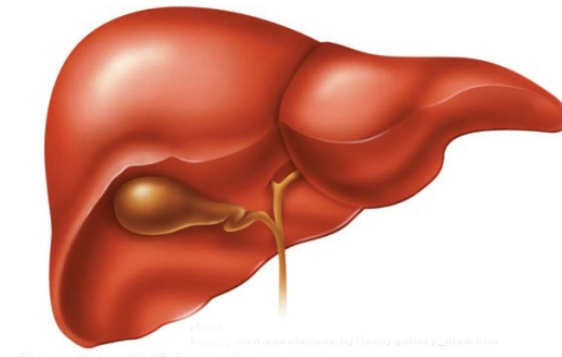
- The National Institutes of Health conducted case studies concerning the supplements effectiveness.
 - ▣ For four weeks, 132 woman experiencing regular hot flashes were divided into two groups. Half were given a placebo and the other half were given 20mg of black cohosh taken twice daily.
 - ▣ After four weeks, the groups switched and were given the opposite of their initial treatment to compare the effectiveness. The women also kept diaries which documented any side effects and relief of “hot flashes”.
 - ▣ Once the study was completed, the woman were surveyed. Black Cohosh only reduced hot flashes by 20% as opposed to a 27% reduction from the placebo.
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, . (2010, September 13). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69140.cfm>

Studies: Efficacy Con'd

- The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) also conducted a study on its effectiveness.
 - ▣ Results showed that “black cohosh, whether used alone or with other botanicals, failed to relieve hot flashes and night sweats in postmenopausal women or those approaching menopause.”
- NCCAM is currently funding other studies to determine the supplements effectiveness.
- Other experts say there is not enough reliable data to confirm its effectiveness to treat or relieve arthritis or other medical conditions.
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, . (2010, July 9). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/blackcohosh/ata glance.htm>

Studies: Liver Problems

- US Pharmacopeia has reported case studies of liver failure and inflammation of the liver in woman using Black Cohosh.
 - ▣ There is no confirmation of cause and effect, only correlations.
 - ▣ It is recommended supplement use should immediately be discontinued by woman with liver damage or symptoms of liver problems including:
 - Dark urine
 - Abdominal pain
 - Jaundice
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, . (2010, July 9). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/blackcohosh/ataglance.htm>



Side Effects

□ Some users have reported side effects such as:

- Upset stomach
- Rashes
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Nausea
- Vomiting



□ Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, . (2010, September 13). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69140.cfm>

Health Risks Continued

- Black Cohosh may not be safe for:
 - Women who are pregnant
 - Nursing Mothers
 - Breast or uterine cancer patients or survivors
 - Women who have endometriosis
 - Children under 18
 - People with liver disease, a high risk of stroke or blood clots, or seizure disorders
 - People with allergies to aspirin
- Although the risks are small, possible detrimental interactions have been reported when combining Black Cohosh with other medications such as:
 - Birth control pills
 - Sedatives
 - Blood pressure medicine
 - Hormone replacement therapy
- WebMD, . (2009, September 19). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-lifestyle-guide/supplement-guide-black-cohosh>

Recommendations



- ❑ Black Cohosh is a supplement I would not recommend using for many reasons.
 - ▣ It appears there is not enough data to support its benefits or rule out its health risks.
 - Although it has been used for centuries, many studies are unclear about its benefits.
 - Research has not even been attempted for some of the symptoms the product claims to relieve.

Recommendations Con'd

- The data and studies we do have suggest the risks outweigh the benefits.
 - ▣ Supposedly the supplement induces labor, but it could also miscarry the developing fetus through stimulating uterine contractions.
 - ▣ It claims to relieve headaches, but some woman have reported headaches as a side effect.
 - ▣ The product alleges to lower blood pressure, but it cannot be combined with blood pressure medication.
 - This could be risky, as some patients may try to combine the products if they are unaware of the adverse interactions.



Recommendations Con'd

- For many of the symptoms the supplement claims to relieve, another safer product could be used.
 - ▣ PMS Relief
 - Studies have shown consuming about 1200mg of calcium and about 5mcg of vitamin D from foods greatly reduced the symptoms of PMS.
 - ▣ Reducing Arthritis Pain
 - Inflammation of joints can be reduced through exercise, loss of body weight, and eating a healthy diet that is high in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables and low in saturated fats.
 - ▣ Lowering Blood Pressure
 - This can be achieved through exercise, decreasing sodium intake, using alcohol moderately, and eating a nutritious whole food diet.
 - ▣ Menopause
 - Regular physical activity combining aerobic exercises and weight-bearing exercise can be great for mood boosting.
- ▣Sizer, F., & Whitney, E. (2008). *Nutrition: concepts and controversies*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Higher Education

Recommendations Con'd

- If individuals feel the supplement would benefit their body, I would suggest they adhere to the “wait 5 years rule”.
 - ▣ More testing and research should be completed before consuming this product.
- As with any product, different individuals can be effected in very different ways.
 - ▣ It is important to keep in mind what might help one person, may have no effect or may even be harmful to another's body.



Bibliography

- Kligler, B. (2003, July 1). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2003/0701/p114.html>
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, . (2010, September 13). *Black cohosh*. Retrieved from <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69140.cfm>
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