

Boswella, the Pain Herb

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Arthritis has always been frustrating, impossible to cure chronic degenerative disease that has afflicted mankind since the dawn of history. Skeletons of ancient man show evidence of arthritis. Even with today's high tech treatment and pharmaceuticals, arthritis has not been conquered. Moreover, prescription drugs are usually ineffective in the long run, and cause serious side effects. Some of the dangerous side effects of anti-inflammatories include gastritis, ulcers, bruising, liver damage, kidney damage, anemia or osteoporosis just to name a few.

Millions of Americans suffer from some form of rheumatic disease. Degenerative arthritis or osteoarthritis is probably the most common type. Patients experience joint pain and swelling, morning stiffness and decrease mobility. Often activities of daily living were limited due to pain, swelling or stiffness.

Boswella is the gum resin exudates from the tree *Boswellia Serrata* from India. Boswella, also known as Indian frankincense, is an herb that has been used as an Ayurvedic treatment system for centuries. It is a specific inhibitor of leukotrienes. Leukotrienes cause inflammation by promoting free radical damage, autoimmune responses, cell adhesion, and by causing the migration of the inflammatory producing cells to the inflamed body area. Leukotrienes are considered to be the initiator of a variety of inflammatory diseases. The inflammatory diseases caused by Leukotrienes include arthritis, rheumatism, colitis, psoriasis, asthma and a host of others. Boswella blocks the synthesis of leukotrienes. This is the most probable mechanism behind the action in inhibiting inflammation. The action of boswella is mediated through a vascular phenomenon. It improves blood supply to the joints and restores integrity of blood vessels blocked by spasm. Boswella may also increase the blood supply to painful joints.

Numerous studies have confirmed that Boswella is an effective treatment for arthritis, chronic pain syndrome, fibromyalgia and sports injuries. It is effective in reducing acute and chronic inflammation including edema, arthritis, cumulative trauma

disorders, pre-menopausal and premenstrual syndrome. Unlike many anti-inflammatory drugs, boswella does not produce any adverse side effects on blood pressure, heart rate, respiration or other autonomic responses. In therapeutic dosages, it is completely non-toxic. Boswella's standardized activity is obtained through a proprietary extraction process. Researchers have reported that boswella effectively shrinks inflamed tissue, the underlying cause of pain in many conditions.

Dr. E. W. McDonagh, a Kansas City osteopath, has reported success among hundreds of patients suffering from a variety of advanced muscular and skeletal conditions for which other treatments had failed to help. "Many were taking multiple prescription and non-prescription medication and had developed side effects from them," says McDonagh. "Once taking boswella as prescribed, pain significantly reduced—or even vanished—in two to four weeks' time. All patients were able to eliminate other medication or reduce the dosages significantly."

Among Dr. McDonagh's patients helped by boswella were individuals with arthritis, muscle pain of all types, degenerative joint disease following traumatic injuries, muscle wasting and loss of function, knee, foot and ankle disease, and low back pain with radiation down the leg. In Abilene, Texas, Joe B. Alexander, M.D. reported "fantastic results" among twenty patients. One of them was a 56-year-old woman with arthritis. "She has taken everything in the past, and most recently was on Feldene," says Alexander. "However, the results she has had from boswella are the best of anything she has ever taken."

Antonio Ruiz, M.D., medical director of the Pain & Stress Center in San Antonio, Texas, reports many patients with a variety of stress-induced soft-tissue pain conditions such as fibromyalgia and occupational cumulative trauma disorders are reporting substantial relief with boswella. "These are normally elusive problems to treat," says Ruiz. "Patients are very pleased with the results and tell us they experience no side effects or discomfort."

The Pain & Stress Center's Billie J. Sahley, Ph.D., reports that many female patients also find boswella effective for symptoms associated with perimenopause and P.M.S. The benefits, she says, are enhanced with the addition of another well-known Indian herb called *ashwagandha*. Ashwagandha produces a calming effect in the body, as well as boosting immunity and stamina. "Women who hurt all over, get headaches and don't sleep improve. Those who suffer from fatigue are getting real help," says Sahley, who adds that a perimenopause muscle pain that she has suffered from improved considerably after she started taking the combined boswella-ashwagandha remedy.

In Jammu, India a clinical trial of 175 patients taking 300 to 400 milligrams of boswella three times per day. Some improvement was noted in ninety-seven percent of the patients in their arthritis. Boswella has been found to improve blood supply to the joints and restore integrity of blood vessels weakened by spasm. Excellent results were seen in fourteen percent while fifty-three percent reported good, thirty percent fair and three percent poor results. Morning stiffness, swelling and pain were reduced while mobility increased after two to four weeks of boswella.

Boswella is one of the first effective herbal adjunctive treatments for arthritis and chronic pain syndrome. It is one of the most exciting new herbs to reach the American public in years. Clinical trials were undertaken across the United States in the summer of 1991. In those studies, over eighty percent of the severe arthritic patients reported that boswella worked as well, if not better than any previous non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug that they had taken. Sherry Rogers, M.D. in her book *Pain Free in 6 Weeks* states that drug side effects constitutes the third leading cause of death in the U.S. Six thousands people a year die from NSAIDs. Boswella is safe and effective with no adverse side effects. Boswella can be used with DLPA, Malic Acid Plus Serrapeptase and magnesium for an effective pain program. Wherever a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication is used, boswella might be used without the side effects. At the Pain & Stress Center, we have been using Boswella Plus. This formula contains boswella 300

milligrams, 100 milligrams of Ester C and 11 milligrams of calcium ascorbate per capsule. Patients have reported good results with this formulation.

Boswella possesses good anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic, and analgesic activities. In addition, it significantly reduced the total white blood cell count in the joint fluid. The action of boswella is mediated through changes in the blood supply. It seems to improve blood flow to joints. Boswella is a potent anti-arthritic with added advantages of no side effects such as gastric irritation and ulcer forming activity. To avoid gastric irritation, boswella should be taken with or after food. Boswella may be effective in rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, cervical spondylosis, low back pain, soft tissue rheumatism, myositis and fibromyalgia. Some other usages of Boswella include low back pain and herniated disks, sports injuries, and sprain and strain. Boswella can be combined with 70 milligrams of the amino acid DLPA for extended pain management therapy. Boswella acts on the central nervous system as a sedative in addition to its analgesic effect. Boswella works well with Mellow Mind and Green Tea Extract.

Boswella has been shown to have NO side effects or counter indications even with long-term use.

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