

Herb profile

Ginseng

Michelle Lynde, RH

You may be looking for safe and effective ways to help your body deal with stress and boost your immune system. If so, ginseng is the herb for you. There are several distinct species of ginseng, and each has its own effects on the body.

Ginseng is known as an adaptogen, a term first coined in the 1950s to describe any substance that increases the nonspecific resistance of an organism to physical, chemical, and biological stress. In other words, ginseng balances and normalizes body functions under a variety of stressful conditions, enhancing them when deficient and reducing them when in excess. There are three types of ginseng considered to be adaptogens, each containing varying concentrations of ginsenosides, the important active constituents.

Chinese ginseng

The most widely used variety is *Panax ginseng*. Studies have shown that it enhances the body's ability to deal with the accumulative effects of physical and mental stresses brought on by overwhelming workloads or strong emotional situations. It can both restore quality sleep and increase daytime efficiency, thereby demonstrating its adaptogenic qualities. *Panax gin-*

seng improves overall well-being, especially during times of illness and convalescence. It increases muscular strength and oxygen uptake, normalizes heart rate, improves alertness, and helps support the immune system.

In human studies *Panax ginseng* reduced serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels and increased HDL, the good cholesterol. It can be used to

help stabilize and manage blood sugar levels in diabetics and nondiabetics, regulate both high and low blood pressure, and protect the liver from toxic substances. *P. ginseng* may be overstimulating for some people and should not be combined with other stimulants such as coffee.

American ginseng

Panax quinquefolium or American ginseng has a more calming, cooling action than *P. ginseng* and is an important adaptogen for treating nervous tension and mental fatigue. It has been shown to increase alertness, concentration, and visual and auditory response times. It strengthens the respiratory system and can help build athletic endurance, especially for sports played in hot weather. Recent research has found that American ginseng may be useful for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It may help to decrease acute elevated blood sugar levels after meals, making it beneficial for diabetics.

According to a study published in the October 2005 *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 130 participants who took two 200-mg capsules of *Panax quinquefolium* a day during a 4-month randomized double-blind trial had fewer colds and less severe symptoms than those in the placebo group. While further studies are needed, American ginseng could be a potent antiviral remedy for upper-respiratory infections in healthy adults.



American ginseng

Three varieties of adaptogenic ginseng

Panax ginseng (right) is also known as Chinese, Asian, or Korean ginseng. It is known to enhance the body's ability to deal with physical or mental stress.



American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) can help us deal with nervous tension and mental fatigue.

Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) is well known for its immune-boosting effects and may be safely used long term.

Siberian ginseng

During the past 50 years, extensive scientific studies have confirmed that the roots and leaves of Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) have adaptogenic, immune-enhancing effects, with no known toxicity. Siberian ginseng can safely be used long term to counteract exhaustion, insomnia, irritability, and mild depression and to minimize the incidence of acute infections.

Research has determined that the root is more effective for enhancing endurance and maintaining energy levels while the leaf is more energizing and better at regulating blood sugar levels and improving insulin utilization. Further research has shown that using the root and leaf together in a fluid extract has an even wider range of benefits, including inhibiting stress-induced hypertension and reducing cardiovascular responses to stress.

Get genuine ginseng

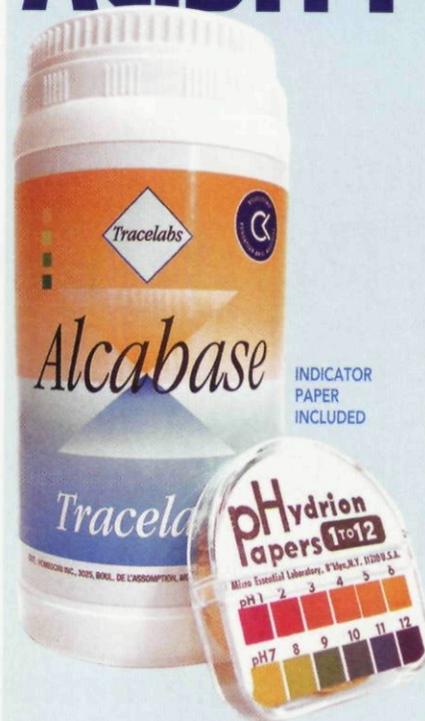
Ginseng roots for cooking and preparing teas can be purchased in many Asian food markets. Fluid extracts,

tinctures, and capsules are available in natural health stores. Look for standardized products to ensure adequate ginsenoside content and provide consistent therapeutic results. All ginsengs are safe, but dosages vary and each individual's response can be quite different. It's best to consult with a professional herbalist or health care practitioner to determine which ginseng is best for you.

In our busy lives, we may experience unavoidable stresses as we try to balance the many demands and responsibilities of work, family, and home. Ginseng can combat the negative effects of stress by increasing vitality and stamina and helping to maintain our health and well-being. **a**

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FIGHT ACIDITY



DID YOU KNOW?

Your diet has a direct impact on the body's acidity level. Food such as fish and meat is converted into uric acid which contributes to arthritis as well as osteoarthritis.

SOLUTION : *Alcabase* is made of basic natural mineral salts that help cleanse the body from accumulated metabolic waste which is inadequately eliminated.

INFO+

It is important for your body to stay balanced, as Cancer will not survive in an alkaline environment.



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