DEVIL’S CLAW

A Natural Approach to Reducing Inflammation

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Devil's claw is an herb with potent anti-inflammatory properties. In autoimmune joint disorders, devil's claw is used to reduce pain and inflammation.

Inflammation

Inflammation is one of the primary mechanisms in the immune response. It occurs when the immune system reacts to injury or the presence of toxins and foreign substances. Chronic inflammation is the underlying cause of most diseases and the direct cause of most pain.

Active Ingredients

Harpagophytum prumbens, an herb commonly known as devil's claw, has been found to help people with autoimmune disease by reducing both inflammation and pain. Used alone or in combination with other herbs such as white willow, devil's claw has potent anti-inflammatory properties. Devil's claw has two primary active ingredients:

1. Harpogoside
2. Beta-sitosterol

While both compounds have anti-inflammatory properties, beta-sitosterol is considered an immunomodulator. Therefore, most studies focusing on pain reduction are based on the properties of harpagoside.

Sources of Devil's Claw

Devil's claw is found as a perennial groundcover native to the dry highlands of Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa. Indigenous South Africans have used devil's claw for centuries. The name devil's claw is derived from the plant's fruit, which resembles a large, hooked claw. The recommended daily dose of devil's claw is 50-60 mg of the active harpagoside ingredient, which corresponds to 2,400 to 2,900 mg of devil's claw extract daily. The extract is best taken in 2-3 divided doses daily. As a dried powdered root containing both harpagoside and beta-sitosterol, 1 gram as a tea can be used 3 times daily. As a 1:5 tincture, 1 teaspoon can be taken 3 times daily.

Clinical Trials and Studies

In studies conducted at the University of Frieburg in Germany, patients with arthritis treated with 60 mg of devil's claw's active ingredient harpagoside were as likely to
experience from 50 percent to complete pain reduction as patients using the arthritis
drugs phenylbutazone, corticosteroids, and Vioxx. In addition, devil's claw has been
found in studies to alleviate some of the aches, pain, and stiffness seen in osteoarthritis
and it modestly reduces blood sugar levels.

Precautions

Compared to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs), which may cause
stomach ulcerations and gastrointestinal bleeding, Devil's claw has an impressive safety
record. However, devil's Claw is not recommended for people with ulcers since it can
cause mild stomach distress, and it is not recommended for pregnant or lactating because
its effectiveness in these conditions has not yet been studies.

Other Uses

Devil's claw is also reported to be an effective treatment for gout and gouty arthritis. In
conditions of gout, inflammation is related to excess production of uric acid. Devil's claw
has been found to reduce uric acid levels, thereby helping tame the disease process.