

From our friends at "Back to Herbs"



Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) is one of the oldest living tree species and its leaves are among the most extensively studied botanicals in use today. In Europe and the United States, ginkgo supplements are among the best-selling herbal medications. It consistently ranks as a top medicine prescribed in France and Germany.



Ginkgo has been used in traditional medicine to treat circulatory disorders and enhance memory. Scientific studies throughout the years have found evidence to support these uses. Laboratory studies have shown that ginkgo improves blood circulation by dilating blood vessels and reducing the stickiness of blood platelets. Ginkgo exerts an anti-coagulating effect on the blood and prevents blood clots from forming. This may possibly reduce risk of stroke. Ginkgo helps the blood vessels to relax and enlarge so blood can flow more freely. It also helps to reduce cholesterol to plaque conversion. Plaque deposits in the arteries can cause strokes and heart problems.

Ginkgo biloba is known as a "living fossil tree". This tree's genetic line spans the Mesozoic era back to the Triassic period. Closely related species are thought to have existed for over 200 million years. Trees can live 1,000 years.

Maidenhair tree's leaf extract is a billion-dollar business. According to one recent report, "In Germany alone, ginkgo biloba prescriptions (it is prescribed by doctors in Germany) retailed at \$280 million in U.S. dollars". A German manufacturer, Schwabe, sold almost \$2 billion U.S. dollars worth of Ginkgo biloba extract worldwide in 1993.

More than 40 components isolated from the ginkgo tree have been identified, but only two are believed to be responsible for the herb's medicinal effects: flavonoids and terpenoids. Flavonoids are plant-based antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances that scavenge free radicals -- compounds in the body that damage cell membranes, tamper with DNA, and even cause cell death. Laboratory and animal studies have shown that flavonoids protect the nerves, heart muscle, blood vessels, and retina from damage. Terpenoids (such as ginkgolides) improve blood flow by dilating blood vessels and reducing the stickiness of platelets.

Ginkgo is widely used in Europe for treating dementia. It was used originally because it improves blood flow to the brain. Now further study suggests it may work directly to

protect nerve cells that are damaged in Alzheimer's disease. A number of studies have found that ginkgo has a positive effect on memory and thinking in people with Alzheimer's or vascular dementia.

Clinical studies suggest that ginkgo may provide the following benefits for people with Alzheimer's disease:

- Improvement in thinking, learning, and memory (cognitive function)
- Improvement in activities of daily living
- Improvement in social behavior
- Fewer feelings of depression

Several studies have found that ginkgo may be as effective as prescription Alzheimer's medications in delaying the symptoms of dementia.

Because ginkgo improves blood flow, it has been studied in people with intermittent claudication (pain caused by reduced blood flow to the legs). Ginkgo biloba combined with regular walking exercises is more beneficial than just exercise alone.

Ginkgo is widely touted as a "brain herb." Ginkgo may help improve memory in healthy people who experience normal memory loss that comes with age.

The flavonoids found in ginkgo may help stop or lessen some retinal problems (problems with the back part of the eye). Macular degeneration (often called age-related macular degeneration or ARMD) is an eye disease that affects the retina. It is a progressive, degenerative eye disease that tends to affect older adults and is the number one cause of blindness in the United States. Some studies suggest that ginkgo may help preserve vision in those with ARMD. Also, it has shown improvement with glaucoma.

A standardized ginkgo extract was reported to significantly improve functional measures (such as coordination, energy level, strength, mental performance, mood, and sensation) in people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Available evidence demonstrates ginkgo's efficacy in "cerebral insufficiency" (a syndrome thought to be secondary to atherosclerotic disease, characterized by impaired concentration, confusion, decreased physical performance, fatigue, headache, dizziness, depression, and anxiety).

Additionally, further research is needed for the following however ginkgo studies with limited data have shown initially positive results for the following:

Acute hemorrhoid attacks, age-associated memory impairment (aami), altitude (mountain) sickness, asthma, cardiovascular disease, chemotherapy side effects reduction, chronic venous insufficiency, cocaine dependence, cognitive performance (in patients with multiple sclerosis), depression and seasonal affective disorder, diabetic neuropathy, dyslexia, gastric cancer, glaucoma, Graves' disease, macular degeneration, memory enhancement (in healthy people), mood and cognition in post-menopausal women, multiple sclerosis, peripheral artery disease (pad), premenstrual syndrome, pulmonary interstitial fibrosis, quality of life , Raynaud's disease, retinopathy (diabetes mellitus type 2), schizophrenia, sexual dysfunction, stroke, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), vertigo, vitiligo.

Because of its many benefits relating to problems associated with getting older it's a very popular supplement with the elderly.

- Improve blood flow to the brain
- Improve circulation to the extremities
- Fight free radicals and oxidation
- As a very powerful antioxidant
- Improve memory, concentration and focus
- Improve cognitive function
- Treat a wide range of respiratory ailments
- Treat the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease
- Treat irregular heartbeat
- Treat varicose veins, hemorrhoids and leg ulcers
- For longevity
- Treat skin sores
- Tonic for the elderly
- Treat some types of sexual dysfunction
- Treat macular degeneration and cataracts
- Prevent heart disease and stroke
- Stabilize the structure of nerve cells
- Fight mental deterioration and dementia
- Treat impotence
- Prevent intoxication
- Aid digestion

Ginkgo biloba is a widely used complementary and alternative medicine option that most people associate with combating memory loss. However, some may consider using it for asthma, too. In terms of treating asthma, Ginkgo is thought to:

- Decrease inflammation
- Reduce hyperresponsiveness of the airway
- Diminish bronchospasm

Never directly consume Ginkgo seeds, as this can lead to loss of consciousness and seizures.

Initial results often take 4 - 6 weeks, but should grow stronger beyond that period.

If taking ginkgo, one should stop taking it at least 36 hours prior to surgery or dental procedures due to the risk of bleeding complications. Tell your doctor or dentist that you take ginkgo.

People who have epilepsy should not take ginkgo, because there is concern that it might cause seizures.

Pregnant and breast feeding women should not take ginkgo.



Be sure to try NSP's Ginkgo Biloba Extract T/R (30 tabs) , Ginkgo & Hawthorn Combination (100 caps) or Ginkgo/Gotu Kola w/Bacopa Conc. (60 tabs) .

References:

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/ginkgo-biloba/NS_patient-ginkgo
<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/ginkgo-biloba-000247.htm>
http://forestry.about.com/cs/treed/a/ginkgo_tree.htm
<http://www.herbslist.net/ginkgo-biloba.html>
http://asthma.about.com/od/asthmacam/a/art_ginkgo.htm

Disclaimer: We do not directly dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of herbs or supplements as a form of treatment for illness. The information found on here is for educational purposes only to empower people with knowledge to take care of their own health. We disclaim any liability if the reader uses or prescribes any remedies, natural or otherwise, for him/herself or another. Historically all of these herbs & vitamin supplements may nutritionally support the bodies biological systems. Please consult a licensed health professional should a need be indicated.

Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

Chris Ritchason
Dr. Jack & Verlyn Ritchason, Founders
The Back to Herbs Team

This information was provided by

Chuck & Judy Erkitz

Natures Better Way

PO Box 261 - 880 W Dryden Rd., Metamora, MI 48455

www.naturesbetterway.com

www.naturesbetterway.my4life.com

www.mynsp.com/naturesbetterway

1-810-678-3131 erkfitz@erkfitz.com