



Golden Seal

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Hydrastis canadensis

COMMON NAMES

Eye Balm, Eyeroot, Golden seal, Ground Raspberry, Indian Dye, Jaundice Root, Ohio Curcuma, Orange Root, Tumeric Root, Yellow Eye, Yellow Indian Paint, Yellow Paint Root, Yellow, Puccoon, Yellowroot

Golden seal was originally introduced to early American settlers by Native American tribes, who used it primarily for skin problems, digestive disorders, and as a wash for sore eyes. It is now one of the most popular herbs in the United States. As golden seal has soared in popularity, it has become over-harvested. In 1997, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora reported that golden seal is at risk of becoming an endangered species. As a result, the international trade of golden seal continues to be closely controlled and monitored.



Golden seal is a perennial herb in the buttercup family, native to southeastern Canada and the northeastern United States. Golden seal has been ascribed the following herbal properties (whole herb): bitter, hepatic, alterative, anticatarrhal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, laxative, emmenagogue, and oxytotic (labor inducing).

Golden seal is often used as a multi-purpose remedy, and is thought to possess many different medicinal properties. In addition to being used as a topical antimicrobial, it is also taken internally as a digestion aid, and may remove canker sores when gargled. Golden seal may be purchased in salve, tablet, tincture form, or as a bulk powder. Golden seal is often used to boost the medicinal effects of other herbs it is blended or formulated with.

Herbalists recommend golden seal for gastritis, colitis, duodenal ulcers, loss of appetite and liver disease. They discuss the astringent effect it has on mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract, the gastrointestinal tract, the bladder, and rectum (applied topically), and the skin. Golden seal is very bitter, which stimulates the appetite and aids digestion, and often stimulates bile secretion.

Golden seal contains a compound called berberine that kills many types of bacteria in test tubes, including the ones that cause diarrhea. Berberine has also been shown to kill a wide range of other types of germs in test tubes, such as those that cause candida (yeast) infections and various parasites such as tapeworms and Giardia.

Berberine may also activate white blood cells, making them more effective at fighting infection and strengthening the immune system. Berberine is sometimes used as an antibiotic and disinfectant, both externally and internally. Berberine may also be useful in heart failure.

Today, Golden seal is marketed as a tonic to aid digestion, soothe upset stomach, and as an antibacterial agent. It is considered a natural antibiotic and is most often combined with echinacea in preparations designed to strengthen the immune system. Golden seal is often found in herbal remedies for hay, colds, and the flu. It may help ease a sore throat, which often accompanies cold or flu.



Because golden seal appears to have antiseptic properties in test tubes, it's sometimes used to disinfect cuts and scrapes. It is commonly used to treat several skin, eye, and mucous membrane inflammatory and infectious conditions (such as sinusitis, conjunctivitis, and urinary tract infections). It is also available in mouthwashes for sore throats and canker sores.

Golden seal has not been investigated in many scientific studies. Some trials have looked at berberine, one of the active compounds in golden seal. Berberine is widely used in Traditional Chinese Medicine to treat dysentery and infectious diarrhea. Berberine may be effective in humans for malaria, heart failure, and various types of infections, including upper respiratory problems. It may also dilate blood vessels and help in treating heart failure.

Golden seal's ability as a "natural antibiotic" has given this herb a great reputation in the herbal lore. The Native American peoples traditionally treated inflammation in the body of all kinds by using golden seal herb as a topical ointment. The native folk medicine of many American cultures used golden seal as an herbal eyewash and as a rinse or mouth gargle to gain relief from problems like soreness in the mouth, to gain relief from sore throat, from canker sores, as well as from thrush and related infections. Digestive disorders of all kinds were also traditionally treated using golden seal herb by several Indian tribes. The alkaloid called berberine present in golden seal has been proven to be quite effective in the treatment of diarrhea induced by the presence of toxic pathogens such as the bacterium causing cholera in the body. In the treatment of giardia infections in children, the golden seal remedy proved more effective than a placebo during another long-term trial. The alkaloids hydrastine and berberine in the herb also lower the blood pressure in laboratory animals subjected to tests. The secretion of bile is stimulated by the berberine, while another fraction called canadine is believed to be responsible for triggering uterine contractions in women. Blood flow to the spleen of laboratory mice, is increased by the compounds found in golden seal, this chemical fraction also stimulated the activity of blood macrophages, which are white blood cells performing an important role in the immune system of man. In certain kinds of strep or sinus infections, the herb is often used as an alternative medication in addition to the conventional medicines.

Side Effects and Cautions

- Golden seal is considered safe for short-term use in adults at recommended dosages. Rare side effects may include nausea and vomiting.
- There is little information about the safety of high dosages or the long-term use of golden seal.
- Golden seal may cause changes in the way the body processes drugs, and could potentially alter the effects of many drugs.
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid using golden seal. Berberine, a chemical in Golden seal, can cause or worsen jaundice in newborns and could lead to a life-threatening problem called kernicterus.
- Golden seal should not be given to infants and young children.

A few studies report interactions between berberine (a major component of Golden seal) and prescription or non-

prescription medicines.

Tetracycline-One study reported that berberine may decrease the effectiveness of tetracycline antibiotics.

Anticoagulants (blood thinners) - Theoretically, Golden seal and berberine could increase the risk of bleeding, especially if you take blood thinners. These medications include:

- Warfarin (Coumadin)
- Aspirin



Be sure to try NSP's [Golden Seal \(100 Caps\)](#), [Echinacea/Golden Seal \(100 Caps\)](#), [Echinacea/Golden Seal Liquid \(2 fl. oz.\)](#) or [Golden Seal/Parthenium Extract](#). You can see other products containing Golden Seal by [clicking here](#).

References

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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