

Practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine, the traditional medicine of India, regard this root as the Indian answer to ginseng for the male libido. Some references do not recommend on a daily basis but others do. It is considered to reduce vata and kapha. It is mainly used in the West as a restorative for the elderly and the chronically ill. For such regenerative purposes, it can be taken as a milk decoction to which may be added raw sugar, honey, pippali and basmati rice. As such, it inhibits aging and catalyzes the anabolic processes of the body. It is a good food for weak pregnant women, it helps to stabilize the fetus. It also regenerates the hormonal system, promotes healing of tissues, and can be used externally on wounds, sores, etc. Five grams of the powder can be taken twice a day in warm milk or water, sweetened with raw sugar.

By reducing overactivity and encouraging rest and relaxation, withania is useful in countering the debility that accompanies long-term stress. Its high iron content makes it useful for anemia. Withania has been widely researched in India. Studies in 1965 indicated that the alkaloids are sedative, reduce blood pressure, and lower the heartbeat rate. Research in 1970 showed that withanolides, which are similar to the body's own steroid hormones, are anti-inflammatory. They also inhibit the growth of cancer cells. The herb may be of use in chronic inflammatory diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis and as a cancer preventative. Trials in 1980 indicated that withania increases hemoglobin levels, reduces graying of hair, and improves sexual performance. It also helps recovery from chronic illness.

Traditional use: acne, adrenal disorders, age spots, anemia, anorexia, arteriosclerosis, atherosclerosis, cardiovascular disease, chronic inflammatory diseases, convalescence, debility, depression, diabetes mellitus, diarrhea, edema, endometriosis, failing memory, fatigue, frigidity, hyperlipemia, hypertension, immunodeficiency, impotence, indigestion, insomnia, multiple sclerosis, poor attention span, ulcer