



GINSENG

FOR CANCER-RELATED FATIGUE

How ginseng can work for you

A first step in dealing with fatigue is to begin a gentle, low-impact aerobic training program. If exercise does not improve your fatigue, consider trying ginseng.

Talk with your healthcare provider before starting ginseng or any other dietary supplements or over-the-counter medications, as they could interact with other medications you are taking.

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolis*) pure ground root was used in a 2013 Mayo Clinic study to determine if it helped decrease cancer-related fatigue. Results of the study indicated that cancer-related fatigue improved with 2,000 mg of pure ground American ginseng daily during a two-month study, though more studies are needed. The ginseng used in the study came from the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin (www.ginsengherbco-op.com).

How and when to take ginseng

- Buy pure ground root American ginseng, not ginseng extract. Extract may not have enough active ginseng components to be effective.
- Take 1,000 mg by mouth at breakfast and 1,000 mg by mouth at lunch so it won't affect your sleep. It is okay to take ginseng with food.
- If you take warfarin (Coumadin), your dose may need to be adjusted when taking or stopping ginseng.
- Ginseng can affect your International Normalized Ratio or prothrombin time (INR or PT) values.
 - Take the same dose of ginseng every day.
 - Notify the provider monitoring your INR/PT so they know you take ginseng for cancer-related fatigue.

- Do not use for longer than six months unless directed by your health care provider.
- Stop taking ginseng at least seven days before you have surgery.

Do not take ginseng without speaking to your healthcare provider first.

Contraindications to ginseng use may include:

- Pregnancy
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Use of certain medications, including those used to treat diabetes, MAOIs including Phenelzine, Nardil, or Parnate, immunotherapy or immunosuppressant medications, digoxin (a heart medicine), and estrogens

Regulations

Supplements are subject to limited regulation by the Food and Drug Administration. Use caution if buying over the Internet. Consider buying supplements that have the following information on the label:

- The word “ginseng”
- Net quantity of contents (60 capsules, for example)
- Ingredients and amounts of those ingredients
- Includes the disclaimer: “This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.”
- Directions for use (for example, “Take one capsule daily.”)
- Supplement facts panel (includes serving size, amount and active ingredient)
- Name and address of manufacturer, packer or distributor
- “GMP Assured” stamp