

Passionflower Herb



To sleep or not to sleep, that is the question

“This morning I want to continue our conversation on herbal medicine by discussing one of my favorite nervine herbs, Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*). Despite its name, Passionflower, has been shown to be an effective sedative and hypnotic. As a sedative it helps with anxiety and as a hypnotic it helps you to sleep.

We will talk about American’s prescription drug addiction (*60 percent of Americans are taking a prescription drug*) in a future post. In 2013, 16.7 percent of 242 million U.S. adults reported filling one or more prescriptions for psychiatric drugs, (*As reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association’s JAMA Internal Medicine.*)

Insomnia and sleep disorders are normally short-term experiences and self-limiting for most people. Some people with chronic anxiety and insomnia feel that they need medical assistance and will generally walk away from a medical appointment with a prescription for a hypnotic drug such as Ambien, Sonata, or Lunesta. If you

watch television, you are probably well educated regarding these drugs from the ubiquitous drug commercials advertising them.

If your insomnia or sleep disorder is chronic this is often an indication of problems with your lifestyle involving poor sleeping habits, the overuse of media devices, late night gaming or internet surfing, too much caffeine, a poor diet, alcohol consumption, late night eating, and many other factors. Sometimes insomnia is the result of respiratory or breathing difficulties (*sleep apnea*) and then the problem should be medically diagnosed and treated.

To effectively treat insomnia, you need to identify the behaviors and your personal “triggers” that are causing your lack of sleep or your anxiety. Once you identify the behaviors and triggers they need to be eliminated or managed appropriately. This action is the foundation of your personal plan to manage your anxiety or sleeping disorder. What is not effective and is in fact very dangerous, is to continue negative behaviors and to attempt to “medicate” the problem away with powerful and dangerous hypnotic and anti-depressant prescription drugs. Many people who are on anti-depressants and hypnotic drugs, and despite the warnings, also self-medicate with alcohol and other recreational drugs. This behavior can lead to depression, suicidal thoughts or actions, paranoia, and/or acrophobia.

There are about 100,000 prescription drugs deaths per year in the United States so getting off drugs that cause these deaths is a good idea.

Passionflower flowers, leaves and roots have a long history of use among Native Americans in North America and Passionflower was adopted by the European colonists early in American history. The German Commission E monograph recommends doses of up to six grams of the herb a day in an infusion, although I have primarily recommended it in an alcohol extract from 30 to 60 drops per day. Always consult with your herbalist or naturopath before using Passionflower. If you are pregnant, or could be pregnant, don't use any herbal medicine without expert input.

Passionflower was shown to be as effective as several pharmaceutical sedatives in the benzodiazepine (*valium*) family, the aerial parts of this herb are great for nervous tension and anxiety. In recent research, passion flower extract at 45 drops daily (*tincture*) was shown to be as effective as oxazepam (*like valium*). This nervine herb is also “antispasmodic” which makes it mildly effective for people with nervous twitching or spasticity.

Passionflower



This Article was Written by,
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Contraindications and Warnings
Below

Passionflower Medication Interactions & Warning

Are there safety concerns?

Passionflower is **LIKELY SAFE** for most people when used in food-flavoring amounts.

It is **POSSIBLY SAFE** when taken as a tea nightly for 7 nights, or as a medicine for up to 8 weeks.

It is **POSSIBLY UNSAFE** when taken by mouth in large amounts, such as 3.5 grams of a specific extract (*Sedacalm, Bioplus Healthcare, Australia*) over a 2-day period.

Passion flower can cause some side effects such as drowsiness, dizziness, and confusion.

There isn't enough information to rate the safety of passion flower when applied to the skin.

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Special Precautions & Warnings:

Pregnancy and breast-feeding:

Don't take passionflower if you are pregnant. It is **POSSIBLY UNSAFE**. There are some chemicals in the passion flower plant that might cause the uterus to contract.

Not enough is known about the safety of taking passionflower during breast-feeding.

Stay on the safe side and don't use it.

Surgery:

Passionflower can affect the central nervous system.

It might increase the effects of anesthesia and other medications on the brain during and after surgery.

Stop taking passionflower at least 2 weeks before a scheduled surgery.

Are there any interactions with medications?

Sedative medications (*CNS depressants*)

Interaction Rating: Moderate Be cautious with this combination.

Talk with your health provider.

Passionflower might cause sleepiness and drowsiness. Medications that cause sleepiness are called sedatives. Taking passionflower along with sedative medications might cause too much sleepiness.

Some sedative medications include

pentobarbital (*Nembutal*), phenobarbital (*Luminal*), secobarbital (*Seconal*), clonazepam (*Klonopin*), lorazepam (*Ativan*), zolpidem (*Ambien*), and others.

Caution: Do not use Passionflower if you are currently on an anti-depressant, anti-anxiety, or sleep medication. If you want to try Passionflower first talk to your doctor about getting off your prescription medication and then try it. In some individuals Passionflower is so effective that it can cause drowsiness. Be careful when using Passionflower and driving or working with mechanical tools or equipment.



Neuromuscular Wellness

Health + Life + Balance