Asian Ginseng

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/asian-ginseng  
  
  
Asian Ginseng  
Common Names: Asian ginseng, Chinese ginseng, Korean ginseng, red ginseng, white ginseng  
  
Latin Names: Panax ginseng  
  
Background  
Asian ginseng is native to the Far East, including China, Korea, and far-eastern Siberia. It has been used for health-related purposes in traditional Chinese medicine for thousands of years.  
Asian ginseng is one of several types of ginseng. The terms red ginseng and white ginseng refer to Asian ginseng roots prepared in two different ways.  
The part of the plant most frequently used for health purposes is the root.  
Asian ginseng taken orally is promoted for increasing resistance to environmental stress and as a general tonic to improve well-being. Asian ginseng is also promoted as a dietary supplement for a variety of other reasons to improve physical stamina, concentration, and memory; stimulate immune function; slow the aging process; and relieve various other health problems, such as respiratory and cardiovascular disorders, depression, anxiety, and menopausal hot flashes. Topical use (applied to the skin) of Asian ginseng as part of a multi-ingredient preparation is promoted for premature ejaculation.  
Asian ginseng contains many substances; those thought to be most important are called ginsenosides (or panaxosides).  
How Much Do We Know?  
Many of the published randomized controlled trials on Asian ginseng may not be high-quality studies. Therefore, our understanding of Asian ginseng s health effects is limited.  
What Have We Learned?  
Results from a 2013 review of 65 randomized controlled trials suggest that Asian ginseng may help improve glucose metabolism and lower blood sugar. However, the scientists who published the review noted some issues with the studies they examined: that many were not high quality and that ginseng preparations were diverse.  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
Short-term oral use (up to 6 months) of Asian ginseng in recommended amounts appears to be safe for most people. However, questions have been raised about its long-term safety, and some experts recommend against its use by infants, children, and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.  
When used short-term as part of a specific multi-ingredient topical skin application, Asian ginseng is likely safe. Safety after prolonged repetitive topical use has not been determined.  
Insomnia (trouble sleeping) is the herb s most common side effect. Others include menstrual problems, breast pain, increased heart rate, high or low blood pressure, headache, loss of appetite, and digestive problems.  
Some evidence suggests that Asian ginseng might affect blood sugar. If you have diabetes, consult your health care provider before using Asian ginseng.  
There are uncertainties about whether ginseng might interact with certain medications, such as calcium channel blockers and other high blood pressure medications, as well as statin medications and some antidepressants. Studies on the effect of Asian ginseng on the anticoagulant (blood thinner) warfarin (Coumadin) have had mixed results. If you re taking medication, consult your health care provider before using Asian ginseng.  
Asian ginseng may be unsafe when taken orally during pregnancy. One of the chemicals in it has been found to cause birth defects in animals. Little is known about whether it s safe to use Asian ginseng while breastfeeding.  
Keep in Mind  
Take charge of your health talk with your health care providers about any complementary health approaches you use. Together, you can make shared, well-informed decisions.  
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Using Dietary Supplements Wisely  
Know the Science: How Medications and Supplements Can Interact  
Know the Science: How To Make Sense of a Scientific Journal Article  
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Website: https://ods.od.nih.gov  
  
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