Chamomile

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/chamomile  
  
  
Chamomile  
Common Names: chamomile, German chamomile  
  
Latin Names: Matricaria recutita, Chamomilla recutita  
  
Background  
There are two types of chamomile: German chamomile and Roman chamomile. This fact sheet focuses on German chamomile.  
Chamomile was described in ancient medical writings and was an important medicinal herb in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome.  
Today, chamomile is promoted for sleeplessness, anxiety, and gastrointestinal conditions such as upset stomach, gas, and diarrhea. It is also used topically for skin conditions and for mouth sores resulting from cancer treatment.  
How Much Do We Know?  
Not much is known about the health effects of chamomile because there are few studies on chamomile in people for individual conditions. Also, some studies look at products made of chamomile plus other herbs, so it is difficult to know chamomile s role from those studies.  
What Have We Learned?  
Some preliminary studies suggest that a chamomile dietary supplement might be helpful for generalized anxiety disorder.  
Some research has found that products containing certain combinations of herbs that include chamomile may be of benefit for upset stomach, for diarrhea in children, and for infants with colic. But chamomile alone has not been shown to be helpful for these conditions.  
There s very little information on chamomile s effect on insomnia. A 2019 review of six small studies included only one study on insomnia. That one study found that chamomile had no benefit for insomnia. The same 2019 review looked at five studies on chamomile s effect in non-insomnia populations. The review concluded that chamomile might help improve the individual component of sleep quality over a 4-week period in people without insomnia.  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
Chamomile is likely safe when used in amounts commonly found in teas. It might be safe when used orally for medicinal purposes over the short term. The long-term safety of using chamomile on the skin for medicinal purposes is unknown.  
Side effects are uncommon and may include nausea, dizziness, and allergic reactions. Rare cases of anaphylaxis (a life-threatening allergic reaction) have occurred in people who consumed or came into contact with chamomile products.  
People are more likely to experience allergic reactions to chamomile if they re allergic to related plants such as ragweed, chrysanthemums, marigolds, or daisies.  
Interactions between chamomile and cyclosporine (a drug used to prevent rejection of organ transplants) and warfarin (a blood thinner) have been reported, and there are theoretical reasons to suspect that chamomile might interact with other drugs as well. Talk to your health care provider before taking chamomile if you re taking any type of medicine.  
Little is known about whether it s safe to use chamomile during pregnancy or 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.  
For More Information  
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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The NCCIH Clearinghouse provides information on NCCIH and complementary and integrative health approaches, including publications and searches of Federal databases of scientific and medical literature. The Clearinghouse does not provide medical advice, treatment recommendations, or referrals to practitioners.  
  
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ODS seeks to strengthen knowledge and understanding of dietary supplements by evaluating scientific information, supporting research, sharing research results, and educating the public. Its resources include publications (such as Dietary Supplements: What You Need To Know) and fact sheets on a variety of specific supplement ingredients and products (such as vitamin D and multivitamin/mineral supplements).  
  
Website: https://ods.od.nih.gov  
  
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Srivastava JK, Shankar E, Gupta S. Chamomile: a herbal medicine of the past with bright future. Molecular Medicine Reports. 2010;3(6):895-901.  
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