Chasteberry

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/chasteberry  
  
  
Chasteberry  
Common Names: chasteberry, chaste tree, vitex, monk's pepper  
  
Latin Names: Vitex agnus-castus  
  
Background  
The chasteberry plant, also called chaste tree, is native to the Mediterranean region and Asia.  
The name chasteberry may reflect the traditional belief that the plant promoted chastity. Monks in the Middle Ages reportedly used it to decrease sexual desire. In the past, chasteberry extracts were used to treat a variety of gynecological disorders and skin conditions.  
Today, chasteberry is promoted as a dietary supplement for symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, breast pain associated with the menstrual cycle, infertility, and other conditions.  
How Much Do We Know?  
There s not a lot of strong research on the effectiveness of chasteberry for any condition. We do have some clear safety information on the herb.  
What Have We Learned?  
Preliminary studies suggest that chasteberry might be helpful for symptoms of premenstrual syndrome and for breast pain related to the menstrual cycle, but the evidence is not conclusive.  
Researchers have studied chasteberry for infertility in women, but there isn t enough reliable evidence to know if it helps.  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
When used in limited amounts, chasteberry appears to be generally well tolerated. Side effects are generally mild, and may include nausea, headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, or itching.  
Taking chasteberry during pregnancy or while breastfeeding may not be safe.  
It may not be safe for women with hormone-sensitive conditions, such as breast, uterine, or ovarian cancer, to take this herb. It s possible that chasteberry might interact with some medicines, such as birth control pills, drugs used to treat Parkinson s disease, and drugs used to treat psychosis. If you re taking medicine, talk with your health care provider before using chasteberry.  
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  
NCCIH Clearinghouse  
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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Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), National Institutes of Health (NIH)  
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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