Eleuthero

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Eleuthero  
What is it?  
Eleuthero (Eleutherococcus senticosus) is a woody shrub sometimes called Siberian ginseng. It is not a true ginseng. It is sometimes used as an adaptogen.   
  
Eleuthero is often considered an adaptogen. Adaptogens are a class of substances that are believed to stimulate the body's resistance to physical, environmental, and emotional stressors. Eleuthero contains many chemicals that affect the brain, immune system, and certain hormones.  
  
People use eleuthero for genital herpes, diabetes, athletic performance, memory and thinking skills, the common cold, and many other conditions, but there is no good scientific evidence to support most of these uses.  
  
Don't confuse eleuthero with other herbs called "ginseng," including American Ginseng, Blue Cohosh, Canaigre, Codonopsis, Panax Ginseng, and Panax Notoginseng. These are not the same.  
  
  
How effective is it?  
Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database rates effectiveness based on scientific evidence according to the following scale: Effective, Likely Effective, Possibly Effective, Possibly Ineffective, Likely Ineffective, Ineffective, and Insufficient Evidence to Rate.The effectiveness ratings for ELEUTHERO are as follows:Possibly effective for...  
Genital herpes. Taking a specific eleuthero extract (Elagen) by mouth might help reduce genital herpes outbreaks.  
  
  
There is interest in using eleuthero for a number of other purposes, but there isn't enough reliable information to say whether it might be helpful.  
  
  
Is it safe?  
When taken by mouth: Eleuthero is likely safe when used for up to 3 months. Eleuthero is usually well-tolerated. Side effects might include diarrhea, stomach upset, and headache. There isn't enough reliable information to know if eleuthero is safe to use for longer than 3 months.  
  
  
Special precautions & warnings:  
Pregnancy and breast-feeding: There isn't enough reliable information to know if eleuthero is safe to use when pregnant or breast-feeding. Stay on the safe side and avoid use.  
Children: Eleuthero is possibly safe in teenagers (ages 12-17 years) when taken by mouth for up to 6 weeks. There isn't enough reliable information to know if it is safe to use long-term or in young children.   
Heart conditions: Eleuthero might cause a pounding heart, irregular heartbeat, or high blood pressure in people who have heart disorders. If you have a heart condition, only use eleuthero under the supervision of a healthcare provider.  
Hormone-sensitive conditions such as breast cancer, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, endometriosis, or uterine fibroids: Eleuthero might act like estrogen. If you have any condition that might be made worse by exposure to estrogen, don't use eleuthero.  
  
  
  
Are there interactions with medications?  
ModerateBe cautious with this combination.Digoxin (Lanoxin)There is some concern that eleuthero might increase levels of digoxin. This could increase the effects and side effects of digoxin. If you are taking digoxin, speak with a healthcare provider before taking eleuthero.Medications changed by the liver (Cytochrome P450 1A2 (CYP1A2) substrates)Some medications are changed and broken down by the liver. Eleuthero might change how quickly the liver breaks down these medications. This could change the effects and side effects of these medications.Medications changed by the liver (Cytochrome P450 2C9 (CYP2C9) substrates)Some medications are changed and broken down by the liver. Eleuthero might change how quickly the liver breaks down these medications. This could change the effects and side effects of these medications.Medications for diabetes (Antidiabetes drugs)Eleuthero might lower blood sugar levels. Taking eleuthero along with diabetes medications might cause blood sugar to drop too low. Monitor your blood sugar closely.Medications moved by pumps in cells (Organic anion-transporting polypeptide substrates)Some medications are moved in and out of cells by pumps. Eleuthero might change how these pumps work and change how much medication stays in the body. In some cases, this might change the effects and side effects of a medication.Medications moved by pumps in cells (P-glycoprotein substrates)Some medications are moved in and out of cells by pumps. Eleuthero might change how these pumps work and change how much medication stays in the body. In some cases, this might change the effects and side effects of a medication.Medications that decrease the immune system (Immunosuppressants)Eleuthero can increase the activity of the immune system. Some medications, such as those used after a transplant, decrease the activity of the immune system. Taking eleuthero along with these medications might decrease the effects of these medications.Medications that slow blood clotting (Anticoagulant / Antiplatelet drugs)Eleuthero might slow blood clotting. Taking eleuthero along with medications that also slow blood clotting might increase the risk of bruising and bleeding.MinorBe watchful with this combination.Medications changed by the liver (Cytochrome P450 2D6 (CYP2D6) substrates)Some medications are changed and broken down by the liver. Eleuthero might change how quickly the liver breaks down these medications. This could change the effects and side effects of these medications.Medications changed by the liver (Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) substrates)Some medications are changed and broken down by the liver. Eleuthero might change how quickly the liver breaks down these medications. This could change the effects and side effects of these medications.  
  
  
Are there interactions with herbs and supplements?  
Herbs and supplements that might lower blood sugarEleuthero might lower blood sugar. Taking it with other supplements with similar effects might lower blood sugar too much. Examples of supplements with this effect include aloe, bitter melon, cassia cinnamon, chromium, and prickly pear cactus.Herbs and supplements that might slow blood clottingEleuthero might slow blood clotting and increase the risk of bleeding. Taking it with other supplements with similar effects might increase the risk of bleeding in some people. Examples of supplements with this effect include garlic, ginger, ginkgo, nattokinase, and Panax ginseng.  
  
  
Are there interactions with foods?  
There are no known interactions with foods.  
  
  
How is it typically used?  
There isn't enough reliable information to know what an appropriate dose of eleuthero might be. It's often used in combination with other herbs such as Andrographis and Echinacea. Keep in mind that natural products are not always necessarily safe and dosages can be important. Be sure to follow relevant directions on product labels and consult a healthcare professional before using.  
  
  
Other names  
Acanthopanax Obovatus, Acanthopanax Obovatus Hoo, Acanthopanax senticosus, Buisson du Diable, Ci Wu Jia, Ciwujia, Ciwujia Root, Ciwujia Root Extract, Devil's Bush, Devil's Shrub, leuth ro, Eleuthero Extract, Eleuthero Ginseng, Eleuthero Root, Eleutherococci Radix, Eleutherococcus senticosus, leuth rocoque, Ginseng de Sib rie, Ginseng des Russes, Ginseng Root, Ginseng Siberiano, Ginseng Sib rien, Hedera senticosa, North Wu Jia Pi, Phytoestrogen, Plante Secr te des Russes, Poivre Sauvage, Prickly Eleutherococcus, Racine d'Eleuth rocoque, Racine de Ginseng, Racine Russe, Russian Root, Shigoka, Siberian Eleuthero, Siberian Ginseng, Thorny Bearer of Free Berries, Touch-Me-Not, Untouchable, Ussuri, Ussurian Thorny Pepperbrush, Wild Pepper, Wu Jia Pi, Wu-jia.  
  
  
Methodology  
  
 To learn more about how this article was written, please see the Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database methodology.   
   
  
  
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