Hoodia

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/hoodia  
  
  
Hoodia  
Common Names: hoodia, Kalahari cactus, Xhoba  
  
Latin Names: Hoodia gordonii  
  
Background  
Hoodia is a cactus-like plant that grows in Africa s Kalahari Desert. Historically, the San Bushmen are believed to have used hoodia to suppress appetite.  
Today, hoodia dietary supplements are promoted as appetite suppressants for weight loss.  
How Much Do We Know?  
We know very little about hoodia because only one study of this herb has been done in people.  
What Have We Learned?  
The one small study of hoodia in people involved women who were overweight. Those who took hoodia for 15 days didn't lose more weight than those who took a placebo.  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
Little is known about the safety of hoodia. However, the one completed study in people raises concerns. In that study, participants taking hoodia had more side effects than those taking placebos, including nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and odd skin sensations. Of concern, hoodia significantly affected some clinical and safety parameters, such as blood pressure, bilirubin, and electrocardiogram (heart function) measures.  
Little is known about whether it s safe to use hoodia during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.  
Whether hoodia interacts with medicines or other supplements is not known.  
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  
  
Email: ods@nih.gov(link sends email)  
  
Key References  
Blom WAM, Abrahamse SL, Bradford R, et al. Effects of 15-d repeated consumption of Hoodia gordonii purified extract on safety, ad libitum energy intake, and body weight in healthy, overweight women: a randomized controlled trial. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 2011;94(5):1171-1181.  
Hoodia. Natural Medicines website. Accessed at naturalmedicines.therapeuticresearch.com on January 22, 2020. [Database subscription].  
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