Yohimbe

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/yohimbe  
  
  
Yohimbe  
Common Names: yohimbe, johimbi  
  
Latin Names: Pausinystalia yohimbe  
  
Background  
Yohimbe is an evergreen tree native to central and western Africa. It has a compound called yohimbine in its bark. The bark has been used traditionally as an aphrodisiac and to enhance sexual performance.  
Yohimbe is promoted for erectile dysfunction, athletic performance, weight loss, angina (chest pain caused by not enough blood flow to the heart), high blood pressure, diabetic neuropathy, and more.  
Yohimbine hydrochloride, a standardized form of yohimbine, is available in the United States as a prescription drug. This is a different product than dietary supplements made from the bark of the tree.  
How Much Do We Know?  
There is very little research in people on the effects of yohimbe as a dietary supplement. But studies have documented the risks of taking it.  
What Have We Learned?  
The amount of yohimbine in dietary supplements may vary; some yohimbe products contain very little yohimbine. Yohimbe sold as a dietary supplement may not work like the prescription medication that contains yohimbine. It is illegal in the United States to market an over-the-counter product containing yohimbine as a treatment for erectile dysfunction without getting approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to do so.  
There is not enough research to say whether yohimbe as a dietary supplement is helpful for any condition, including erectile dysfunction, athletic performance, or weight loss.  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
Yohimbe has been associated with heart attacks and seizures.  
Because of inaccurate labeling and potential for serious side effects, yohimbe supplements have been restricted or banned in many countries.  
Yohimbe caused stomach problems, tachycardia (a rapid heartbeat), anxiety, and high blood pressure, according to a study comparing calls about yohimbe and other substances made to the California Poison Control System between 2000 and 2006. People calling about yohimbe were generally more likely to need medical care than other callers.  
Most yohimbe products don t say how much yohimbine they contain. The amount may vary a lot among products, according to a 2015 analysis of 49 brands of supplements labeled as containing yohimbe or yohimbine for sale in the United States. Some of the yohimbine was either synthetic or from highly processed plant extract. Most of the supplements did not provide information about known side effects.  
It might be unsafe to use yohimbe orally (taken by mouth) during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.  
It might be unsafe for children to take yohimbe orally.  
Do not use yohimbe if you are taking a type of antidepressant medication called monoamine oxidase inhibitors, such as phenelzine (Nardil) and tranylcypromine (Parnate). Yohimbe can interact with these medications.  
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)  
  
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