

Written & researched by Shannon Hobson, Certified East West Herbalist
Founder of Natural-Know How



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Ashwagandha

Solonaceae family (nightshade family)

Part: root

Energy: warm and bitter

Taste: sweet

Latin name: *Withania somnifera*

Western medicine/research: constituents include (***not an exhaustive list**); withanolides (withanolideA, withanolide D, withaferin A), alkaloids, sitoindosides, saponins, tropine, pseudotropine isopelletrine, anaferine, etc.

Actions: adaptogenic, hypnotic or induces sleep (leaves more so), “anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, anti-tumor, anti-stress, neuroprotective, cardioprotective, and anti-diabetic” (Dar, Nawab John, Abid Hamid, and Muzamil Ahmad, 2015), sexual tonic (especially for men)

“management of various disease conditions like bronchial asthma, chronic fever, cold, cough, malaria, dysentery, convulsions, diabetes, diarrhea, arthritis, emetic syndrome, skin diseases, insect bite etc. and in treatment of gastric, hepatic, cardiovascular & immunological disorders” (Verma, Sitansu Kumar, and Ajay Kumar, 2011)

“a viable therapeutic agent for addressing anxiety, cancer, microbial infection, immunomodulation, and neurodegenerative disorders.” (A Dar, Parvaiz, et al. 2016)

Ashwagandha root “has been demonstrated to reduce anxiety and stress, allowing the body to settle down and prepare for sleep” (Deshpande, Abhijit, Nushafreen Irani, and Rathna Balakrishnan, 2018)

“root extract of the plant was found to possess strong antibacterial activity against MRSA as revealed by in -vitro tests” and “Our study suggests that the bioactive fractions separated from

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aqueous extract of *W. somnifera* is a potential source of antibacterial compounds with antioxidant property.” (Mehrotra, Vidhi, et al. 2011)

“withanolides have been found cytotoxic to cancer cells, immunomodulatory, and neuroprotective in function” (Rai, Mahendra, et al. 2016)

“Moreover, the toxicological studies revealed that the reasonable doses of *W. somnifera* are non-toxic and safe” (Rai, Mahendra, et al. 2016)

“All five studies concluded that WS intervention resulted in greater score improvements (significantly in most cases) than placebo in outcomes on anxiety or stress scales.” (Pratte, Morgan A., et al. 2014)

675mg 3 times per day dose of Ashwagandha root extract: “There was a 167% increase in sperm count, 53% increase in semen volume, and 57% increase in sperm motility on day 90 from baseline.” (Ambiye, Vijay R., et al. 2013)

“Treatment with *Withania somnifera* extract (100 mg/Kg/day p.o.) for 15 days significantly reduced ulcer-index as compared to control group. Extract also significantly reduced volume of gastric secretion, free acidity and total acidity” (Bhatnagar, M., C. P. Jain, and S. S. Sisodia. 2005)

Traditional Ayurvedic (Indian) medicine: (Indian ginseng) Considered the primary tonic herb in India (the ‘rejuvenator’)

- Ashwagandha means ‘smelling like a horse’
- Rasayana herb (‘path of essence’ herb), used ‘to expand lifespan and longevity’
- Specific for Vata constitutions (nervous/anxious types)
- Increases Ama (toxic phlegm) in excess type people (lymphatic conditions, colds/flu with congestion, general sinus congestion and allergies, etc.)
- Used for nervous exhaustion and anxiety
- Sexual tonic for females when combined with Shatavari root
- The “grounding” herb, helps stabilize metabolism, immune system, and mood

(KPS. Khalsa & M. Tierra, 2008)

Cautions: not for excess constitutions with high phlegm disorders or ailments, avoid when pregnant, may interact with blood pressure and thyroid medications, caution with individuals with nightshade family intolerances

Preparation and dosage: 1-10 grams (KPS. Khalsa & M. Tierra, 2008)

Traditional use: 1-10g decocted or cooked over a long period in milk (for acute conditions, specific for inducing sleep), 1 gram for lifelong use (specifically for male infertility)

*Always consult a qualified health professional before using herbal medicine, especially in conjunction with pharmaceuticals, or book an appointment with me

Book an appointment today with Shannon Hobson

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