

# AyurvedaNews

Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic & Research Center  
Chakrapani Global Center for Training & Research in Ayurveda

Vol 5, Issue VII

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## Testimonial on our Consultation Service

Hello Dr. Rajesh Kotechaji,

I am writing to inform you of the tremendous benefit I gained from using your prescription for Ayurvedic medicine. I was suffering from a skin condition called Roseacea and I had written to you sometime back for advice. You advised me to use a mixture of Anantmool, Guduchi, Manjishta and Neem powder along with Gandhak Rasayana tablets. You also recommended use of Herbal face pack. I purchased all the above items from Gary at Gary N Sun, Reno, Nevada USA. After using the medicine for ONLY 10 days, the redness on my face reduced considerably. I was truly amazed at the speed with which the medicines started working. I am extremely happy and would like to thank you as well as Gary for helping me.

Please continue your good work. Thank you and best wishes

- Sridhar Neelam, Chicago, USA

(Thanks Sridhar Neelam for the wonderful compliments and appreciation.....)

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## Editor's Note:

The today's feature article entitled "**Ashwagandha: Alternative of Ginseng from India**" provides valuable information on well known Ayurveda herb Ashwagandha. We hope that our valued readers will enjoy reading different aspect of Ayurveda in every issue of AyurvedaNews.

We are thankful to Gilgi Hauser for helping us edit this issue of AyurvedaNews. Do enjoy reading AyurvedaNews. Each issue contains new information and new articles.

We invite your views and ideas on the subject matter and content of our feature articles. Our wish is to help you and for this we need your input to help us to serve you. So please keep us posted with your views, ideas and preferences.

## Ashwagandha: Alternative of Ginseng from India: By Rajesh Kalwadiya 'Vaidya'

There is an herb regarded as a 1st class adaptogenic tonic in one of the world's greatest herbal medical systems, an herb which can compare favorably to the world's most renowned herbal tonics. The use of Ashwagandha in Ayurvedic medicine extends back over 3000 to 4000 years to the teachings of an esteemed rishi (sage) Punarvasu Atreya. It has been described in the sacred texts of Ayurveda, including the Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas where it is widely extolled as a tonic especially for emaciation in people of all ages including babies, enhancing the reproductive function of both men and women. It has also been used for inflammations especially for arthritic and rheumatic conditions and as a major tonic to counteract the ravages of aging and promote youthful longevity. Some of its other traditional uses have been as a mild purgative for chronic constipation and for the treatment of swollen glands.

Ashwagandha is a small woody shrub or herb in the Solanaceae family that grows usually about 2 feet in height and is naturally found in diverse areas ranging from Africa, the Mediterranean and East into India. Because of its wide range, there are considerable morphological and chemotypical variations in terms of local species. Considering its powerful healing properties, except for the bright red fruit, it is a fairly plain, nondescript plant. The fruit is harvested in the late fall and the bright yellow seeds are dried for planting in the following spring. The cultivated Nagori species of Ashwagandha seems to be significantly larger, one source describing it as a shrub growing from 5 to 7 feet tall. However, the primary alkaloids of both the wild as well as the cultivated species are the same.

Traditionally, Ashwagandha has been used in many ways--as a sedative, a diuretic, a rejuvenating tonic, an anti-inflammatory agent, and as an "adaptogen" (endurance enhancer). Many Western herbalists refer to this herb as "Ayurvedic ginseng" because of its reputation for increasing energy, strength, and stamina, and for its ability to relieve stress.

## PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIONS

Ashwagandha is one of the most extensively studied Indian medicinal plant with substantially confirmed tranquilizer cardiotoxic, antibacterial, antifungal, anticancerous, antiarthritic activities concerned with the subject are quoted here:

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1. Dopamine, acetylcholine, benzodizepine, receptor population increase in stress was significantly ( $P < 0.01$ ) prevented by Ashwagandha (*W. Somnifera*). It also reduced brain succinate dehydrogenase enzyme (S.D.H.) increased due to stress (C.C.R.A.S. Study, 1987).
2. Malaviya et al. (1979) have established experimentally a psychotropic effect of Ashwagandha. According to the study, it induces depleting of acetylcholine and catecholamine in the brain of rats. These groups have shown significant barbiturate hypnosis potentiation effect of this medicinal herb experimentally.
3. Singh et al. (1984) have extensively studied antistress activity of *W. Somnifera* and found that it may be due to state of nonspecifically increased resistances (S.N.I.R.) during stress.

#### CLINICAL STUDIES

The effect of Ashwagandha on anxiety neurosis was studied by Malaviya (1976). In his biochemical studies conducted in a series of patients, he found statistically significant reduction of cortisol and catecholamine through urinary secretion. Cortisol and catecholamines are conventionally known as stress hormones and their turnover is notably increased during stressful conditions. Above findings were supported by Shukla et al. (1982) and Kotecha & Singh (1991).

The drug possesses antifatigue and antistress activity (Khandeparkar et al, 1981; Singh et al. 1977). Milk fortified with Ashwagandha increases the body weight, total proteins, M.C.H.C. and proves its effect as growth promoter (Sheshadri et al. 1977).

Chudasama and Singh (1986) studied Rasayana aspect of Ashwagandha. It showed relief of symptoms like Agnimandya, Daurbalya, exercise test, memory and weight gain in underweight patients, with significant increase in IgA, IgG, and IgM levels suggesting its immunopotentiality.

Chhajed and Singh (1990) have recommended its use as adjuvant therapy along with ATT that can provide better and earlier relief.

It is also useful in Amlapitta (hyperacidity) (Shaw, 1982). Epilepsy (Murthy, 1989) Schizophrenia (Parikh, 1984) and various arthropathies including rheumatoid arthritis with fall in E.S.R. (Bector et al. 1971).

#### Antioxidant properties of Ashwagandha

Researchers from Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India, have discovered that some of the chemicals within Ashwagandha are powerful antioxidants. They tested these compounds for their effects on rat brain and found an increase in the levels of three natural antioxidants—superoxide dismutase, catalase and glutathione peroxidase. They say, "These findings are consistent with the therapeutic use of Ashwagandha as an Ayurvedic rasayana (health promoter). The antioxidant effect of active principles of Ashwagandha may explain, at least in part, the reported anti-stress, cognition-facilitating, anti-inflammatory and anti-aging effects produced by them in experimental animals, and in clinical situations."

#### Aphrodisiac properties of Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha is historically used as an aphrodisiac. Ashwagandha is mentioned in the ancient Kama Sutra as an herb to be used for heightening sexual experience, Ashwagandha has the ability to restore sexual health and improve overall vitality while promoting a calm state of mind. Laboratory studies show it can produce nitric oxide which is known to dilate blood vessels

#### Some Traditional and Non-Traditional Ayurvedic Combinations Using Ashwagandha are as Follows:

- The root is taken in 3 gram dosage for general debility, consumption, mal-nourishment in children, senile debility, rheumatic and arthritic conditions, nervous exhaustion, fatigue, brain-gag, memory weakness, senile dementia, muscular weakness, spermatorrhea and leucorrhoea. Normally this can be taken as a powder 3 grams three times daily mixed with warm milk or water.
- For insomnia, Ashwagandha can be mixed with valerian root and oyster shell.
- As a general nerve tonic, especially for hypoglycemia or low blood pressure, Ashwagandha is combined with Gokshura.
- For chronic fatigue Ashwagandha is combined with another great Ayurvedic tonic herb, Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), Yastimadhu (licorice), Amla (*emblica myrobalan*) and Shilajit (colloidal trace minerals).
- For impotence it can be used alone or combined with Kaunch seeds (*Mucuna pruriens*).
- For weak lungs, Ashwagandha is combined with *Sida cordifolia* (Bala).
- Milk, to stimulate production: combine with equal parts *Dioscorea batatas* (also available as Shan Yao, a Chinese herb) and licorice and make a decoction of 30 grams of the mixture. Take three times daily.
- Nerve tonic: combine with Gokshura (*Hygrophila spinosa*) equal parts. This is especially good for hypoglycemia and low blood pressure.
- Nutrition of malnourished children, Improving: Make a paste of the root with ghee and milk. Administer three times daily.
- Skin diseases: Make a salve of Ashwagandha or mix the powder with sesame oil and apply topically.
- Sterility, Female: Boil a decoction of 10 grams in water down to half a cup, add milk and one tablespoon of ghee (clarified butter) and a teaspoon of honey. Take three times daily for two weeks after menstruation.

Ashwagandha is used in Ayurvedic medicine as a powder, decoction, medicated wine, mixed with clarified butter, combined with honey or sugar syrup or as a medicated oil. The most common form is as the powdered root.

Dosage is as follows:

Powder:	3-6 grams daily or up to 5 to 10 grams as an occasional tonic
Decoction:	6 to 10 grams added to heated cow's milk
Mixed with ghee or honey:	1 tsp. 2 times daily

#### Contraindications and Toxicity:

Ashwagandha is relatively safe when taken in the prescribed range of dosage. Large doses, however, have been shown to cause gastrointestinal upset, diarrhea and vomiting. Finally, because Ashwagandha has been found to potentiate the effects of barbiturates, it is generally recommended that it be not taken under such conditions.

Author of feature article Dr. Rajesh Kalwadiya is Panchakama expert and training co-ordinator at Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic & Research Center, a reliable Ayurveda center of north - western part of India. He is BAMS from Rajasthan University, a famous Government University of north - western part of India and had been author of several published research papers and articles on Ayurveda. One can contact him personally at [drkalwadiya@chakrapaniayurveda.com](mailto:drkalwadiya@chakrapaniayurveda.com)

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1. National Seminar and Botanical Expo: **BOTANICAL PRODUCTS IN NEW MILLENNIUM – DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGES** to be held at Chemistry Department, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur from 5th -7th February, 2005. The main emphasis of the Seminar and Expo is to harmonize *Indian botanical products with EU, WHO, USFDA AND Health Canada standards of botanicals and also to bring focus on affordable healthcare as well as health insurance*. Dr. Rajesh Kotecha, CEO, Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic & Research Center, India will be co-ordinating Ayurveda section of this seminar. For more information, please write him at [drrajesh@chakrapaniayurveda.com](mailto:drrajesh@chakrapaniayurveda.com)

2. **Workshop on : Animal tissue culture: applications to the prevention and treatment of viral** to be organized by National Institute of Virology, pune from January 3 to 28, 2005. For more details, please visit ICMR website - [http://icmr.nic.in/icmrnews/niv\\_workshop.htm](http://icmr.nic.in/icmrnews/niv_workshop.htm)

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Sincerely,  
The AyurvedaNews Team

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