Can You Use Herbs for Overactive Bladder?

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Overactive Bladder and Herbal Remedies

Despite following conventional advice, such as staying adequately hydrated, avoiding certain foods and beverages, working on Kegel exercises, taking medications and retraining your bladder, many people still suffer from the annoying urge to run to the bathroom or have actual incontinence. This can be frustrating and embarrassing.

What if there was a herbal remedy that could help to ease overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms? Well, it turns out there are a variety of remedies that are thought to help with OAB.

A Word of Caution Before Trying Herbs for Overactive Bladder

Many experts agree that herbal remedies do not have adequate research to verify effectiveness. This means that while some people may believe their OAB symptoms are decreased, there has not been enough research to actually *prove* that it is a successful remedy.

Herbal remedies are often “natural” so people perceive them as safe. Many remedies are completely safe; however, before beginning any new supplement, it is best to discuss with a physician.

Even a natural supplement may have side effects or interact with other necessary medications, making it an undesirable treatment for OAB.

In addition, the FDA does not regulate herbal treatments. This means that the labeling of the herbal preparations does not necessarily need to be accurate and dosing is not regulated, such as with prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Eight Herbs for Overactive Bladder

If you're curious about which herbs may help your overactive bladder symptoms, below is our list of herbs to look into trying or discussing with your doctor first.

Gosha-jinki-gan

Gosha-jinki-gan is a blend of 10 herbs and has been studied numerous times. One study found that people who took it daily for two months went to the bathroom less.

Another study found that it may actually decrease the urge to urinate, thus helping with incontinence. Bilal Chugtai, MD, an assistant professor of urology at Weill Cornell Medical College, noted that it may halt nerve signals to the bladder.

Horsetail

Horsetail is a member of the fern family and grows marshy, wetland areas. It is rich in antioxidants and may help to slow the aging process of the bladder, although there is little evidence that this directly affects OAB.

Ganoderma Lucidum

Ganoderma lucidum is a mushroom that is used extensively in Chinese medicine. It is used primarily to treat OAB in men because it may decrease hormones that may cause prostate growth, which can directly cause OAB.

Recent research shows that men who took this treatment for two months had a decreased urge to urinate.

Resiniferatoxin

Resiniferatoxin comes from a Moroccan cactus. It is thought that it works by blocking nerve impulses in the bladder that tell us that we have to urinate.

It may also allow the bladder to hold more urine, which reduces the number of trips to the bladder.

Capsaicin

Experts believe that capsaicin may work similarly to resiniferatoxin in terms of OAB treatment. An additional study performed on capsaicin and OAB treatment found that it reduces bladder leaks. However, it can cause irritation to the bladder.

Pumpkin Seed Oil Extract

Researchers have found that 10g of pumpkin seed oil extract may have multiple benefits for OAB sufferers: it may decrease daytime urinary frequency, decrease nighttime urinary frequency, urinary urgency and urgency incontinence in general.

Antioxidants

Antioxidants can help to reduce oxidative stress, which can worsen OAB symptoms. One antioxidant specifically, kaempferol, is thought to reduce OAB symptoms.

Kaempferol not only reduces oxidative stress but also reduces bladder irritation and overactivity. Sources of kaempferol include broccoli, onions, berries, spinach, green tea, and tomatoes. Consuming these foods plus other foods rich in antioxidants, such as grapes and green leafy vegetables, can help reduce symptoms.

Saw Palmetto

Saw palmetto may be helpful for men suffering from OAB related to benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). It has anti-inflammatory properties and also relaxes the muscles around the bladder, which relieves pressure, thus reducing symptoms of OAB.

Conclusion

Keep in mind that utilizing herbal remedies is not a proven way to treat OAB symptoms. Again, it is recommended to discuss the pros and cons of all herbal remedy treatments with a physician prior to initiating the treatment to ensure that it is in your best interest.