

Blue Cohosh

Stock #110-0 (100 capsules)



Blue cohosh is predominantly known for its use in balancing a woman's menstrual cycle and relieving dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation). Native Americans used blue cohosh to lessen pain and spasms associated with menstruation and to stimulate menstruation in women suffering from amenorrhea. Blue cohosh was also commonly used to induce labor and relieve the pain of childbirth, as indicated by its common name "squaw root." While most Native Americans used blue cohosh for gynecological problems, the Omahas boiled the root, drinking the decoction to promote sweating and relieve fever. Blue cohosh was included in the *U.S. Pharmacopoeia* from 1882-1905.¹⁻⁵

The glycoside caulosaponin, derived from the triterpenoid saponin hederagenin, is believed to be responsible for the herb's use as a uterine stimulant, or oxytocic. Blue cohosh contains several bitter constituents which have been found to constrict peripheral blood vessels and provide a laxative effect upon the body. Russian researchers have identified antibacterial properties in the herb which are effective against tuberculosis. Blue cohosh also reduces inflammation, provides diuretic properties, expels intestinal worms, and acts as an antifungal and antimicrobial, making it useful for treating chronic yeast infections.^{1,3-4}

Several important minerals are found in blue cohosh, including calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, selenium, silicon, and phosphorus, the latter of which is helpful for making the blood and urine more alkaline.^{2,3}

Today, blue cohosh is almost solely used to stimulate childbirth; however, it has also been used for arthritis, colic (hence the common name "papoose root"), constipation, cramps, endometriosis, epilepsy, gout, PMS, pelvic inflammatory disease, rheumatism, sore throat, spasmodic dysmenorrhea, uterine inflammation, and vaginitis.^{1,3-4}

Women should avoid using blue cohosh during early pregnancy, as the herb contains substances which can induce labor. Blue cohosh is generally given during the last four weeks of pregnancy and as a tea during labor in order to facilitate contractions and cervical dilation, thus easing childbirth and delivery. Blue cohosh is also recommended for a retained placenta.^{1,4}

Blue cohosh is not recommended for individuals with hypertension or heart disease as it contains ingredients which have been shown to constrict peripheral blood vessels, thus elevating blood pressure.^{1,4}

References:

- 1 Bown, Deni. *Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses*. New York, NY: Dorling Kindersley Inc., 1995.
- 2 Hutchens, A.R. *Indian Herbology of North America*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1991.
- 3 Pedersen, Mark. *Nutritional Herbology*. Warsaw, IN: Wendell E. Whitman Company, 1994.
- 4 Tyler PhD, Varro E. *The Honest Herbal*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, Inc., 1993.
- 5 Weiner, M. and Weiner, J. *Herbs That Heal: Prescription For Herbal Healing*. Mill Valley, CA: Quantum Books, 1994.