



Digestive Bitters Tonic

Stock #3113-9 (4 fl. oz.)

Digestive Bitters Tonic contains a blend of bitter herbs that help improve digestion and enable the body to better absorb nutrients from food eaten. Bitter substances ingested before eating help to enhance appetite and digestion by stimulating the release of salivary and gastric juices. Bitter herbs have been used for centuries for various mild to moderate digestive problems such as loss of appetite, colic, constipation, flatulence, heartburn, indigestion and gallbladder and liver stagnation. Digestive Bitters Tonic is an alcohol-free liquid formula containing only the highest quality ingredients, along with natural sweeteners to minimize the bitter taste.¹⁻⁵

Gentian is widely used as an appetite stimulant and digestive aid. It contains many bitter compounds, including amarogentin and gentiopicrin, which increase salivary flow, stimulate production of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, and facilitate bile flow from the gallbladder. The German Commission E classifies gentian as a tonic herb whose bitter compounds stimulate a reflex excitation of the taste receptors, resulting in the secretion of saliva and gastric juices.

Gentian has long been used for anorexia, appetite loss, dyspepsia (indigestion), flatulence, hypochlorhydria (insufficient stomach acid), and lack of gastrointestinal muscle tone. In Chinese herbal medicine, small amounts of gentian are taken before meals as a digestive tonic to stimulate hydrochloric acid (HCl) secretion—HCl not only helps digest food, but its presence in the stomach also causes the sensation of hunger, thereby helping to improve appetite. Gentian is not recommended for those with hyperchlorhydria (excessive stomach acid), gastritis or gastric or duodenal peptic ulcers.^{1,3,6-9}

Cardamom produces aromatic seeds that are used for culinary and medicinal purposes (primarily gastrointestinal complaints). Since ancient times, cardamom seeds have been utilized to improve digestion and relieve flatulence—chewing the seeds warms the mouth and increases saliva flow, due to a volatile oil in the seeds. Cardamom's ability to stimulate the gallbladder to contract and release stored bile into the small intestines may in part, explain the herb's many uses for gastrointestinal problems, including colic, dyspepsia (indigestion), gallbladder and liver complaints, and loss of appetite and anorexia. In Chinese herbal medicine, cardamom is regarded as a gently warming herb that counteracts nausea and vomiting, eases abdominal fullness and stomachache, relieves constipation and diarrhea, improves appetite and digestion, and eliminates bloating, gas, indigestion and stomach stagnation.^{1,3,8-11}

Orange peel tincture (*Citrus aurantium*)- Aptly named "bitter orange" due to its strongly acidic fruit, this herb stimulates production of digestive fluids and relieves flatulence and heartburn. Bitter orange peel also dispels congestion and improves the transport function of the digestive organs. Tea made from the peel relaxes the body's smooth muscles, which may account for its effects on the digestive system—it relaxes the muscles holding food in place in the digestive tract. Thus, bitter orange can soothe the stomach and relieve symptoms of belching, bloating, constipation, indigestion, nausea and vomiting. Bitter orange is also indicated for loss of appetite. According to Chinese herbal medicine, bitter orange peel stimulates both digestion and *qi* (chi), the body's vital energy, focusing this energy on the spleen, stomach and large intestine. The German Commission E also approves bitter orange peel for loss of appetite and stomach complaints.^{3,5,8-11}

Dandelion is a rich source of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, including choline, which is important for liver health. Dandelion's bitter constituents stimulate the release of gastric and salivary juices, increase bile secretion and bile flow from the gallbladder and liver, and provide a mild laxative effect. Dandelion functions as both a choleric agent—stimulating the liver to produce and secrete bile into the gallbladder—and as a cholagogue—causing the gallbladder to contract and release stored bile into the small intestines. This latter action, in turn, triggers the pancreas to secrete lipases, which aid the assimilation of fat-soluble nutrients. Both animal and human studies show that dandelion improves bile duct inflammation, gallstones, hepatitis, jaundice and liver congestion. Dandelion may also help other gallbladder and liver complaints, including constipation, gallbladder inflammation (cholecystitis) and sluggish liver function stemming from alcohol abuse or poor diet. It is important to note that dandelion can potentiate the effects of antidiabetic, antihypertensive and diuretic agents. Furthermore, dandelion is not recommended for individuals suffering from bile duct obstruction and it should be used with caution by those with gallstones, gastritis or stomach ulcers.^{1-3,6,13}

Raspberry syrup - Due to the acidity of the juice, raspberry fruits are helpful for treating urinary conditions and for breaking up and assisting in the expulsion of gallstones and kidney stones. Syrup made from the juice is used as a gargle for inflamed tonsils and is commonly employed to mask the taste of bitter substances. Raspberry fruits provide a rich supply of vitamins A, B1 and C.^{1,12}

Stevia leaves contain glycosides, including stevioside, which account for the herb's remarkable sweetness. In its

natural form, stevia is considered 10-15 times sweeter than common table sugar, while extracts of stevia (in the form of steviosides) can be 100-300 times sweeter. Fortunately, most experts conclude that stevia does not affect blood sugar metabolism and may be safely used by both diabetics and hypoglycemics. And although stevia is much sweeter than sugar, it contains virtually no calories. In addition, studies from Purdue University show that stevioside significantly reduces plaque development; thus, stevia-use may actually help prevent cavities. Not surprisingly, stevia is used around the world as a safe, natural alternative to sugar and artificial sweeteners.^{3,14-16}

Digestive Bitters Tonic also contains glycerin for improved taste.

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