



Valerian Root

Stock #720-0 (100 capsules)

Valerian has been used throughout history as a natural sedative and sleep-aid. According to historical accounts of World War I, many Europeans took valerian to calm their distressed nerves and treat shell shock caused from artillery assaults and bombing.

Today, herbalists suggest valerian for anxiety, headaches, hypertension, hysteria, nervous indigestion, insomnia, intestinal cramping, and nervousness, as well as tachycardia before going to sleep. In West Germany, where the use of herbs for medicinal purposes is more commonly practiced and more widely accepted than in the United States, valerian can be found as the principal ingredient in more than 100 over-the-counter tranquilizers and sleeping aids, many of which are designed for children. Normal sleepers are typically unaffected.

Researchers have identified the active constituents in valerian—iridoids known as “valepotriates,” which regulate nervous system function and act as a sedative to encourage sleep. Although not yet fully understood, valerian seems to work by soothing and depressing the central nervous system, in turn reducing blood pressure and relaxing muscle spasms, which may account for the herb's ability to help asthma, colic, convulsions, coughs, croup, epilepsy, irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual and stomach cramps, and neck and shoulder tension. Valerian also reduces mental overactivity and nervous excitability by increasing the function of a neurotransmitter which inhibits nervous system action.

Valerian is non-addictive and its effects are not increased with alcohol consumption, thus avoiding two of the biggest risks associated with narcotic sleep-aids. According to Dr. Andrew Weill, in his book *Natural Health, Natural Medicine*, valerian is a safe and effective natural means of achieving sleep. Valerian can be used as a healthy alternative to valium. Valerian is more powerful than L-tryptophan or other sedative herbs such as hops and scullcap. Results from extensive research conducted in Germany and Switzerland validate the use of valerian for promoting restful sleep, improving the quality of sleep, and reducing blood pressure. Valerian also helps alleviate symptoms associated with stress or nervous tension such as aggression and irritability, depression, fatigue, headaches, heart palpitations, migraines, panic, sweating, tremors, and restless sleep accompanied by repeated waking. As a natural sedative, valerian has worked best in cases of hysteria and hypochondria, where the principal causes were emotional or mental. Valerian use is quite common in Europe—over one million people in France take valerian supplements regularly.

A double-blind study conducted with 166 participants and published in *Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior* showed valerian supplements helped improve sleep without the drowsy, lethargic side effects often found with standard pharmaceutical sleep products. Of those receiving the valerian supplement, 44% experienced perfect sleep, with a total of 89% reporting improved sleep. Even those who smoked reported better sleep.

Additional uses for valerian include bruises, some fevers and the plague. Valerian also exhibits antibacterial properties which may help prevent liver necrosis (localized tissue death).

Valerian is quite popular outside of Europe: in Indo-China, valerian root is used to alleviate inflammation and combined with other herbs to treat indigestion and toothache; in Guatemala, valerian is mixed with other herbs to reduce blood pressure; and in Argentina, the root is made into a tea for calming hyperactive children.

Valerian provides the highest herbal source of calcium, and is also high in magnesium.

The toxicity of valerian is low; however, large doses may result in agitation, giddiness, restlessness, headaches, mental excitement, palpitations, stupor, and visual illusions. Valerian is not recommended by some for those having liver problems.