

SHATAVARI

(*Asparagus racemosus*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Adaptogen
- Antitussive
- Antioxidant
- Antibacterial
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Antiulcerogenic
- Digestive
- Cytoprotective
- Galactagogue
- Immunomodulator
- Antioxytocin
- Antispasmodic
- Oestrogen Modulator
- Neuroprotective

Indications

- Sexual debility and infertility
- Insufficient lactation, menopausal symptoms
- Threatened miscarriage
- Stress, fatigue, general weakness
- Inflammatory conditions of the gastrointestinal and urinary tracts including cystitis, gastritis, diarrhoea, dysentery and gastrointestinal ulceration
- Immune debility
- Chronic disease, prevention of adhesions, cancer, rheumatism
- Cough; fluid retention
- Prevention of urinary stones
- Used as an alternative to the endangered false unicorn root

Traditional Use

In Ayurveda shatavari is known as a rasayana herb, a group of plant derived medicines reputed to promote physical and mental health, augment resistance of the body against disease and diverse adverse environmental factors, revitalise the body in debilitated conditions and increase longevity. Most of the rasayana herbs are adaptogen and anti-stress agents. In western herbal medicine, shatavari is often seen as a female reproductive tonic and in

Sanskrit shatavari does indeed mean to “possess a hundred husbands”.

Energetics

Sweet, bitter.

Constituents

Steroidal saponins (Shatavarins I–IV) are the main constituents and are present in the roots. Shatavarin IV is a glycoside of sarsasapogenin having two molecules of rhamnose and one molecule of glucose. Shatavarin I is the major glycoside with three glucose and rhamnose moieties attached to sarsasapogenin. Other actives include asparagamine (a polycyclic alkaloid), racemosol (a cyclic hydrocarbon: 9,10-dihydrophenanthrene), isoflavones including 8-methoxy-5,6,4'- trihydroxyisoflavone 7-O-beta-D-glucopyranoside, phytosterols (0.8%), polyphenols (1.7%), flavonoids, sterols, terpenes, polysaccharides, proteins, starch and tannin.

Use in Pregnancy

Although shatavari has been used traditionally to promote conception and for threatened miscarriage caution should be exercised in pregnancy until more is known about effects in humans.

Contraindications and Cautions

Usually an extremely potent phytoestrogenic herb and long term use is not advisable. Take care with sensitive individuals who may be allergic to the *Asparagus* species. May inhibit hydrochloric acid, observation is advised for those with hypochlorhydria.

Drug Interactions

Caution with lithium and metoclopramide.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 30% alcohol
30 to 60mL weekly.