

Dandelion

This fact sheet provides basic information about dandelion—common names, uses, potential side effects, and resources for more information. Dandelion greens are edible and are a rich source of vitamin A. Dandelion has been used in many traditional medical systems, including Native American and traditional Arabic medicine.

Common Names—dandelion, lion’s tooth, blowball

Latin Name—*Taraxacum officinale*

What It Is Used For

- Historically, dandelion was most commonly used to treat liver diseases, kidney diseases, and spleen problems. Less commonly, dandelion was used to treat digestive problems and skin conditions.
- Today, dandelion is used by some as a liver or kidney “tonic,” as a diuretic, and for minor digestive problems.

How It Is Used

The leaves and roots of the dandelion, or the whole plant, are used fresh or dried in teas, capsules, or extracts. Dandelion leaves are used in salads or as a cooked green, and the flowers are used to make wine.

What the Science Says

There is no compelling scientific evidence for using dandelion as a treatment for any medical condition.

Side Effects and Cautions

- Dandelion use is generally considered safe. However, there have been rare reports of upset stomach and diarrhea, and some people are allergic to the plant.
- People with an inflamed or infected gallbladder, or blocked bile ducts, should avoid using dandelion.
- Tell your health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

Sources

Dandelion. Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database Web site. Accessed at <http://www.naturaldatabase.com> on July 2, 2007.

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Natural Standard Database Web site. Accessed at <http://www.naturalstandard.com> on June 28, 2007.

Dandelion root with herb. In: Blumenthal M, Goldberg A, Brinckman J, eds. *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs*. Newton, MA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2000:359-366.

For More Information

Visit the NCCAM Web site at nccam.nih.gov and view:

- *What's in the Bottle? An Introduction to Dietary Supplements* at nccam.nih.gov/health/bottle/
- *Herbal Supplements: Consider Safety, Too* at nccam.nih.gov/health/supplement-safety/

NCCAM Clearinghouse

Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-888-644-6226

TTY (for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers): 1-866-464-3615

E-mail: info@nccam.nih.gov

CAM on PubMed

Web site: nccam.nih.gov/camonpubmed/

NIH Office of Dietary Supplements

Web site: www.ods.od.nih.gov

NIH National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus

Dandelion Listing: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/natural/patient-dandelion.html

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