

HOLISTIC HERBALISM ADVANCED CLINICAL PROGRAM MATERIA MEDICA

Common Name	Horsetail
Latin	Equisetum arvense
Family	Equisetaceae
Other Known Names	Shave-Grass, Scouring rush
Energy	Neutral, Dry
Taste	Salty, Bitter
Part Used	Sterile branched stems
Location	Native to the temperate zone of Northern Hemisphere.
Gathering	The sterile branched stems are harvested in the spring (March-May).
Cultivation	It prefers wet areas with partial shade to full sun

HERBAL ACTION	TISSUE AFFINITY	MAJOR CONSTITUENTS
Antifungal	Vasculature	Flavonoids and Phenolics:
Antiinflammatory	Bones	Quercetin-antioxidant
Antioxidant	Skin	Luteolin-antioxidant
Astringent	Hair	Kaempferol-antioxidant
Diuretic	Nails	Apigenin-antioxidant
Hemostatic	Prostate	Phenolic acids-antioxidant
Nutritive	Kidney/Bladder	Dicaffeoyl-meso-tartaric acid-antiinflammatory
Osteoprotective	Lung	Manganese-nutritive
		Potassium-diuretic
		Silicic acid (5-10%)-osteoprotective

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS

Drains dampness/diuretic

Lack of tonicity to the skin, weak nails, easily broken hair, bone fractures and osteoporosis.

Urinary tract infections with hematuria.

PRIMARY USES

- Horsetail has a long-held and well-deserved reputation for strengthening the skin, hair, nails, teeth and bones. It is believed to be due to its silicic acid content, although flavonoids and other minerals probably play a role as well.
- Horsetail works well for skin that feels like paper and tears easily (take it with Nettles), weak or brittle finger nails and hair that breaks easily.
- Horsetail is very useful in a protocol to treat and prevent osteoporosis to help heal and prevent fractures and to inhibit dental caries.
- Horsetail contains a significant amount of silicic acid, which is a co-factor for calcium absorption, collagen synthesis, formation of bone and cartilage, and it stimulates maturation of the osteoblasts. Taken with the appropriate herbal formulation, Horsetail can heal bone fractures in half the usual time frame.
- It is a non-irritating diuretic useful for dysuria, cystitis, hematuria urinary calculi, gout, urethritis, prostatitis and BPH.
- Horsetail astringes the urinary tract mucous membranes, heals irritated or ulcerated tissue and increases excretion of uric acid.
- Horsetail is used in Europe to prevent and treat atherosclerosis and may be helpful to prevent oxidation of cholesterol, arterial inflammation and endothelial dysfunction.
- Equisetum is also of benefit for inflammation of the respiratory tract with hemoptysis.

FORMULA COMBINATIONS

- Combine Horsetail with Nettle leaf, Dandelion leaf, Alfalfa, Teasel/Xu Duan, Processed Rehmannia and Amla fruit to heal bone fractures.
- For growing pains in children combine Horsetail with St. John's wort, Chamomile and Achyranthos.
- For UTIs, combine Horsetail with urinary antibacterial such as Uva Ursi, Goldenrod, Goldenseal or Oregon Grape.
- For dysuria and hematuria combine Horsetail with Shephard's purse and Yarrow.
- For gout combine Horsetail with Celery seed and Parsley.
- For preventing heart conditions as detailed above combine with Hawthorn, Amla, Lycium fruit, Gotu Kola or Hibiscus.

DOSAGE

Tea (Decoction), 5 – 10 gram. dried herb, 750 ml. water, decoct 20 minutes, steep for 1 hour, take 150 ml 3x/day

Tincture (1:5), 30% ETOH Dose: 1-2 mL (20-40 gtt.) TID

Vinegar extract (1:5), 2-4 mL (40-80 gtt) TID

Tablets or capsules: 1-2 tablets/capsules BID

Horsetail accounts for 1 part in formulation

PREPARATIONS

A vinegar extract of the herb may be helpful for athlete's foot and a poultice of the herb has been used to treat poorly healing wounds

David Winston's Bone Formula: 2 parts Nettles, 1 part Horsetail, 1 part Alfalfa, 1 part Oat Straw, 1 part Dandelion Leaf, 1 part Drynaria.

Take along with calcium, vitamin D (2,000 i.u. per day) and vitamin K-2 (MK-4 or MK-7).

Ryan Drum's Horsetail Syrup: add 1 part young fresh Horsetail shoots (chopped) to 3 parts warm honey.

Keep at this temperature for several days, strain and take 1 Tbsp. BID.

CONTRAINDICATIONS & DRUG INTERACTIONS

Avoid concurrent use with lithium, digoxin or lanoxin.

Use cautiously in people taking warfarin or other blood thinning or anticoagulant medication. An INR and PT to check on possible interaction would be prudent.

Wear a respirator when grinding or handling dry Equisetum as it can irritate the lungs and repeated inhalation can cause silicosis.

SPECIAL NOTES OF CONSIDERATION

E. hymale was used by the Cherokee as a douche for vaginal candidiasis.

Horsetail is known as Mu Zei in TCM and is used to dispel wind/heat conditions affecting the eyes such as red eyes, eye pain, excessive tearing or cloudy vision.

Gather Horsetail in the spring. The herb gathered in the summer or autumn can irritate the kidneys in some people. It can also concentrate nitrates if growing in areas with farm or lawn fertilizer runoff.

Avoid the related species, Equisetum palustre, which contains potentially toxic alkaloids.

Fresh, undried horsetail has thiaminase-like activity, and can deplete B-1 stores.

Horsetail can be used to make a green dye.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

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