



# ASHWAGANDHA; A MEDICINAL HERB

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**Abstract**-*Withania somnifera* (Ashwagandha) is a plant used in medicine from the time of Ayurveda, the ancient system of Indian medicine. According to review Indian Herbal System (Ayurveda), Ashwagandha is considered one of the most important herbs and the best adaptogenic. which has been used for >3000 years in stress management, energy elevation and improving cognitive health and to lower inflammation, blood sugar levels, cortisol, anxiety, and depression. It contains constituents like cuseohygrine, anahygrine, tropine, and anaferine, glycosides, withenolide with starches and amino acid.

## INTRDUCTION

Plants are one of the most important sources of medicines in world. According to WHO, for primary health care more than 80% of World's population relies on traditional herbal medicine. *Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal is an important medicinal plant and used in Ayurvedic medicines for the treatment of many diseases. Ashwagandha attains the special name because its root smells like horse ("Ashwa") and believe to provide power like horse when consumed . In Vedas it is described as herbal tonic and health food.



- Botanical Name - *Withania Somnifera*
- Family-Solanaceae
- Common Name- withania, winter cherry, Indian Ginseng, Ashwagandha
- Habit-Cultivated throughout drier parts of india

- Product offered-Roots the plant grows in dry and sub-tropical region

Ashwagandha root drug finds an important place in treatment of rheumatic pain, inflammation of joints, nervous disorders and epilepsy. Dried roots are used as tonic for hiccup, cold, cough, female disorders, as a sedative, in care of senile debility, ulcers, etc. Leaves are applied for carbuncles, inflammation and swellings. Leaf juice is useful in conjunctivitis. Bark decoction is taken for asthma and applied locally to bed sores. Ashwagandha and its extracts are used in preparation of herbal tea, powders, tablets and syrups.

## MEDICINAL VALUES

Ashwagandha has also been shown to lower blood pressure and is highly effective in stopping the formation of stress induced ulcers. In arthritis, which involves joints that are painful, dry, swollen and inflamed, Ashwagandha would be the herb of choice. One of the special properties of Ashwagandha is that it will enhance ojas. Ojas is the most subtle, refined level of the physical body and is the end result of healthy food which is properly digested. It is responsible for a healthy immune system, physical strength, lustrous complexion, clarity of mind and sense of Well-being. It allows consciousness to flow within the body. With decreased ojas, we are less in touch with ourselves and more prone to diseases and having a feeling of disharmony. 'Ojakshaya' (decreased ojas) is a condition similar to AIDS/HIV. Ashwagandha, which is also known as winter cherry or Indian ginseng, has natural antioxidants. Thus it may improve overall health and promote better fat burning. Besides, it shows natural antimicrobial effects and may improve immune function. The body enters a survival mode when immune function is compromised by pathogens. In such a condition fat burning is not a priority for the body, and weight loss comes to a standstill at least till the body fully recovers. So better immunity will only have a positive effect on weight loss

## ASHWAGANDHA AS AN ADAPTOGENIC AND ANTI-STRESS AGENT

Ashwagandha is one of the strongest adaptogen herbs. Adaptogens are substances (a combination of amino acids, vitamins, and herbs) that modulate your response to stress or a changing environment. Adaptogens help the body cope with stresses on all levels – be it physical, mental or emotional. External stressors include toxins in the environment, and internal stressors such as anxiety and insomnia.

## ASHWAGANDHA IN CANCER

- Ashwagandha or *Withania somnifera* can treat cancer as it has the ability to provide a wild type p53 (a tumour cell) tumour suppressor activity in cancers with a certain type of mutation. A bioactive component of Ashwagandha – Withaferin A (WA) when used along with Oxaliplatin could offer an effective strategy against Pancreatic Cancer. it was ineffective against the drug-resistant stem-like cancer cells. In a non-randomized comparative trial on 100 breast cancer patients, it showed the potential against cancer-related fatigue and an improvement in the overall quality of life.

## ASHWAGANDHA IN PARKINSON'S AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ashwagandha shows promise as a treatment for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, chronic neurodegenerative conditions for which there currently are no cures. The best and most effective form of administration is the fresh powder of roots. However readers should also be aware of the fact that this medicine has now reached the global market in form of tablets, powders, capsules, extracts etc Enhances memory through cholinergic channel, Stabilizes mood, improves learning ability.

## ASHWAGANDHA AS A CARDIOVASCULAR PROTECTOR

- Able to protect Cardiovascular system
- against ischemic and reperfusion injury.
- Beneficial in Focal ischemia.

- Supports anti-atherogenic activity in
- polyherbal formula.

## CONCLUSION

Although the results from this review are quite promising for the use of ashwagandha as a multi-purpose medicinal agent. Multiple health benefits featured in this herbal supplement makes it as a perfect rejuvenator of physical and psychological health. As per research, this medicinal herb is mainly found in the regions of North America and India. Powerful antioxidant compounds enriched in this herb scavenges free radicals and reduces aging impact on person. Apart from consuming this extract, diet taken by person plays an important role in increasing the level of antioxidants in body.

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