

Licorice

Botanical name: *Glycyrrhiza glabra*

Energetics/Actions: neutral, demulcent, expectorant

Description

Licorice has been used as medicine for over 3000 years. It is the 10th most important herb for Western herbalists and the most commonly used herb in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In TCM licorice is used to harmonize the effects of other herbs in a formula. The roots and rhizomes of the plant are used. Licorice has many GI applications and may inhibit the growth of *h pylori*, the bacteria that causes ulcers.



Deglycerized licorice (DGL) is licorice that has had the salt glycyrrhizin removed. Glycyrrhizin is the component of licorice that makes it sweet. It is 50x sweeter than sugar and calorie free but can cause potassium levels in the body to drop too low, which can cause high blood pressure and irregular heartbeat (arrhythmias).

Use

Constipation: A cup of licorice tea acts as a mild lubricating laxative. It works best with other herbs (consider senna and chamomile).

Heartburn: Effective for heartburn, GERD and stomach ulcers and soothing to stomach lining.

Cough/congestion: Licorice tea will soothe a cough and sore throat.

Adrenal Health: Supports hormonal balance, decreases fatigue due to stress, overwork, illness. Useful for PCOS. Decreases testosterone production and increases circulating cortisol.

Dose

It is important to let licorice mix with saliva to increase the production of mucus in the GI tract.

For this reason teas and chewable tablets are best. I recommend using DGL licorice, it's safer.

Tea: 1 cup of boiling water poured over 2 gm of licorice root and steeped for 10-15 minutes 1-3 times a day.

Chewable: 380 mg/DGL 4:1. Chew 1-2 tablets 20 minutes BEFORE eating for heartburn. (May use 2-4 tablets for acute symptoms)

Capsules: 150-300 mg/day for up to 4 weeks for adrenal health.

Duration of use is up to 12 weeks.

Safety information

Do not use if you have liver or kidney disease, high blood pressure (DGL may be appropriate in this case) or hypokalemia (low potassium). Not for use in pregnancy or breastfeeding.