Stress-Relax®

SAFFRON EXTRACT

100% Pure · 28 mg

NPN 80118349

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Feature summary

People of all ages can feel overwhelmed by stress and nervousness. When left unaddressed, perceived stress can negatively affect overall health and quality of life. Natural Factors Stress-Relax Saffron Extract features Affron®, a 100% pure source of saffron that has been clinically studied for mood balance in adults, adolescents, and youth 12 years and over. Saffron has a calming effect on the body that helps relieve restlessness and nervousness. Daily use helps reduce symptoms of perceived stress, such as fatigue, weariness, and irritability, and improves sleep quality in people experiencing sleeplessness.

Affron is a premium saffron ingredient standardized to 3.5% of Lepticrosalides®, a complex of saffron's key active compounds. Multiple clinical studies support its effectiveness for improving mood balance and related symptoms, such as tension, nervousness, sadness, and fatigue. Affron is made from a certified source of genuine *Crocus sativus* L. from Spain. It is extracted using a proprietary AFF® ON Cool-Tech process that preserves and concentrates saffron's key bioactives without the use of chemicals.

Each vegetarian capsule contains a gentle 28 mg dose to be taken once daily alone or in combination with other Stress-Relax products. Saffron Extract is a great supplement for people aged 12 years and up who perceive life as stressful and want to support feelings of relaxation naturally.

How it works

Saffron contains more than 100 bioactive compounds; safranal, crocin, and picrocrocin are responsible for most of its therapeutic activities (Singletary, 2020). Affron saffron extract is standardized to a complex of these compounds, collectively known as Lepticrosalides, and guaranteed to contain a minimum of 3.5% of crocin and safranal.

Saffron's anti-inflammatory activity acts on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which is a key player in the body's stress response. This helps lower stress hormone levels in the body (Lopresti et al., 2017).

Saffron supports mood balance by modifying levels of specific chemicals in the brain. Crocin and safranal inhibit the reuptake mechanism of the neurotransmitters dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in nerve synapses. This helps improve mood by increasing the concentration of these neurotransmitters within synapses and in the brain (Siddiqui et al., 2018).

Crocin and safranal are the primary antioxidants in saffron, helping to quench free radicals to reduce oxidative stress produced in the central nervous system during stress (Siddiqui et al., 2018; Lopresti et al., 2017). Preliminary evidence shows that crocin encourages non-REM sleep by altering the body's histamine and cholinergic activities, increases the GABA response, and influences the production and secretion of the sleep hormone melatonin (Nishide et al., 2018; Pitsikas & Tarantilis, 2020; Lopresti et al., 2021a).

Research

Saffron has been cultivated for centuries for use in medicine, as a culinary ingredient, and as a dye. It has a history of therapeutic use in traditional Ayurvedic and Persian remedies, including those for mental health. Multiple clinical studies have connected saffron's key active compounds with improvements in mood balance, symptoms of perceived stress, and sleep quality (Singletary, 2020; Lopresti et al., 2021a).

Mood disorders are among the leading health concerns faced by today's youth (Lopresti et al., 2017). In addition, statistics show that 28.3% of Canadian adults aged 35–49 perceive life on most days as quite a bit or extremely stressful (Statistics Canada, 2019). Multiple studies have concluded that standardized saffron extracts provide significant benefits for adults and youth with perceived stress, nervousness, and mood imbalances, without the adverse effects commonly associated with mood balance interventions (Singletary, 2020).

A randomized, placebo-controlled study was conducted on youth ages 12–16 years displaying symptoms of mild-to-moderate nervousness and sadness, as assessed using the Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS). After eight weeks of supplementation with 14 mg of Affron saffron extract taken twice per day, participant RCADS scores decreased by 33% (versus only 17% in the placebo group). Affron was associated with significant improvements in the youths' symptoms of nervousness, social phobia, and sadness (Lopresti et al., 2017).

Affron's effectiveness was assessed in healthy adults with self-reported mood disorders. In this three-arm, randomized, placebo-controlled study, participants took either 28 mg or 22 mg of Affron per day, or a placebo. After four weeks of supplementation, participants taking the 28 mg dose had significant improvements in mood and symptoms of perceived stress and nervousness, including less tension, sadness, anger, fatigue, confusion, vigour, and total mood disturbance (Kell et al., 2017). An eight-week, randomized, placebo-controlled study used this same dose of Affron in addition to pharmaceutical antidepressant therapy. Depressive symptoms decreased by 41% in adults taking Affron and pharmaceutical therapy versus only 21% in adults taking only the pharmaceutical therapy (Lopresti et al., 2019).

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, perimenopausal women found that Affron helped reduce mood disturbances related to menopause without an estrogenic effect. Over 12 weeks of supplementation with 28 mg of Affron per day, women's anxiety levels were found to decrease by 33% (Lopresti et al., 2021b).

Stress and mood imbalance can significantly impact sleep quality, making saffron a useful option for relieving stress-related sleeplessness. In a randomized, placebo-controlled study, adults experiencing disrupted sleep supplemented with a single dose of either 14 mg or 28 mg of Affron one hour before sleep each night. After 28 days, the 28 mg dose was found to have improved sleep quality by 22.3%, morning mood by 14.4%, and measures of insomnia by 16.8%. Supplementation was also associated with higher evening melatonin levels (Lopresti et al., 2021a). These results supported earlier evidence from Lopresti et al. showing that Affron improved measures of sleep quality (with most improvements occurring within the first weeks of supplementation) and restorative sleep (Lopresti et al., 2020).

Ingredients

Each vegetarian capsule contains:

Saffron extract (Affron®) (*Crocus sativus* L.) (stigma).....28 mg
(3.5% Lepticrosalides® containing crocins and saffranal)

Dosage

Recommended dose: Adults (mood, symptoms of stress, nervousness, sleep quality): 1 capsule daily or as directed by a health care practitioner. Consult a health care practitioner for use beyond 12 weeks. For sleep quality, consult a health care practitioner for use beyond 4 weeks. **Adolescents over 12 years of age (mood):** 1 capsule daily or as directed by a health care practitioner. Consult a health care practitioner for use beyond 8 weeks.

Cautions

Consult a health care practitioner if symptoms persist or worsen. Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you suffer from any psychological disorder and/or condition such as frequent anxiety or depression, or if you are taking antidepressants. Do not use if you are taking blood thinners/anticoagulants, have a bleeding disorder, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Some people may experience anxiety/nervousness, increased appetite, nausea, and/or headache, in which case discontinue use. Keep out of the reach of children.

References

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