

dogs naturally

May - June 2019

Special Puppy Issue

THE OVER-CULTURED
CANINE

**WHAT'S IN A
VACCINE?**

**PUPPY
HOMEOPATHY**

**SUCCESSFUL
POTTY TRAINING**

**PUPPY OR
PIRANHA?**

**TO CHIP OR
NOT TO CHIP**





Ashwagandha

Botanical Name: *Withania somnifera*

Family: Solanaceae

Parts Used: Root

The common names for ashwagandha are Indian ginseng, winter cherry and poison gooseberry. Its history can be traced back to 6,000 BC and it's a very well-known herb in Ayurvedic medicine. Ashwagandha is a powerful plant that improves lifespan, as it is used for many health issues.

Pharmacological studies show the mechanism of action is withaferin A, a primary withanolide that stimulates neurotransmitter pathways in the brain and enhances cognitive processes. Ashwagandha has also been shown to stimulate the growth of axons and dendrites, which transmit signals to and from neurons in the brain. It's a primary herb for immune modulation specific to Anaplasma infection; it prevents depletion of white blood cells, is rich in iron, enhances endocrine function with direct effect on the thyroid and is anti-inflammatory.

Using it raw increases the levels of catalase, superoxide dismutase, and glutathione peroxidase.

Ashwagandha root is a calming adaptogen and nervine that helps to reduce stress. It affects multiple body systems to promote emotional wellbeing, mental

sharpness and physical endurance. It has an affinity to support, strengthen and nourish the entire musculoskeletal system as an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antispasmodic. It works synergistically with many other herbs (especially eleuthero root) to reduce muscle fatigue, autoimmune inflammation and to support connective tissue.

To use organic ashwagandha root powder in synergy with organic eleuthero root powder to support the musculoskeletal system, you can use 65 percent ashwagandha and 35 percent Eleuthero for your blend and give ½ tsp per 25 lbs of body weight once daily for dogs under 5 years, or twice daily for dogs over 5 years. This will help to keep inflammation at bay for continued support and strength as they age.

Ashwagandha also has an affinity for the adrenals, which are the glands that influence the body's stress response (fight or flight), immune health, sleep and mood. The adrenals produce hormones that naturally assist normal structure and functions including the cardiovascular system, metabolism, blood sugar levels and the HPA (hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal) axis. Healthy adrenals are vital to all wellbeing. Ashwagandha can help to

relieve stress especially with a high energy or high stress dog. When we see a dog's normal reaction or response to a situation change with either fear or aggression, consider the possibility of an adrenal tonic such as ashwagandha to be a go-to herb to help regain the balance in the system, especially if this happens post-vaccines, anesthesia or another stressor.

This can be done using the organic powder of ashwagandha root at ½ teaspoon per 25 lbs body weight twice daily until great improvement in stress response is shown. You can also use a 1:4 ratio of the fresh root tincture at 1 drop per 2 lbs of body weight twice daily. 🐾



Joyce Belcher is an herbalist and formulator of pet supplements and herbal medicinals for veterinarians and is the founder of Herbs for Life Inc and Sustenance Herbs. She lives in Kittery, Maine with her husband, Aja the Poodle and two cats; they are all rescues.

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