



dogs naturally

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Special Nutrition Issue

KOMBUCHA

WHY WASTE MATTERS

FINDING THE PERFECT OMEGA OIL



THE DOG OBESITY EPIDEMIC

KETOGENIC DIETS

BALANCING MINERALS IN THE RAW DIET



Gymnema

Botanical Name: *Gymnema Sylvestre*

Family: Apocynaceae

Part Used: Leaf

Common Names: Gymnema, Cowplant, Australian Cowplant, Periploca Of The Woods



Gymnema is a woody climbing shrub native to the tropical forests of Africa and India but is now common to most of the world and especially popular in Japan as well as India.

In Sanskrit, it's called *Gudmar Mehashringi*, which means sugar destroyer and is how gymnema has become known as the "insulin plant." It has a long history of use in Ayurvedic medicine.

Some of the energetics of gymnema include anti-diabetic, hypoglycemic, bitter, astringent, heating, digestive stimulant, laxative, diuretic, antimicrobial.

As with most herbs, there are many medicinal uses for gymnema but the most popular and important use is for diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

Gymnema's active ingredients are gymnemic acids (a group of triterpenoid saponins) that are similar in structure to glucose but with different actions. They actually help to decrease the absorption of sugar from the intestine and increase the amount of insulin in the body; this increases the growth of cells in the pancreas, where insulin is made. In short, it slows the transport of glucose from the intestines to the bloodstream. Gymnema extract can help repair and

regenerate the beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin and is effective in both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes can show up in a routine blood check even when you don't see any symptoms so it's good to know what to look for just in case. Some of the signs that your dog may have a blood sugar or pancreas issue leading to diabetes can be increased thirst, panting, weight loss, listlessness (extreme tiredness), frequent urination or urinary tract infections, sweet smelling breath, quick onset of cataracts (which, if left undiagnosed or untreated, can cause sudden blindness) and vomiting. Some of the causes of diabetes in dogs include obesity, autoimmune disorders, genetics, some medications, chronic pancreatitis and of course diet plays a huge role. With all the grain-based diets on the market for dogs and cats today, it is no wonder that diabetes is an all too common diagnosis with pets.



Joyce Belcher is an herbalist and formulator of pet supplements and herbal medicinals for veterinarians and is the founder of Herbs for Life Inc. She lives in York, Maine with her husband, two dogs and two cats; they are all rescues. Visit Joyce at petwellnessblends.com

Other uses for gymnema are to treat malaria, liver disease, anemia, as a snake bite antidote, digestive stimulant and appetite suppressant, as a diuretic, to lessen a cough, soften stools, reduce water retention, improve circulation and activate the uterus.

Cautions: Use caution if combining gymnema with any pharmaceutical or other herbs that lower blood sugar levels. There is not enough information to determine safety in pregnancy therefore I would use caution with pregnant or lactating dams, giving only small doses.

Dosing: I've used the liquid extract from gymnema leaves to effectively reduce blood sugar levels in cats and dogs. Use gymnema in a 1:3 ratio (1 part plant to 3 parts menstruum – usually alcohol) mixed 50/50 with organic corn silk extract at a 1:2 ratio.

For pets up to 20 lbs give 1 drop per lb of body weight twice daily; for pets over 20 lbs give 2 drops per 3 lbs of body weight twice daily. 🌿