



YOUR GUIDE TO ASHWAGANDHA:

*Understanding
the Potential Uses and Benefits*

INDEX



| | |
|---|----|
| What Is Ashwagandha?..... | 02 |
| Potential Uses & Benefits of Ashwagandha..... | 05 |
| Does Ashwagandha work?..... | 28 |
| How should Ashwagandha be taken?..... | 43 |



WHAT IS ASHWAGANDHA?

Ashwagandha is a vital component of traditional Ayurveda, India's longstanding traditional form of alternative medicine. The botanical name given to the small, woody shrub is *Withania somnifera*, which gives the nod toward some of its traditional uses (*somnifera* being Latin for "sleep-inducing"). The common name, ashwagandha, is loosely translated as "the smell of the horse," which is an apt description for the pungent odor released when the roots and leaves of the plant are crushed. You may be more familiar with it as "Indian ginseng" or winter cherry.

A Description of Ashwagandha

The ashwagandha shrub is native to the Indian subcontinent and can be found throughout India, Pakistan, and other nearby areas. It is also native to North Africa, and can also be found throughout the Middle East, China, and Nepal. However, due to its use as an alternative health treatment, as well as its uses in food preparation, it has been exported around the world. The shrub thrives in dry, sunny locations where temperatures do not get very cold and are adapted for humid conditions. It grows best in well-drained soil with minimal watering.

The shrub is short, growing no more than 36 inches in height, and has a low growing habit. The leaves are yellowish green and elliptical. The flowers are bell-shaped, and, after pollination, transform into red-orange berries. Do not be fooled by the Indian ginseng moniker, however. This plant has no relation to ginseng at all. It is more closely related to tomatoes, potatoes, and deadly nightshade.

WHAT IS AYURVEDA?

Ayurveda is India's alternative health tradition, which dates back many thousands of years. Translated, it means "knowledge of life" or "science of life." It is essentially a collection of healing practices recorded over the millennia. It is one of the oldest healing systems in the world, and it is still practiced.

Ayurvedic thought hinges on how the five elements (space, air, fire, water, and earth) combine within the body to create the three doshas or life forces. These are Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. The three doshas each control specific bodily functions, and if the doshas are significantly out of balance, it can lead to illness and disease.

There are eight specific branches of Ayurvedic medicine, each focused on preventative care and disease treatment for a specific area. Kaayachikitsa focuses on internal medicine, while baalachikitsa deals with pediatrics. Bhuta Vidya focuses on psychiatry, while shalakyata focuses on ear, nose, and throat health. Shalya Tantra involves surgical treatments, and vishagara vairodh tantra handles toxicology. Jarachikitsa deals with geriatric and rejuvenation treatments, and vajikarana touches on conception, fertility, and aphrodisiac therapy. Finally, panchakarma deals with cleansing the body and rebalancing the doshas.

The ancient texts documenting Ayurvedic healing practices are called "Vedas," and all focus on a holistic approach to life by balancing the mind, body, and spirit in harmony. Achieving that balance is done through practices like yoga, and by following the right diet, but also by consuming particular herbs, including ashwagandha.

Several different Vedas mention the herb categorically, including the Rig Veda, although with different focuses. For instance, the herb is variously described as being an aphrodisiac, as a means of enhancing strength, and for improving overall health when taken as a tonic, or Rasayana.

TRADITIONAL ASHWAGANDHA CONSUMPTION

Ashwagandha has been consumed in many different forms within Ayurvedic tradition. However, root powder made by first drying and then crushing or grinding the roots is perhaps the most common. This powder could be added to foods, made into tinctures and tonics, added to topical applications, and used in many other ways. The leaves of the plant are also traditionally used similarly.

What Are Traditional Ashwagandha Uses?

In Ayurvedic medicine, ashwagandha has many traditional uses. It is thought to help improve:

- Sleep quality
- Immune system function
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Low testosterone levels in men
- Stress
- Nervous system conditions
- Cardiovascular health conditions
- Cognitive conditions

You will find that the herb is still used to treat many of the same conditions, as well as several others. Within this guide, we will explore the broad range of potential treatment options, how does ashwagandha work and how it might be able to help.

ASHWAGANDHA TODAY

While ashwagandha has been used for thousands of years, it remains a vital component of alternative medicine in India and many other nations. As science gains a greater understanding of herbal treatments, and more clinical studies are conducted, herbs like ashwagandha are being used by a much wider audience.

Today, ashwagandha is still used as it has been for thousands of years, but it is also available in highly concentrated, purified forms that deliver more excellent performance and increase the potential for improved health and healing. Below, we will discuss several areas where ashwagandha shows promise and has been clinically studied by scientists and medical professionals.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR SLEEP HEALTH

We tend not to think much about our sleep, other than to wish we had gotten more of it as we are yawning during the morning meeting at the office, or struggling to stay awake after wolfing down a meal on our lunch break. However, sleep and its lack can have a significant impact on our health. Taking ashwagandha for sleep problems could provide numerous benefits.

One of the most traditional uses for ashwagandha is as a sleep aid. It's even right there in the scientific name of the plant, as we discussed earlier in this guide. This is due to two different actions the herb creates in the body.

First, in medical studies involving animals, the herb was able to **act as a tranquilizer**, calming the body and suppressing the central nervous system. Note that this study did not include human subjects. Second, ashwagandha may be able to reduce the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the human body, thereby helping you relax and achieve a deeper level of restorative sleep.

And sleep is a critical element of human health and one that we overlook all too often. Ashwagandha for sleep could help improve a broad range of health conditions related to poor quality sleep or a lack of sleep. What does poor sleep cause to the human body, though? If you have not been keeping up with emerging science, some of this information may be shocking.

According to the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), part of the National Institutes of Health in the US, “Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can protect your mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.”

A lack of sleep, or low-quality sleep, can result in a wide range of negatives. For instance, it can increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, including suffering from a heart attack or stroke. It can cause an irregular heartbeat, increase your blood pressure, and even lead to heart failure.

Sleep deprivation and poor-quality sleep can also lead to an inability to concentrate, problems with short and long-term memory, irritability, significant mood swings, difficulty learning and mastering concepts, an inability to perform in your work and personal life, and much more.

It is not just about physical health, or your ability to be alert and aware, either. Poor-quality sleep can have a dramatic impact on your emotional and mental health. For instance, a lack of sleep can impair your problem-solving abilities, control your behavior, and more. It has been linked to depression and even suicide.

Daytime performance suffers significantly with poor-quality sleep. For instance, you become sluggish, less confident, and less able to make informed choices and decisions. Even activities as mundane as driving a car become life-threatening. The US government estimates that sleep deprivation plays a role in 100,000 car accidents per year and 1,500 auto-accident related deaths every year.

The **Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development** sums it up well, “Sleep deprivation can noticeably affect people’s performance, including their ability to think clearly, react quickly, and form memories. Sleep deprivation also affects mood, leading to irritability; problems with relationships, especially for children and teenagers; and depression. Sleep deprivation can also increase anxiety.”

How can Ashwagandha help with sleep and sleeplessness?

Taking ashwagandha for sleep could improve your mental, emotional, and physical health while ensuring that you get the quality sleep necessary for alertness and performance.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR ANXIETY & STRESS

Anxiety and stress go hand in hand and can have a profoundly negative impact on a person’s quality of life, even on their ability to experience intense emotions. Ashwagandha for anxiety may be able to help. It may also be able to help provide relief from stress. In this section, we will explore both anxiety and stress, their impacts on the body, mind, and emotions, and how this herbal supplement might be able to provide relief.

Anxiety

Anxiety is normal, at least to some extent. Everyone feels anxious from time to time. However, some individuals face significant anxiety on an ongoing basis. Dubbed “anxiety disorder,” patients experience “intense, excessive, and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations,” according to the Mayo Clinic. It is also more widely experienced than you might realize.

According to the *Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)*

- Up to 40 million adults in the US are affected by an anxiety disorder.
- Less than 40% of affected individuals find treatment.
- There are multiple subtypes of anxiety disorder that affect Americans, including:
 - Generalized anxiety disorder
 - Panic disorder
 - Social anxiety disorder
 - Agoraphobia
 - PTSD
- Sufferers with an anxiety disorder are up to six times more likely to be hospitalized for a psychiatric disorder than those who do not have anxiety.

Anxiety disorders present with a wide range of different symptoms, including feeling tense or nervous, rapid breathing, trembling, sweating, increased heart rate, difficulty controlling worry, difficulty sleeping, and difficulty concentrating. In some instances, an anxiety disorder can be related to another medical condition, such as heart disease or diabetes. However, there is often no other correlating condition.

Suffering from anxiety disorder means that patients experience an even broader range of health impacts – it's not just about the symptoms of chronic anxiety. Those with this disorder will suffer from headaches, fatigue, muscle pain, insomnia, overwhelming self-consciousness, feelings of terror or impending doom, obsessive thoughts, and more. These individuals are at higher risk for developing heart disease, as well as chronic respiratory disease.

Ashwagandha for anxiety may be able to help individuals control their emotions and even alleviate the physical symptoms of the disorder.

Stress

Stress is part and parcel of daily life, today more so than ever before. The **US National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus** publication defines stress as “a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.”

While stress has always been part of human existence, or hectic modern lifestyles have raised stress levels to incredible heights. MedlinePlus goes on to say, “Stress is your body’s reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline. But when stress lasts a long time, it may harm your health.”

Acute stress is short-term. It occurs in response to a particular stimulus, and then it goes away. However, chronic stress lasts for a long time and can have a significantly negative impact on your mind and body. Symptoms of chronic stress include:

- Low energy levels
- Headaches
- Tense muscles
- Insomnia
- Lowered immune system
- Chest pain
- Stomach upset
- Loss of sexual desire

In addition to those symptoms, sufferers of chronic stress are at risk for a wide range of additional medical conditions. For instance, chronic stress has been linked with high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression, anxiety, menstrual problems, and even eczema and acne.

How does Ashwagandha help for Anxiety and Stress?

While studies have not been conclusive and additional trials are needed, ashwagandha has been shown to reduce both stress and anxiety in animal trials as well as human studies. In one study that included 64 individuals for a total of 60 days, patients taking ashwagandha for anxiety and stress reported-

-a reduction in symptoms by 69%. Several other studies have also shown similar promise.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR DEPRESSION

Depression is a terrible affliction that takes a massive toll in quality of life and even lives. As our understanding of depression and overall mental health improves, we have come to realize just how widespread this condition truly is. According to the [National Institute of Mental Health](#), “Major depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. For some individuals, major depression can result in severe impairments that interfere with or limit one’s ability to carry out major life activities.”

Statistics from 2017 show that an estimated 17.3 million US adults suffered at least one major depressive episode. Statistics also show the incidence of major depression is highest in individuals ages 18 through 25 and is higher in women than in men. 35% of those suffering from significant depression receive no form of care at all. Of the remainder, 6% turn to medication without any form of counseling, 15% seek counseling only, and 44% use both medication and help from a health professional.

Symptoms of major depression are often misunderstood and misdiagnosed. While classic signs are certainly to be watched for, many individuals who struggle with depression are not so prominent. Some of the less well-known signs and symptoms include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Feelings of pessimism
- Irritability and mood swings
- Loss of interest in activities or pastimes
- Loss of sex drive
- Digestive problems
- Recurring headaches
- Restlessness

Depression often leads to actions like alcoholism or drug use, as well as to suicide. However, it can also lead to many other negative health impacts. Some of these include increased risk of heart disease, inflammation within the body, chronic pain, weight gain (or loss), and an increased risk of cancer, and many more.

How Might Ashwagandha Help with Depression?

Taking ashwagandha for depression may be able to alleviate some symptoms. Note that only limited human studies have been carried out in this area, but those that were have shown promise. One study covered 64 adults suffering from stress and who suffered from depression for 60 days. During that period, participants who consumed ashwagandha reported a 79% reduction in severe depression.

However, note that because only one participant had a history of depression, the results of the study are unclear. Several other studies have shown that ashwagandha may help those with depression, though additional studies are required to understand the mechanism of action.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR FITNESS AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Today, too many of us lead sedentary lives. We work a desk job for eight or nine hours, then commute back to our homes where we sit down for an evening of television watching before going to sleep so we can wake up and do it all over again. This lifestyle has had an incredibly negative impact on our fitness level and physical health as a nation.

According to [MedlinePlus](#), “In the United States and around the world, people are spending more and more time doing sedentary activities. During our leisure time, we are often sitting; while using a computer or other device, watching TV,-

-or playing video games. Many of our jobs have become more sedentary, with long days sitting at a desk.”

When you have an inactive lifestyle, you burn fewer calories, which leads to weight gain. A sedentary lifestyle also leads to a loss of muscle mass and stamina. It may even lead to bone density loss, meaning that minor accidents could cause significant injuries. Living a sedentary lifestyle has also been linked to poor blood circulation, lowered immune system function, increased inflammation overall, and even hormone imbalances.

A sedentary lifestyle has farther-reaching repercussions than those discussed above, as well. It leads to obesity, which increases your chance for diseases like diabetes, as well as for heart disease and stroke. A sedentary lifestyle can also lead to metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, and in some cases, will affect mental health, leading to depression and anxiety.

According to the [Department of Health and Human Services](#):

- Under 5% of US, adults exercise for 30 minutes or more per week
- Over 80% of US adults fail to meet aerobic and muscle-strengthening guidelines.
- Children spend up to 7.5 hours in front of a screen of some type.
- 80.2 million people in the US are physically inactive
- One-third of high school students play digital games (video or computer) for at least three hours per day.

How Might Ashwagandha Help Improve Fitness and Physical Health?

While there have only been a handful of studies conducted on the relationship between ashwagandha and physical health/fitness, the few that have been showed a promising correlation. For instance, one study that covered a group-

-of healthy men for 30 days showed that taking a dosage of ashwagandha root every day helped them gain muscle mass. A second study showed that those who took an ashwagandha supplement enjoyed more significant muscle mass gains while simultaneously helping to shed almost twice as much body fat as those taking a placebo.

While it remains unclear how, taking ashwagandha may be able to help reduce body fat, improve overall body composition, improve fitness, and boost muscle mass gained from exercise. Before you start taking ashwagandha in any form, it is crucial to know how should ashwagandha be taken? If you are seeking medication for any chronic disease, then it is advised to check with your doctor for the recommended dosage.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health is a blanket term that covers an extensive range of elements related to sexual function and fertility. The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) defines sexual health as “a state of physical, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.”

For a slightly different take on the subject, we can turn to the [American Sexual Health Association \(ASHA\)](#), which defines sexual health as, “the ability to embrace and enjoy our sexuality throughout our lives. It is an important part of our physical and emotional health.”

Adults, and even teens sometimes, face a vast range of challenges to their sexual health and their ability to engage in sexual intimacy with their partner of choice. These include:

- Lack of interest in sex
- Lack of arousal during foreplay
- Lack of lubrication (primarily women)
- Inability to reach orgasm
- Inability to maintain an erection

Many of these symptoms are tied to sexual dysfunction conditions, such as:

- Desire disorders
- Arousal disorders
- Orgasm disorders
- Pain disorders

Men suffering from these disorders may experience a wide range of symptoms, including an inability to maintain or even achieve an erection, absent ejaculation, delayed ejaculation, and premature ejaculation. Men can also suffer from pain during intercourse, as well as an inability to become aroused.

Women suffering from sexual dysfunction disorders may experience a dramatic reduction or complete elimination in the act of sex, as well as an inability to achieve orgasm, inadequate vaginal lubrication, and an inability to relax the vaginal muscles enough to allow intercourse to occur. Women can also suffer from pain during intercourse and an inability to become aroused.

While there has been limited scientific research into the use of ashwagandha for sexual health, there has been some interest and some rather startling results, at least within the single pilot study that has been conducted thus far.

This **single study** included 50 healthy women. One portion of the group was given a 300-milligram ashwagandha supplement daily, while the control group received nothing. Those who received the supplement showed marked increases in several key areas, including arousal, lubrication, and ability to reach orgasm.

A second study was conducted using ashwagandha with a group of 46 men, who received a 675-milligram dose of the herb three times per day for 90 days. At the end of that period, those taking the supplement had a higher sperm count, improved sperm mobility, and a significant (53%) increase in sperm semen volume than those who were given a placebo.

How Taking Ashwagandha for Sexual Health Might Help?

As highlighted above, there is some evidence that taking ashwagandha for sexual health can help alleviate sexual dysfunction symptoms including lack of arousal, lack of lubrication, inability to orgasm, and even improve sperm count and semen volume. More scientific study is necessary before solid conclusions can be drawn, however.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR DIABETES

Diabetes has grown from a little-known disease in the 19th and early 20th centuries to a true scourge of epidemic proportions. It affects all industrialized nations to some extent, and its impact on human beings is only increasing.

According to the **American Diabetes Association**, 30.3 million Americans had diabetes in 2015. That number has only gone up. The organization estimates 7.2 million people with undiagnosed diabetes, and another 1.5 million new-

-cases every single year. Diabetes has become the 7th leading cause of death in the United States, with over 250,000 deaths attributed to it as at least a contributing factor. The disease cost American taxpayers \$327 billion in 2017.

There are two common types of diabetes – type 1 and type 2. The **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases** defines them as follows, “If you have type 1 diabetes, your body does not make insulin. Your immune system attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, although it can appear at any age. People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin every day to stay alive. If you have type 2 diabetes, your body does not make insulin or use insulin well. You can develop type 2 diabetes at any age, even during childhood. However, this type of diabetes occurs most often in middle-aged and older adults. Type 2 is the most common type of diabetes.”

Type 2 is the single most common type of diabetes, and it is mostly related to lifestyle. In the past, it was thought that the damage caused was permanent, but new evidence shows that at least some can be reversed through diet, exercise, and healthy living.

Symptoms of uncontrolled/undiagnosed diabetes include:

- ◉ Frequent urination
- ◉ Frequent serious thirst
- ◉ Feeling hungry even when eating.
- ◉ Slow healing
- ◉ Numbness in hands and/or feet
- ◉ Weight loss without a reduction in eating
- ◉ Blurry vision
- ◉ Fatigue

Of course, the effects of diabetes do not stop with the symptoms listed above. Even when controlled through medications, people with diabetes are at significant risk for other health impacts. Called “diabetic complications,” these effects include an increased risk for coronary heart disease, an increased risk of stroke, an increased risk of degenerative vision disease and blindness, increased blood pressure, diabetic neuropathy and damage to the kidneys, nerve damage, digestive health problems, and a significant number of other issues.

How Might Taking Ashwagandha for Diabetes Help?

One of the key potential benefits of taking ashwagandha is the herb’s ability to help reduce blood sugar levels. Both test tube trials and human trials have been conducted, and while further study is necessary before health claims can be substantiated, there is evidence that ashwagandha could help with diabetes and could potentially stave off diabetes complications.

The mechanism of action here seems to be an impact on the body’s insulin secretion levels and sensitivity to insulin. Several human studies have been conducted, all of which have shown a reduction in blood sugar for participants consuming ashwagandha rather than placebo. **One study** followed 18 healthy participants as they consumed two doses per day for 30 days, while a **second study** followed patients with schizophrenia for four weeks and found that fasting blood sugar levels were significantly improved (13.5 mg/dL versus 4.5 mg/dL) in comparison to patients taking a placebo. A **third study** followed just six people, all of whom were diabetics with type 2 diabetes. Participants took ashwagandha for 30 days, and all were able to reduce their fasting blood sugar levels better than by taking oral insulin.

While it might not be clear how ashwagandha can affect blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity, the herb shows promise and may be able to offer relief for diabetics and pre-diabetics.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR JOINT HEALTH

Our bodies are only able to move because of joints. From the elbow to the knee to the joints in the fingers and toes, the body requires joints for mobility. Many joint health conditions can cause pain and stiffness, limiting mobility and reducing the quality of life.

A wide range of joint disorders can affect the human body. Arthritis is perhaps the most common, and there are over 100 different forms, including rheumatoid arthritis, gout, psoriatic arthritis, and more. All forms of arthritis are marked by inflammation, pain, swelling, and stiffness. Severe joint damage will eventually occur.

Bursitis is another joint health disorder. This is marked by an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac that cushions the joint (the bursa). As the sac inflames, it limits mobility and creates pressure and pain within the joint. As with arthritis, damage can result over time.

Dislocations are also common, particularly in athletes and those who live active lifestyles. Joint dislocations force the ends of the bones out of position, causing pain and inflammation, as well as potentially leading to the development of scar tissue that will limit mobility and cause discomfort even after the initial inflammation subsides.

According to the CDC, within two years from 2013 to 2015, over 54 million American adults each year were informed they had some health condition that would affect joint health, from arthritis to gout to lupus. That number has not decreased over time. **The CDC goes on to report:**

- Nearly 15 million people with arthritis experience severe joint pain.
- 50% of adults with arthritis experience persistent pain.
- Joint health problems are more common in women than in men.

- Joint health problems are common in those over 45, but also in those who live active lifestyles.
- Diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can worsen the effects of joint health problems.

How Might Ashwagandha for Joint Health Help?

While there has been limited research conducted, and some of the studies completed used a blend of herbs and minerals, rather than the only ashwagandha, there is some evidence that taking an ashwagandha supplement might be able to help reduce joint health-related pain and discomfort. For instance, [WebMD](#) states, “Early research shows that ashwagandha taken along with a zinc complex, guggul, and turmeric might improve arthritis symptoms. The impact of ashwagandha alone is unclear.”

The [University of Michigan](#) offers a similar explanation by stating, “A combination of Boswellia, ashwagandha, turmeric, and zinc effectively treated pain and stiffness in one study, without the stomach irritation that is a common side effect of NSAIDs.”

Finally, [a study published in 2015](#) notes that in a clinical trial involving 125 patients with joint pain, a significant decrease in joint pain and tenderness was observed. The study’s authors explain, “All patients were tested positive for rheumatoid factor and increased ESR level. Ashwagandha and Sidh Makardhwaj treatment decreased RA factor. A significant change in post-treatment scores of tender joint counts, swollen joint counts, physical global assessment score, patient global assessment score, pain assessment score, patient self-assessed disability index score, and ESR level was observed as compared to baseline scores.”

Ultimately, more studies need to be conducted on the effects of ashwagandha-

on patients with joint health problems, but the results from those studies that have been conducted are promising.

A quick tip: If you are concerned about joint health, then you must check out these natural herbs and supplements:

- 1 Turmeric Curcumin BioPerine®
- 2 Organic Ashwagandha w Black Pepper Extract

ASHWAGANDHA FOR INFLAMMATION

Inflammation – it is such a small word, and yet it has incredibly damaging implications for human life. The vast majority of diseases and health conditions not caused by outside vectors and pathogens are related to inflammation within the body. Arthritis, asthma, eczema, headaches...these are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg when it comes to adverse health impacts created by inflammation.

Healthline explains, “Inflammation is a natural process that helps your body heal and defend itself from harm. However, inflammation is harmful if it becomes chronic. Chronic inflammation may last for weeks, months, or years – and may lead to various health problems.”

Scripps Health expands on that by explaining, “You cannot see it or feel it, but inflammation may slowly be damaging your body. Inflammation (swelling), which is part of the body’s natural healing system, helps fight injury and infection. However, it does not just happen in response to injury and illness. An inflammatory response can also occur when the immune system goes into action without an injury or infection to fight. Since there is nothing to heal, the immune system cells that normally protect the body begin to destroy healthy arteries, organs, and joints.’

For an even better explanation of how what is supposed to be a defense mechanism that protects us can transform into something that harms us, we can turn to [WebMD](#). “In some diseases, like arthritis, the body’s defense system – the immune system – triggers an inflammatory response when there are no foreign invaders to fight off. In these diseases, called autoimmune diseases, the body’s normally protective immune system causes damage to its tissues. The body responds as if normal tissues are infected or somehow abnormal.”

Arthritis, asthma, and eczema are not the only examples of inflammatory diseases. There are others that most of us do not associate with inflammation, such as stroke, heart disorders, diabetes, and the like. [Pfizer](#), the pharmaceutical manufacturer, notes that “Overall, the estimated prevalence of the chronic inflammatory disease in Western society is 5 to 7%”. The report also explains that “chronic inflammatory disease patients are at greater risk for developing another inflammatory-related condition,” meaning that these conditions can feed into one another, and build.

That is backed up by a study published by the [World Health Organization and Rand Corporation](#) in 2014 that noted “60% of Americans had at least one chronic condition, 42% had more than one and 12% of adults had five or more chronic conditions. Worldwide, three out of five people die due to chronic inflammatory diseases like stroke, chronic respiratory diseases, heart disorders, cancer, obesity, and diabetes.”

Symptoms of chronic inflammatory disease include:

- Pain within the body, particularly within the joints
- Skin rashes and conditions, such as eczema
- Excessive mucus production
- Low energy, even when getting plenty of sleep.
- Digestive health problems, including abdominal pain and bloating

As mentioned, patients with the chronic inflammatory disease have much more to worry about than these symptoms alone. Over time, chronic inflammation-

can lead to an incredibly wide range of conditions, many of which eventually become fatal, such as heart disease, or are significant contributing factors to early death, such as diabetes.

How Helpful Is Taking Ashwagandha for Inflammation?

Ashwagandha has been studied in both animal trials and human trials for its anti-inflammatory capabilities. One study involving male rats found that those fed a diet high in fructose (fruit sugars) along with ashwagandha had lower rates of inflammation markers than those not consuming ashwagandha. A second study involving mice found that ashwagandha extracts “may possess therapeutic perspectives in the treatment of inflammation and pain.”

A third study found that in animals treated with ashwagandha, “the results showed that [the herb] exhibited antioxidant and anti-arthritis activity and reduced inflammation in CIA rats and suggested the potential use of this plant in the treatment of arthritis.” **In human trials**, it was discovered that ashwagandha could decrease inflammation markers, such as C-reactive protein, as well as increase the activity of so-called “natural killer cells,” which fight infection.

While additional study is necessary, there is promising evidence that shows an ashwagandha supplement taken regularly may be able to help fight chronic inflammation and even prevent related diseases.

ASHWAGANDHA'S POTENTIAL ANTI-CANCER CAPABILITIES

As we discussed in the previous section, inflammation is the root of most of the frightening diseases we are subject to today, including heart disease and stroke. However, cancer also falls under that heading – it is an-

-inflammation-related disease. There is some evidence that taking an ashwagandha supplement might help prevent some types of cancers.

Understanding Cancers

Before we discuss how ashwagandha might help prevent the formation of some types of cancers, it is crucial to establish a baseline understanding of these diseases. Cancer is not a single disease, but several different interrelated ones. According to the [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#), “Cancer is the name given to a collection of related diseases. In all types of cancer, some of the body’s cells begin to divide without stopping and spread into the surrounding tissues.”

While cancer is defined as being a genetic disease – that is, it is caused by genetic mutations – the actual underlying cause is inflammation. Again, we turn to the [National Cancer Institute](#) for an explanation. The organization states that inflammation is a normal response in the body to trauma and infection, but chronic inflammation can have devastating consequences. “Over time, chronic inflammation can cause DNA damage and lead to cancer. For example, people with chronic inflammatory bowel diseases, such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease, have an increased risk of colon cancer.”

In an explanation of how this develops over time, the NCI clarifies, “Cancer can start almost anywhere in the human body, which is made up of trillions of cells. Normally, human cells grow and divide to form new cells as the body needs them. When cells grow old or become damaged, they die, and new cells take their place. When cancer develops, however, this orderly process breaks down. As cells become more and more abnormal, old, or damaged cells survive when they should die, and new cells form when they are not needed. These extra cells divide without stopping and may form growths called tumors.”

How Can Ashwagandha Help in Cancer?

There have been limited studies involving laboratory testing and animal testing regarding ashwagandha's effects on cancer. In laboratory (test-tube) testing, the herb was able to induce programmed cell death, called apoptosis. Several animal studies have been conducted, showing that the herb may be instrumental in treating some types of cancer, including lung, brain, ovarian, and breast cancers. One study, in particular, involving female mice with ovarian cancer, showed that ashwagandha had the potential to reduce tumor growth rates by up to 80% when used alone, as well as in conjunction with anti-cancer medications. Researchers also noted that the herb prevented cancer from spreading to other organs within the test animals.

While there have been no trials involving ashwagandha for cancer in humans as yet, the results thus far are encouraging. However, they are not definitive.

ASHWAGANDHA FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Over time, our cognitive function (brain power) declines. We see this in things like age-related forgetfulness, as well as in more serious mental health conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease. An ashwagandha supplement may be able to help preserve and even improve cognitive capabilities like memory, as well as other brain functions.

Why Does Cognition Decline?

Cognition declines for multiple reasons. There is no single, overriding cause. Some of the more common causes in older adults include:

- Side effects of medications and supplements

- Hormonal imbalances
- Vitamin and nutrient deficiencies
- Metabolic imbalances, such as glucose levels or kidney dysfunction
- Brain neuron damage due to injuries or a neurodegenerative condition
- A build-up of toxins

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), over 16 million people in the US now live with some form of cognitive impairment. The organization goes on to explain that cognitive impairment is “when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life. Cognitive impairment ranges from mild to severe.”

Everyone is subject to cognitive decline as they age. It is a natural part of the aging process. As neurons break down, the mental acuity slightly declines. However, that decline is not particularly significant in the course of healthy aging. Those suffering from mild cognitive impairment suffer from a more significant loss of cognition, however.

Mild cognitive impairment, or MCI, is the most common condition in the nation. The [Alzheimer’s Association](#) notes that “Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) causes a slight but noticeable and measurable decline in cognitive abilities, including memory and thinking skills. A person with MCI is at an increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s or another dementia.”

The [Mayo Clinic](#) further expands that explanation by stating, “Mild cognitive impairment is the state between the expected cognitive decline of normal aging and the more serious decline of dementia. It can involve problems with memory, language, thinking, and judgment that are greater than normal age-related changes.”

How Might Taking Ashwagandha for Brain Health Help?

To date, there have been test-tube trials, animal trials, and even human studies involving the effects of ashwagandha on brain health and cognition. While further study is needed, the results thus far have been quite encouraging.

For instance, several laboratory tests have indicated that ashwagandha may help improve brain function due to damage caused by diseases or injuries. **One study** showed that supplementing with the herb could reverse beta-amyloid1-42 induced toxicity in human neuronal cells. Animal trials have likewise shown significant promise, although they are not conclusive. **One study** showed that rats suffering from memory impairment due to hypobaric hypoxia benefited from taking Ashwagandha. **Another study** showed that sleep-deprived rats gained neuroprotective benefits from taking the herb.

In terms of human studies, there have only been a few despite thousands of years of documented use in Ayurvedic tradition. **One study** involved 50 adults and followed them for eight weeks. Participants took ashwagandha twice per day, and all participants showed an increase in attention, memory, and performing tasks. A **second study** showed that even healthy individuals could benefit from taking an ashwagandha supplement. Men who took a daily dose of the herb reported an increase in their ability to perform tasks, as well as their mental reaction times.

Again, further study is needed for conclusive proof, but the results of the studies completed thus far offer hope for those who are suffering from cognitive decline.

ASHWAGANDHA BENEFITS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Ashwagandha is a powerful natural herb that has been used for thousands of years for an extensive range of purposes. Some of the benefits of taking an ashwagandha supplement may yield include:

- Assistance with weight loss through body fat reduction and body composition balancing
- Assistance with stress through reduction of cortisol (the stress hormone) in the body
- Improved sleep through hormone balancing and stress reduction, as well as tranquilization effects
- Increased muscle mass and physical endurance/performance
- Anti-tumor effects for multiple types of cancer
- Improved mental cognition
- Improved central nervous system performance
- Enhanced immune system performance
- Reduced inflammation within the body, which in turn reduces the chances of developing multiple inflammation-related diseases, ranging from diabetes to stroke
- Increased desire for sex and enjoyment of sexual activity for both men and women
- Anti-arthritis effects, including reduced swelling and better pain management
- Ashwagandha benefits for women include improved reproductive health and menstrual health.
- Ashwagandha benefits for men include improved sperm motility, increased semen volume, and better control over erections and ejaculation.

There are significant potential benefits of ashwagandha for men and women. However, note that these benefits have not been conclusively proven. While clinical studies bear them out and the herb has thousands of years of use in Ayurvedic tradition, there is insufficient scientific evidence as yet concerning its effectiveness in treating health and medical conditions.

DOES ASHWAGANDHA WORK?

While there is no conclusive, scientific proof, the fact that it has been used successfully for thousands of years in holistic medicine may be an encouraging factor. Additionally, the number of studies already conducted, as well as the number of new studies either currently in progress or being planned, indicate there may be significant potential with this herb to treat a wide range of health conditions.

How does ashwagandha work, though? While many of its effects are not yet well understood by science, some have been determined. Ashwagandha is what is called an adaptogen, which means that it has demonstrated an ability to help the body withstand the effects of stress.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines an adaptogen as, “a non-toxic substance and especially a plant extract that is held to increase the body’s ability to resist the damaging effects of stress and promote or restore normal physiological functioning.”

According to **Time magazine**, “Adaptogens are nontoxic plants that are marketed as helping the body resist stressors of all kinds, whether physical, chemical, or biological. These herbs and roots have been used for centuries in Chinese and Ayurvedic healing traditions, but they’re having a renaissance today. Some, like holy basil, can be eaten as part of a meal, and some are consumed as supplements or brewed into teas.”

Healthline broadens this definition by explaining, “Adaptogens are herbal pharmaceuticals. They work to counteract the effects of stress in the body. Stress causes real physical changes in the body, including harming the neurological, endocrine, and immune systems. Adaptogens have stimulant properties that help counteract those harmful effects.”

We have known about adaptogens for thousands of years, but it was not until WWII that they began to see scientific research. Scientists at the time sought a means to help air force pilots improve their performance and alertness in flight. Russian scientists were the first to publish the results of their findings, citing the effects of Schisandra chinesis, or five-flavor berry.

How Do Adaptogens Work?

When it comes to answering the question of whether ashwagandha works or not, we need to study how adaptogens as a whole affect the human body. While many different herbs fall under the adaptogen heading, they tend to work similarly.

With that being said, each brings its unique blend of benefits to the table, as well. For instance, while ashwagandha may be beneficial for depression, building muscle mass, and even boosting mental cognition, other adaptogenic herbs help improve liver health (Schisandra) or also combat the flu (arctic root).

Adaptogens work to keep our bodies within the central segment of our stress response. When stress affects the human body, it begins to go through three distinct segments or phases. The first is the alarm. The alarm is when your adrenaline kicks in, your heartbeat increases, and your focus sharpens. These results are evolutionary adaptations to help us survive in life and death situations – being stalked by a lion on the savannah, for instance.

After the alarm, comes the resistance phase. In this segment, your body is actively resisting whatever the stressor might be. The resistance delivers increased energy and clearer thinking. However, that eventually wears off and fatigue or exhaustion set in. In this phase, you experience the downsides of the stress response – shaky hands, tremors, reduced energy, and the like.

Adaptogens like ashwagandha keep the body firmly in the middle resistance segment for a more extended period. They extend the amount of time that we can experience improved blood flow and cognition, improved oxygenation in-

-the blood, and other benefits. However, this goes deeper than merely offering a more prolonged boost of energy and clearer thinking.

Adaptogens have shown to have numerous powerful effects on the human body (and on other animals, such as rats and mice in laboratory testing). Some of the advantages conferred by taking an ashwagandha supplement may include:

- Stimulates the central nervous system
- Fights fatigue and exhaustion
- Combats depression, anxiety, and stress
- Offers neuroprotective properties to support healthy brain function
- Increases mental work capabilities
- Increases attention and concentration

However, bear in mind that because ashwagandha is an herb/supplement, it means that the FDA does not monitor it, nor does the US government vouch for benefits of taking this supplement. Also, because there is no FDA oversight of supplement formulation, finding a high-quality product from a reputable manufacturer is essential. Less than reputable companies may include very little ashwagandha in their formulation or even none at all.

What Are the Most Common Ashwagandha Side Effects?

While ashwagandha is generally considered safe, there are some reported side effects that users have experienced. Note that there are no clinical studies on the long-term effects of taking ashwagandha for prolonged periods, and high doses of the herb may cause additional symptoms and side effects, such as vomiting, upset stomach, nausea, and diarrhea.

Blood Pressure

There is a chance that taking ashwagandha may lower blood pressure. In individuals with hypertension, this is beneficial. However, for those who are prone to low blood pressure, this could create a dangerous situation. If you take medication for high or low blood pressure, the herb may interfere with its operation.

Diabetes

Ashwagandha shows excellent promise for lowering blood sugar levels. However, for those taking diabetes medication or those subject to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), this could create a dangerous situation. Always monitor your blood sugar when taking ashwagandha if you have diabetes, on diabetes medication, or are hypoglycemic.

Gastrointestinal Distress

There is evidence that ashwagandha can cause gastrointestinal distress in people who suffer from stomach ulcers. If you have an ulcer or suspect that you may have an ulcer, do not take this supplement. Work with your doctor to heal the ulcer before taking Ashwagandha. Additionally, some individuals involved in clinical studies have reported experiencing stomach irritation and nausea not related to ulcers.

Central Nervous Systems Impacts

Because ashwagandha affects the central nervous system and may slow it down or speed it up, it is not recommended to take this supplement before any surgical procedure. If you take ashwagandha regularly, speak with your medical provider to determine how long before your surgical procedure to stop taking the supplement.

Auto-Immune Diseases

While there is evidence that suggests ashwagandha might be beneficial for some types of auto-immune diseases, there is also evidence that it might cause-

-the immune system to become more active. In some individuals, this may increase the symptoms or the severity of symptoms caused by the disease.

Skin Health

While ashwagandha might be useful in treating inflammation-related skin conditions, some clinical trial participants have noted that taking the supplement has caused unexpected skin health complications/side effects, such as burning and itching. Some also noticed discolored skin patches.

Heart Health

Some study participants have reported experiencing heart health-related issues, including irregular heartbeat and dizziness. Note that these side effects were not reported in conjunction with ashwagandha alone, but an herb-mineral mixture.

Those Taking Sedatives

Ashwagandha has sedative/tranquilizer properties. It is essential that those taking sedatives understand that this may amplify the effects of their medication. Ideally, you will work with your medical practitioner to determine the right dosage, or whether it is safe to take this supplement in conjunction with your regular medication.

Those Taking Anti-Anxiety Medications

Ashwagandha has classically been taken to help deal with stress and anxiety. However, those taking anti-anxiety medications may find that the supplement amplifies the effects of the medicine. Speak with your healthcare provider before starting to take ashwagandha to determine a safe dosage, or whether you should take ashwagandha with your medication.

Herbal Supplements

While ashwagandha is considered relatively safe for most people to take, it does have some potential to cause problems, particularly for those who take-

-herbal supplements that alter the mood. For instance, those taking St. John's wort should consult their healthcare provider before combining that supplement with ashwagandha, or consider not taking St. John's wort with ashwagandha.

Other herbs that may see amplified effects or cause unwanted side effects when combined with ashwagandha include the following:

- Hops
- 5-HTP
- Jamaican dogwood
- Yerba mate
- Valerian root
- Skullcap
- Calamus
- California poppy
- Catnip
- Kava

Alcohol

Consuming ashwagandha with alcohol, or consuming alcohol after taking ashwagandha is not recommended due to the herb's soporific effects. Combining the two can lead to drowsiness, and the supplement may amplify the other effects of alcohol, as well.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Do not take ashwagandha if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

These side effects, while present and reported within clinical trials and studies, remain rare. The herb is rated as being generally safe for most people to consume. However, if you fall into any of the categories above, it may be necessary to speak with your medical provider before adding an ashwagandha supplement to your daily regimen.

Is Ashwagandha Safe for Topical Application?

There has been little in the way of clinical/scientific research involving the topical application of ashwagandha. Virtually all clinical trials involving humans and animals, and all test-tube tests, have involved oral supplementation. However, ashwagandha has been used topically in Ayurvedic tradition, as well as in other holistic healing modalities.

For instance, the root has historically been ground into a powder and then mixed with oil or a liquid before being applied to skin irritations, lesions, boils, blisters, skin ulcers, and even infections. However, due to the lack of clinical research in this area, it is unclear whether it is safe to apply ashwagandha to the skin in for short or long periods.

Is Ashwagandha Safe to Take?

Yes, ashwagandha is generally considered safe to take for most people. However, there are some exceptions. For instance, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers should not take ashwagandha under any circumstances due to potentially adverse effects. We will discuss those effects in a separate section. Others who should avoid taking this supplement, or at least consult their physician before taking ashwagandha include:

- Those with lupus
- Those with type 1 diabetes
- Those taking thyroid medications
- Those with Hashimoto's thyroiditis
- Those with rheumatoid arthritis

For those who do not fall into the list above, ashwagandha should be relatively safe to take, but it never hurts to check with your medical practitioner to see what he or she recommends. It is also possible that you might be taking a medication that ashwagandha will create contraindications with, which will be discussed in another section.

You should also only take an ashwagandha supplement for a limited duration. There are no studies on the safety of long-term consumption. Moderation is the key to enjoying the benefits this herb may be able to offer.

What to Know about Ashwagandha and Pregnancy?

Many people wonder if you can take ashwagandha during pregnancy. The answer is a resounding no. This herb, like many natural supplements and medications, should not be taken during pregnancy. It should also be avoided by breastfeeding mothers. However, there is conflicting advice out there.

Some herbalists (not licensed medical professionals), particularly those following Ayurvedic traditions, do recommend taking ashwagandha during pregnancy because it may be able to help alleviate lower back pain, reduce fatigue, and even speed delivery time. Even those herbalists who recommend taking it during pregnancy specify that you should do so only under the guidance of a supervising professional. Most Western medical experts restrict the use of ashwagandha during pregnancy because of some of the potential side effects the herb can cause.

Perhaps the most worrisome side effect for pregnant women is an induced abortion due to the uterine stimulants the herb contains. The same stimulants may cause women further into their pregnancies to give birth prematurely. Both premature births and induced abortions have occurred in animal testing with ashwagandha.

Low doses of the herb will likely cause no issues for you or your baby, but therapeutic doses do have the potential to cause harm. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant and still want to include ashwagandha in your daily regimen, consult your doctor before doing so.

Is It Safe to Take Ashwagandha While Breastfeeding?

Few medical studies involving animals or humans have been conducted regarding the safety of taking ashwagandha while breastfeeding. However, most Western physicians recommend avoiding the herb while breastfeeding.

One limited study followed 40 women who suffered from insufficient milk supply at five days after birth who were given a mixture of herbs, including ashwagandha. With the herbs, milk production increased. However, due to the study's lack of placebo control, randomization, blinding, and instruction for participants, it is considered the low quality and should not be used in determining whether to take ashwagandha while breastfeeding.

The **authors of a summary study** of ashwagandha's use during breastfeeding explained, "No data exist on the excretion of any components of Withania [ashwagandha] into breastmilk or on the safety and efficacy of Withania in nursing mothers or infants. In general, Withania is well-tolerated in adults with occasional gastrointestinal upset and allergic skin reactions. It should be used cautiously by patients with diabetes or hypertension. Because there is no published experience with Withania during breastfeeding, it should be avoided, especially while nursing a newborn or preterm infant."

What Are the Most Notable Ashwagandha Interactions with Other Medications?

While the herb is generally considered safe to take, there are some-

-ashwagandha interactions and contraindications that you should know before adding it to your regimen. With that being said, all ashwagandha interactions are considered either moderate, requiring caution, or minor, requiring watchfulness.

Diabetes Medications

If you take medication(s) to manage your type 2 diabetes, be aware that ashwagandha can cause unexpected complications by decreasing blood sugar levels. In most cases, you will need to adjust your diabetes medication level. Note that if you have type 1 diabetes, you should not take ashwagandha. Also note that ashwagandha may cause unwanted interactions with all types of diabetes medications, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Amaryl
- DiaBeta
- Micronase
- PresTab
- Glynase
- Insulin
- Metformin
- Actos
- Avandia
- Diabinese
- Glucontrol
- Orinase

High Blood Pressure Medications

In clinical studies, it was found that ashwagandha may help lower blood pressure and combat hypertension. For those taking high blood pressure medications, this can mean a severe drop in pressure that leads to health problems. If you are seeking high blood pressure medications, consult your doctor before taking this supplement. Some of the blood pressure medications that might interact with ashwagandha include:

- Capoten
- Vasotec
- Cozaar
- Diovan
- Cardizem
- Norvasc
- HydroDIURIL
- Lasix

Immunosuppressant Medications

Taking an ashwagandha supplement may help with inflammation-related autoimmune conditions. However, the supplement may cause negative interactions with immunosuppressant medications. In most cases, taking ashwagandha in conjunction with immunosuppressant medicines will decrease the effectiveness of the medication. If you take these medications, do not start taking ashwagandha without first discussing it with your medical practitioner. Examples of these medications include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Imuran
- Simulect
- Neoral
- Sandimmune
- Zenapax
- OKT3
- Orthoclone
- OKT3
- CellCept
- Prograf
- Rapamune
- Deltasone
- Orasone

Sedatives

One of the most common classical uses for ashwagandha was as a sedative. The botanical name of the plant even indicates this. Those taking sedative medications will likely experience negative interactions with this supplement.

This includes both benzodiazepines and CNS depressants. In both cases, interactions and side effects include significant drowsiness/sleepiness. Some of the medications that fall into this category include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Klonopin
- Valium
- Ativan
- Xanax
- Dalmane
- Versed
- Donnatal
- Ambien

Thyroid Medications

In clinical studies, ashwagandha has been shown to increase the amount of thyroid hormone produced in the body. For those taking thyroid medications, this can cause significant side effects. Speak with your doctor before you begin taking this supplement to determine what dosage amount (if any) is safe for you to intake. Examples of thyroid medications include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Thyrolar
- Levothroid
- Triostat
- Cytomel
- Unithroid
- Synthroid

If you have any questions or concerns about possible interactions with other medications or supplements you are currently taking, the best course of action would be to speak with your physician before adding ashwagandha to your daily regimen.

How Much Ashwagandha Should I Take?

Wondering how much ashwagandha you should take each day? It can be quite confusing, mainly if you read the published scientific studies, as there seems to be very little commonality across the board in terms of dosage size or frequency.

It is essential to understand that, like other herbs, vitamins, and natural supplements, there is a recommended daily allowance set by the FDA or any other government agency. The FDA regulates pharmaceuticals, foods, and is responsible for setting the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamins and nutrients like vitamin C and iron.

Because the FDA does not regulate herbs and supplements, there is no regulated dosage. However, many manufacturers and even holistic health practitioners, have worked together to arrive at what is called “standardized” dosages. With that being said, a lot depends on what benefits you want to see from taking the supplement.

Traditionally, Ayurvedic healers would recommend differing dosage amounts of ashwagandha for each individual being treated based on a wide range of specific factors, including:

- The patient’s age
- The patient’s overall health
- The condition being treated specifically

In classical literature, the average dosage of the herb seems to have been 3,000 mg of ashwagandha containing 5% withanolide concentration twice per day, as mentioned in a clinical study published in the journal **BioMed Research International**. However, researchers determined that a lower rate of consumption would be more beneficial for most patients. How much should you take? There is no one-size-fits-all dosage, but there are broad-stroke suggestions based on your desired outcome.

For Anxiety and Stress

One of the classical uses for ashwagandha was to control anxiety and stress. Today, many people use the supplement for the same reason. Ashwagandha may be able to help reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the body, which may impact everything from stress to anxiety to body fat. In some medical studies, dosages ranging from 125 mg to 5 grams for one to three months were able to help reduce cortisol levels in the bodies of study participants. Participants in other studies were able to reduce their level of perceived anxiety and stress by taking 500 to 600 mg of ashwagandha once per day for up to 12 weeks.

For Blood Sugar Control

While those with type 1 diabetes should not take ashwagandha, those struggling with type 2 diabetes may be able to find help, as may those with hyperglycemia. However, all people with diabetes should discuss taking the supplement with their doctor before beginning a regimen. Individuals seeking to control their blood sugar better may see benefits from ashwagandha's potential ability to reduce fasting blood sugar levels. In clinical studies, dosages ranged from 250 mg to 3 grams two to three times per day. Patients interested in this benefit are advised to begin with a dose of 250 mg once per day and slowly move up.

For Fertility

Ashwagandha has been used as a fertility aid for thousands of years, and there is scientific evidence that it may be able to **improve fertility in both men and women**. Several studies have been conducted that found ashwagandha may be able to increase sperm count, sperm motility, and semen volume in men. Most of the studies conducted have focused on using roughly 5 grams of ashwagandha per day for three months. Note that this is a therapeutic dose of 5,000 mg (1 gram equals 1,000 mg).

For Physical Strength and Muscle Mass

Ashwagandha has shown the potential to help increase muscle mass, physical strength, and endurance. This is another of the herb's traditional uses in Ayurvedic healing. Several clinical studies have been conducted on this subject and found that 500 mg to 1,250 mg per day increased muscle mass, strength, and endurance. Muscle strength increased up to 1.7 times, and muscle size increased up to 2.3 times higher than those participants taking a placebo.

For Whole-Body Inflammation

Ashwagandha has been used for thousands of years to reduce inflammation and to boost the human immune system. Several clinical studies support this use and indicate the ashwagandha may be able to help reduce inflammation within the body while strengthening the immune system and fighting infections. Taking **250 to 500 mg of ashwagandha per day** for two months was shown to reduce C-reactive protein levels in the body by 30%, while 12 ml of extract per day might be able to **improve immune system function**.

For Cognition

Ongoing research shows that regular consumption of ashwagandha may be able to help support brain health and cognition, particularly in the area of boosting memory. In **clinical studies**, 300 mg to 500 mg once to twice per day showed improvement in patients' ability to remember information, perform during tasks, focus, and reduce their reaction time. Note that the trials conducted in this area have been limited, and more study is required.

From the information above, you can see that there may be benefits to a wide range of health conditions available by taking a daily ashwagandha supplement. However, remember that only a few medical trials and clinical studies have been conducted and that further research is needed before these claims can be substantiated. Also, remember that none of these health benefits is backed up by the FDA.

HOW SHOULD ASHWAGANDHA BE TAKEN?

Are you wondering about taking ashwagandha? Unsure how to take this natural supplement? Curious as to the best ashwagandha intake method? There are several different ways that ashwagandha extract can be taken, but they are not all created equal.

Choose Ashwagandha Root

One of the first things you should know when it comes to choosing the supplement that is right for you is that ashwagandha root is preferred by Ayurvedic healers to the plant's leaves. You will find supplements on the market made from both, as well as those that combine root and leaf powders. However, ashwagandha root delivers higher concentrations of withanolide, the herb's active ingredient, and the key to its healing capabilities.

Ashwagandha Rasayanas

A Rasayana is a tonic used in Ayurvedic tradition. It is possible to create such a tonic on your own using ashwagandha root powder. In traditional cases, the powder would be mixed with milk, as well as honey to sweeten the mixture, and ghee (clarified butter), and is served warm.

A similar version can be made by combining milk with ashwagandha root powder, honey, and a small amount of water – a single serving would include a ½ cup of milk, ½ cup of water, one tsp. of honey, and one tsp. of ashwagandha root powder.

If neither of those options appeals to you, the powder can be mixed into many other beverages, including lattes. Or, you can sprinkle it into your food if you would rather. The reason many people choose to mix the powder in with a sweeter food or beverage is that it can be somewhat bitter. The powder also carries the horse-like smell the herb is known for, so mixing it with something else may make it more palatable.

Ashwagandha Capsules

Perhaps one of the simplest ways to add ashwagandha to your daily regimen without the bitterness or the odor is to take it in capsule form. Capsules allow you to quickly and easily ingest ashwagandha root at any point in your day. All you need is a little water to wash it down with.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING AN ASHWAGANDHA SUPPLEMENT

Many different manufacturers today offer ashwagandha supplements. However, not all of them are created equal. Additionally, because there is no FDA regulation in this area, manufacturers are free to add fillers and binders. These may reduce the concentration of withanolide in the supplement, as well as the quality of the ashwagandha powder overall.

In order to ensure you have the best chance of seeing the health benefits you seek, it is crucial that you choose a high-quality supplement. Below, we will walk through a brief guide to help ensure that you can choose the highest quality supplement.

Organic

One of the first considerations is the quality of the ashwagandha itself. Organic Ashwagandha is free of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that might leech into the root from the surrounding soil and is of the highest quality.

GMO-Free

GMO-free labeling indicates that the product is not made with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Only naturally-grown ashwagandha is used in these products.

Capsules

Capsules are more straightforward and more accessible to deal with than powder on its own, and easier to consume than tablets and pills. However, make sure that capsules are made from 100% vegetable matter. Some capsules are made from gelatin, which is derived from animal products.

Ingredients

Check the ingredients list on any ashwagandha supplement you are considering. You should see no binders, no fillers, and no artificial ingredients. Ideally, you will only one or two ingredients. For instance, at Trusted Nutrients, we use only 100% organic ashwagandha root powder and black pepper extract in our capsules. Black pepper is included to increase the uptake of withanolide in the digestive tract.

Amount of Ashwagandha Root Powder

One of the areas where you will find the most considerable variance is in terms of how much root powder is included in each capsule/serving/dose. Some are as low as 300 mg or even lower. Others may be as high as 3,000 mg or even more. At Trusted Nutrients, we included 1,300 mg of organic ashwagandha root powder in each vegetarian capsule.

Quantity

Check the number of capsules in each container, as this will affect yours out of pocket costs. At Trusted Nutrients, we include 120 capsules – that's 60 days of ashwagandha supplements to help improve your health. Other manufacturers include far fewer doses, which means you will need to repurchase your supplement sooner.

CONCLUSION

Ashwagandha has been a trusted supplement in Ayurvedic healing tradition for thousands of years. It has classically been used to prolong life, improve strength and endurance, reduce **stress and anxiety**, and even **improve sexual health** and performance.

Today, modern science is beginning to take notice of this humble herb. Many clinical studies have been conducted, and more are currently in progress, in order to investigate the potential health benefits offered by ashwagandha root extract. While additional studies are needed for conclusive proof, evidence indicates that taking an ashwagandha supplement may help with a broad range of health conditions and goals, including:

- Managing blood sugar
- Improving memory and cognitive function
- Improved energy levels and less fatigue
- Better quality sleep
- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Improved sexual health
- Weight loss
- Increased muscle mass and strength

However, being able to enjoy these potential benefits hinges on finding a high-quality supplement. At Trusted Nutrients, we are proud to offer one of the most potent, high-performing formulations on the market. Our **Organic Ashwagandha with Black Pepper Extract** includes 1,300 mg of organic ashwagandha root powder combined with 10 mg of organic black pepper extract to ensure maximum uptake in the body.

THANK YOU

Congratulations on your purchase! I wanted to make sure to write and thank you personally for your order.

We value your trust in our company and we went through great lengths to create the highest purity Ashwagandha available. Rest assured, you will be feeling restful, focused and balanced in no time.

Welcome to our family of natural products and taking control of your health.



Christina

Christina
CEO, Trusted Nutrients