

## EASY Does It: Andrographis Herb for COVID

### The EASY guide to deciding whether to try something for COVID

When you are choosing whether or not to do something for your health, take it EASY! All four factors - 1) Effects, 2) Access, 3) Safety, and 4) You – can help you make a decision.

Tom heard about an herb called Andrographis that might help to make symptoms of COVID less severe or even shorten the length of feeling sick if he got COVID. He wanted to know more so he used the EASY guide to help him decide if this herb was worth a try:

**Effects:** *Andrographis paniculata* (AP) is an herb used traditionally in Indian and Chinese medicine for several conditions, including the common cold. COVID is a disease that can cause symptoms like the common cold including sinus congestion, sore throat, fever, and cough. There is no research yet on treating COVID with AP. Some studies *in cells* found that AP may have anti-inflammatory effects and help the immune system, the body's way of fighting off infections.<sup>1</sup> Several studies *in people* with cold symptoms have found that if people started taking AP within the first 24-48 hours of feeling sick, it might keep symptoms like sore throat, fever, nasal congestion, and cough from getting bad and shorten the total time of feeling sick compared to taking a placebo.<sup>2-6</sup> In one small study AP worked better than *Echinacea* if started early in uncomplicated common colds.<sup>6</sup> Many of these studies were done with specific products and ones in which AP was combined with the other herbs. So, more research is needed to know if the helpful effects were due to AP, the specific products, or the combination of herbs. Taking AP may be helpful to *prevent* the common cold, but more research is needed to know for sure.<sup>7</sup>

**Access:** The leaves and above-ground parts of AP are the most commonly used and studied and most products are made from extracts of these plant parts. Check the label to make sure. AP is commonly available in recent years and comes in capsule, tablet, and alcoholic tincture. Many products are standardized to 10-35% andrographolides, often considered a main active compound in AP. This is done to make sure the product is concentrated enough to be effective. AP is not currently costly. While prices vary, the average online cost of 60 capsules would be about \$7.30. Look for a reputable manufacturer and supplier to be assured of a quality product.

**Safety:** The amount of AP used for the common cold in research studies ranged from 450 mg to almost 2,000 mg of AP extract daily (divided into 3 to 4 doses) for 5 to 7 days. Side effects were rare and mild.<sup>2-6</sup> Doses of up to 6 grams daily for 7 days have been used with apparent safety.<sup>6</sup> In the one prevention study, 200 mg per day (in divided doses) was used for 3 months, but more long-term studies are needed to know what the best dose of AP is for *prevention*.

**You:** Tom is 45 years old and is generally healthy, with no major health problems. If he had an existing health condition like heart disease or diabetes, AP might be helpful, but he would want to be sure to work closely with his doctor if he came down with symptoms of COVID-19.

*Tom decides that AP sounds safe enough to try and that he will buy some to have on hand if he starts feeling sick.*

The information in this handout is general. **Please work with your health care team to use the information in the best way possible to promote your health and happiness.**

## For more information:

ORGANIZATION	RESOURCES	WEBSITE
University of Wisconsin Integrative Health	Other COVID resources	<a href="https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/integrative/resources/modules/">https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/integrative/resources/modules/</a>
Whole Health Institute	Whole health resources	Coming Soon!

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## References

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