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Studies on whether guggul can lower cholesterol levels are mixed.

Guggul is a resin extract that has been used in [Ayurvedic medicine](#) for centuries to treat various conditions, but studies are limited.

In lab experiments, a chemical in guggul called guggulsterone affects cholesterol production by the liver. Mice fed guggul had reduced cholesterol levels compared with mice on normal diets.

In humans however, studies on whether guggul can lower cholesterol levels are mixed. One study suggests it may actually raise cholesterol levels. Therefore, additional study is needed to determine whether guggul is safe and effective.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To treat acne

Evidence is lacking to support this claim for guggul alone. See the [Ayurveda](#) monograph for more information on the treatment of acne.

- To treat arthritis

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- To treat hemorrhoids

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- To reduce high cholesterol

Studies on whether guggul can lower cholesterol levels are mixed.

- To treat urinary tract disorders

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- To lose weight

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

## What are the side effects?

- Headache
- Mild nausea
- Belching
- Hiccups
- Loose stools
- Rash

### Case reports

- Allergic reactions: Contact dermatitis related to guggul in slimming and anticellulite creams.
- Elevated liver enzymes: In a 63-year old woman after using an over-the-counter lipid-lowering product for 6 months that contained guggulsterol and [red yeast rice](#) extract. Her symptoms normalized after the product was discontinued.
- Liver failure requiring transplant: In a healthy woman who took a dietary supplement containing usnic acid, [green tea](#), and guggul tree extract. Although [usnic acid](#) was considered the main cause, its effects could have been amplified by the other ingredients.

## What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are taking CYP3A4 substrate drugs: Guggul may make these medications less effective.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Guggul - Last updated on January 5, 2022

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