

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Available evidence indicates that devil's claw may benefit patients with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee, and back pain.

Devil's claw is a plant native to South Africa and is used in traditional medicine to treat rheumatism, arthritis, inflammation, and stomach disorders. Currently, preparations of devil's claw root are used as anti-inflammatory agents and to relieve pain. Laboratory and animal studies show that devil's claw has anti-inflammatory, pain relieving, antioxidant and appetite suppressant effects. It also helps slow bone loss caused by inflammation. Small clinical studies indicate its benefits in patients with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee, and rheumatic disorders. Larger studies are needed to confirm these effects.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To suppress appetite
Animal study suggests that devil's claw can suppress appetite. Human data are lacking.
- To treat gastrointestinal disorders
No scientific evidence supports this use.
- To reduce inflammation
Lab and animal studies show that devil's claw is effective against inflammation.
- To treat osteoarthritis
Devil's claw was shown effective against osteoarthritis of the hip and knee.
- To relieve pain
Clinical data indicate benefits of devil's claw for relief of back pain.

What are the side effects?

- Dyspepsia (indigestion) has been reported following consumption of a devil's claw extract.
- Ulcers and gastrointestinal bleeding have occurred with use of devil's claw root.
- Intake of a product containing devil's claw for osteoarthritis resulted in systemic hypertension in a 62-year-old healthy postmenopausal woman.
- Intestinal obstruction was reported in an 87-year-old man, due to a bezoar consisting of a herbal preparation containing devil's claw.

What else do I need to know?

Patient Warnings:

A case controlled study suggests increased risk of acute pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) with use of devil's claw.

Do Not Take if:

- You are taking drugs that are substrates of Cytochrome P450 1A2/2C8/2C9/2C19/2D6 and 3A4 enzymes: Devil's claw may increase the risk of side effects of these drugs. But according to another study, the interaction may not have any clinical significance.
- You are taking drugs that are substrates of P-glycoprotein: Devil's claw may increase the risk of side effects of these drugs. Clinical significance is not known.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Devil's Claw - Last updated on April 13, 2023

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