

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

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Myrrh has been used in traditional medicine for its anti-inflammatory effects, but studies are very limited.

Myrrh is an extract of a tree gum resin that has long been used as a fragrance and as an herbal medicine. Animal studies suggest it may reduce inflammation and fevers or protect against substances that are hard on the digestive system. It may also have antioxidant properties and stimulate the thyroid gland. Other experiments suggest it may slow cancer growth in mice or isolated cancer cells, but it is unknown if such effects can occur in humans.

Only a few small studies have been conducted in humans, some of which were herbal preparations that included other compounds. Additional studies are needed to determine what utility myrrh may have for various conditions.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To treat asthma
Experiments in animals suggest that myrrh might reduce inflammation.
- To treat coughs
No scientific evidence supports this use.
- To treat gastrointestinal disorders and indigestion
Animal studies suggest myrrh extracts may protect against damage to the stomach lining.
- To reduce inflammation
Experiments in animals suggest that myrrh might reduce inflammation.

What are the side effects?

- High doses of myrrh can affect heart rate.
- Topical myrrh products can cause skin redness, swelling, and itching.

Case reports

Acute abdominal pain: In a pregnant woman who used large amounts of myrrh herbs. Symptoms ended after myrrh was discontinued.

Skin reaction after oral myrrh: Diagnosed by patch test, after taking a traditional Chinese medicine formula.

What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

- You are taking warfarin: Myrrh may reduce the therapeutic effects of warfarin.
- You have sensitive skin: Topical myrrh products can cause irritation.

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.

Myrrh - Last updated on December 7, 2021



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