

CODONOPSIS & ARTICHOKE FOR IBS

A placebo study of 116 people saw irritable bowel syndrome symptoms improve after taking the Chinese herb codonopsis (*Codonopsis pilosula*) for four months (15 600 mg. capsules a day). While a commercially prepared herb product was effective, the best result was with a formula custom-designed for each individual. An alcohol extract had a greater effect than water extracts because it was richer in polysaccharides. Interestingly, immune suppression was previously seen in animals given codonopsis for a month while immunity was stimulated after two months. Other studies indicate it also reduces stomach acid and protects against stomach ulcers. Traditional Chinese medicine considers the herb a tonic that increases a person's "chi" (vital force).

Shan, BE, et al. 1999. Stimulating activity of Chinese medicinal herbs on human lymphocytes. *International Journal of Immunopharmacology* 21(3):149-59



An extract of artichoke leaf (*Cynara scolymus*) relieved symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) when 279 volunteers with at least three symptoms took two capsules of a standardized extract (320 mg each) a day for six weeks. The treatment was rated as good or excellent by 84% with no serious adverse effects.

Walker AF, et al. 2001. Artichoke

leaf extract reduces symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome in a post-marketing surveillance study. *Phytotherapy Research* 15(1):58-61 & Marakis, G. 2001. Artichoke leaf. *Phytotherapy Research* 15:58-61.

JAPANESE ASTHMA BLEND

In a study at the Tokyo University of Pharmacy, flavonoids and lignans made up the 11 compounds found in the urine after administration of a traditional Japanese herbal blend called Saiboku-To that is used to treat bronchial asthma. They are thought to be responsible for the herbs' anti-asthmatic activity by means of suppressing the allergic reaction. Medicarpin derived from licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), magnolol and related substances from magnolia (*Magnolia officinalis*), and baicalein, wogonin, and oroxylin A compounds from Chinese scullcap (*Scutellaria baicalensis*) inhibited lymphocyte blastogenesis. Saiboku-To, along with the compounds medicarpin, baicalein, magnolol, and baicalin, also inhibited inflammation in another study, although they proved weaker than cortisone drug treatments.

Taniguchi C, et al. 2000. Pharmacological effects of urinary products obtained after treatment with saiboku-to ... on type IV allergic reaction. *Planta Medica* 66(7):607-11.



SALICYLATES

Aspirin contains the anti-inflammatory salicylic acid, from a family of compounds called salicylates. Those who take aspirin have a reduced risk of colorectal cancer. Researchers who did a study at the Dumfries and Galoway Royal Infirmary in Scotland feel that salicylates in the diet may have the same beneficial effects as aspirin. They found that vegetarians have higher levels of salicylic acid in their blood (up to 2.47 mg per liter) when they tested Buddhist monks living in a monastery and diabetic patients who took 75 mg. aspirin a day. This may be partly due to the salicylic acid found in fruits and vegetables. It is possible that natural salicylates also contribute to other benefits of a healthy diet.

Paterson, JR and JR Lawrence. 2001. Salicylic acid: link between aspirin, diet and prevention of colorectal cancer. *Quarterly Journal of Medicine* 94(8):445-8. Also see: Vane, JR. 2000. The fight against rheumatism: from willow bark to COX-1 sparing drugs. *Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* 51(1):573-86.

FEVERFEW FIGHTS INFLAMMATION

Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) is used to reduce the inflammation that contributes to migraine headache and arthritis. Now Yale University researchers have discovered that the herb's active ingredient (parthenolide) binds to and inhibits a protein (IKK-beta) that encourages inflammation. The pharmaceutical industry is already involved in developing drugs that target this protein and will probably use it as a guideline. Parthenolide also inhibited DNA from binding and increased the break down of breast cancer cells treated with the anti-cancer drug paclitaxel, suggesting anti-inflammatory herbs may help increase the sensitivity of cancer cells to chemotherapy drugs.

Kwok BH, et al. 2001. The antiinflammatory natural product parthenolide from medicinal herb feverfew directly binds to and inhibits I κ B kinase. *Chemical Biology* 8(8):759-66; & Patel, NM, et al. 2000. Paclitaxel sensitivity of breast cancer cells with constitutively active NF- κ B enhanced by I κ B α super-repressor and parthenolide. *Oncogene* 24:19(36):4159-69.

SMOKING WEED

Cannabinoids, the active compounds in marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*), were a more effective anti-emetic than pharmaceutical drugs such as prochlorperazine in one study. Patients preferred it for the sedation and euphoria it produced and the few side effects, although it can cause high blood pressure, dizziness, depression, hallucinations, and paranoia.

Tramer, M, et al. 2001. Cannabinoids for control of chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting review. *British Medical Journal* 323(7303):16-21.

The risks of smoking today's "weed" may be increasing as marijuana becomes stronger. Today, it contains 6-8% of the psychoactive constituent THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and sometimes up to 14% compared to 0.1%-0.4% in the 1960s. Modern marijuana produces four times the tar of a normal cigarette, so pot smokers may be developing cancer sooner than tobacco smokers. According to one unofficial survey, cancers of the lungs, larynx, mouth, or esophagus is appearing 10-13 years earlier with marijuana than tobacco and schizophrenic breakdown three years earlier. Stuttaford, J. *The Times*, London, England, July 12, 2001.