

Role of Devil's Claw (A Medicinal Herb) in Health

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Devil's claw, a medicinal herb, derived its name from its hook-covered fruit appearance. The hook anchor animals to disperse its seeds. This plant has the scientific name *Harpagophytum procumbens*, which in Greek means "hook plant." Some people utilize the plant's roots and tubers to treat a variety of ailments, such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and back discomfort. However, Devil's claw's efficacy for these purposes is currently unsupported by credible scientific data. Many active chemicals found in the plant's roots, which can be used as a herbal supplement. Iridoid glycosides, a chemical found in devil's claw, may have anti-inflammatory properties. Therefore, devil's claw supplements are being studied as a potential treatment for inflammatory diseases such as arthritis and gout.¹ Scientists believe that the plant's anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving effects are the outcome of this animal study. Devil's claw is available in powder form, herbal tea, pills or concentrated extracts as a dietary supplement. In contrast to medicines, herbal and botanical products are not subject to the same level of scrutiny or quality control as pharmaceuticals.² Since devil's claw is a natural substance, its efficacy and safety may vary depending on the product, and additional research is needed to determine its real efficacy and safety.¹

It is believed that devil's claw, which contains iridoid glycosides like harpagoside, might be used to treat inflammation. Scientists have shown that harpagoside can reduce inflammation in animal and cell cultures.³

Some studies have shown that harpagoside has a substantial effect on cytokines. It is not known that how effective devil's claw in humans but animal research proved it alternate therapy for inflammation.^{2,3}

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Received: 22 August 2021, **Accepted:** 13 September 2021,

Published: 25 October 2021

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Devil's claw appear to decrease osteoarthritis related pain alone or in combination with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs).¹ After 16 weeks of therapy, devil's claw may be as effective as a slow-acting osteoarthritis medication called diacerhein in relieving pain in the knees and hips. It has been shown that taking devil's claw by mouth tends to help relieve back discomfort. Devil's claw may be just as effective as some NSAIDs.⁴

While devil's claw has been touted for its efficacy, there is not enough data to assess how well it could function. Devil's claw's efficacy requires more research. Among them are: Inflammatory conditions such as, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, menstrual cramps, indigestion, anxiety, migraine and tendinitis.⁵ Moreover, the possible side-effects of devil's claw, need to be study further. We might get it as a very good player to address these disorders.¹

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