

[IMAGE]

## Natural Pain Control: The Power of *Corydalis*

By Dr. Mark Reps

Many chronic pain patients are prescribed pain-control medications such as codeine, morphine and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Unfortunately, there are often significant side effects from these medications, and of course, they do little or nothing to actually solve the problem *causing* the pain.

Doctors of chiropractic have long had the mission to save patients from the pernicious effects of drugs and surgery. As chiropractic's founder, D.D. Palmer said, "Chiropractic first, drugs second and surgery last."

Our patients are trained by advertising that there is something they can take for their chronic pain. But an antagonist drug is not the answer due to the many side effects previously mentioned. However, herbs and herbal combinations augment the normal physiological functions of the body, instead of working against it. One of these herbs is *Corydalis* (Chinese name: *Yan Hu Suo*).

### **Corydalis for Pain Control**

*Corydalis* has a long, frequent history of use in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) for pain control. The primary reason for pain, according to TCM theory, is "*qi* blockage," and *Corydalis* is thought to soothe this blockage.

*Corydalis* is commonly used clinically for back pain (including back pain of spinal origin that has a nerve irritation or muscle spasm component), headaches, inflammation and menstrual pain. Animal studies suggest *Corydalis* may block inflammation and nerve pain.

The compound in *Corydalis*, dehydrocorybulbine (DHCB), is believed to produce pain-relieving effects similar to prescription drugs by blocking pain signals in the brain. However, it does so naturally and does not carry the risk of addiction that many prescribed pain medications do.

In fact, some medical websites state that *Corydalis* can be used for mild depression, mild mental disorders, emotional disturbances, severe nerve damage and limb tremors. It is also used to lower blood pressure and relax spasms in the small intestine.

### **Recommended Dosage\***

*Corydalis* comes in two forms: granular and softgel capsules. In granular form, *Corydalis* is a single herb prescribed at one packet per day, mixed with hot water as a tea.

It is also available in a softgel capsule. Softgel capsules are usually blended with a second herb, angelica. This is prescribed at two capsules, three times per day. Softgel caps contain the herbal ingredients in liquid form and can be easily absorbed.

*Corydalis* is generally considered safe for healthy adults. It is recommended for chronic moderate to significant pain. It should not be used for occasional, minor pain.

### **Safety Precautions**

*Corydalis* is safe, but with some general restrictions. It should not be used by pregnant or breast-feeding women, or people with an irregular heart rhythm. It also may interact with medications such as hypnotics, sedatives, cancer medications and anti-arrhythmic drugs. It should be noted there is no buildup of tolerance with use of *Corydalis*.

*\*Editor's note: Always talk to your health care provider before taking any medication, nutritional supplement or herbal formula, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition.*

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