

[IMAGE]

Willow Bark Extract for Low Back Pain

The bark of the willow tree has been used for centuries for pain relief and fever reduction. The principal active ingredient in willow bark is salicin, a compound from which aspirin is derived. However, unlike aspirin (and many other pain-relieving medications), natural salicin is not associated with any adverse effects such as gastrointestinal discomfort or bleeding.

Many low back pain (LBP) sufferers take aspirin and other pain-relieving medications to combat their pain. Herbal remedies have been suggested as effective alternatives because of their relatively low incidence of side effects. In a study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of willow bark extract in managing LBP, 210 patients received low-dose (120 milligrams of salicin) or high-dose (240 mg) extract or placebo for four weeks. A pain medication (“tramadol”) also was provided for all patients if necessary during the study period.

Of 191 patients completing the study, 39% of the high-dose group and 21% of the low-dose group reported being “pain-free” after four weeks, defined as having no pain for at least five days without the use of tramadol. Only 6% of the control group achieved such success, leading the authors to conclude that willow bark extract “may be a safe way for patients to diminish LBP compared to other drugs, especially when considering the low incidence of reactions.”

Talk to your doctor about the dangers of over-the-counter and prescription medications, and find out about the many nonpharmaceutical alternatives currently available for treating back pain and a variety of other conditions.

If you’re suffering from back pain or would like to prevent back pain before it strikes, schedule and appointment with a doctor of chiropractic. You can also access information on line at <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/backpain.html>.

Reference:

Chrubasik S, Eisenberg E, Balan E, et al. Treatment of low back pain exacerbations with willow bark extract: a randomized double-blind study. *American Journal of Medicine* 2000: Vol. 109, pp9-14.

For additional information on nutrition, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/nutrients.html>

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