



## BEE POLLEN

### Also Known As:

Bee Pollen Extract, Buckwheat Pollen, Honeybee Pollen, Honey Bee Pollen, Maize Pollen, Pine Pollen, Pollen, Pollen D'Abeille.

### Scientific Name:

None.

### People Use This For:

Orally, bee pollen is used for nutrition, as an appetite stimulant, to improve stamina and athletic performance, for premature aging, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), hay fever or allergic rhinitis, mouth sores, rheumatism, painful urination, prostate conditions, and radiation sickness. It is also used orally for bleeding problems including coughing or vomiting blood, bloody diarrhea, nosebleed, cerebral hemorrhage, and menstrual problems. Bee pollen is also used for gastrointestinal (GI) problems including constipation, diarrhea, enteritis, colitis, as a general tonic, diuretic, and for alcohol intoxication.

Topically, bee pollen is used for skin care in skin softening products, and for treating eczema, pustular eruptions, and diaper rash.

### Safety:

**POSSIBLY SAFE** ...when used orally and appropriately, short-term (7062, 7063, 12008). There is some evidence that taking bee pollen extracts for up to approximately 30 days is safe (7063). There is also preliminary evidence that taking 2 tablets twice daily of a specific combination product containing royal jelly 6 mg, bee pollen extract 36 mg, and bee pollen plus pistil extract 120 mg (Femal, Natumin Pharma) per tablet for up to 2 months seems to be safe (12008).

**PREGNANCY: POSSIBLY UNSAFE** ...when used orally. There is some concern that bee pollen might have uterine stimulant effects (5, 6, 11); avoid using.

**LACTATION:** Insufficient reliable information available; avoid using.

### Effectiveness:

#### **POSSIBLY INEFFECTIVE**

**Athletic performance.** Taking bee pollen orally doesn't seem to increase athletic performance or stamina (7062, 7063).

#### **INSUFFICIENT RELIABLE EVIDENCE to RATE**

**Premenstrual syndrome (PMS).** Preliminary evidence suggests that a specific combination product (Femal, Natumin Pharma) seems to decrease some symptoms of PMS including irritability, weight increases, and edema when given over a period of 2 menstrual cycles. This product contains royal jelly 6 mg, bee pollen extract 36 mg, and bee pollen plus pistil extract 120 mg per tablet. It is given as 2 tablets twice daily (12008). More evidence is needed to rate bee pollen for this use.

### Mechanism of Action:

Bee pollen refers to the pollen from flowers that collects on the legs and bodies of worker bees. It can also include amounts of nectar and bee saliva. Bee pollen

composition varies depending on plant source and geographic region. Up to 50% of bee pollen may be polysaccharides. The other constituents include lipids, protein, simple sugars, vitamin C, and carotenoids (5). Proponents often claim that enzymes in bee pollen provide a variety of therapeutic benefits. However, any enzymes in bee pollen are likely to be digested in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. There is no reliable evidence indicating that bee pollen enzymes or other constituents in bee pollen offer any therapeutic benefit.

#### **Adverse Reactions:**

Orally, bee pollen seems to be well tolerated in most patients. There is one report of dizziness in a patient who took a combination product containing royal jelly, bee pollen extract, and a bee pollen plus pistil extract (12008).

Patients with pollen allergies are at risk for serious allergic reactions. Allergic reactions can include itching, swelling, shortness of breath, light headedness, and anaphylaxis. Chronic allergy symptoms due to bee pollen include gastrointestinal (GI) and neurologic symptoms and eosinophilia (5, 6, 11). There have also been two cases of acute hepatitis associated with bee pollen use. One case involved ingestion of two tablespoons of pure bee pollen daily for several months. Another case involved ingestion of 14 tablets per day of a combination herbal product containing bee pollen, chaparral, and 19 other herbs for 6 weeks (1351). In this case it is not known if bee pollen or another herb might have caused the adverse event.

#### **Interactions with Herbs & Supplements:**

None known.

#### **Interactions with Drugs:**

None known.

#### **Interactions with Foods:**

None known.

#### **Interactions with Lab Tests:**

None known.

#### **Interactions with Diseases or Conditions:**

**POLLEN ALLERGY:** Patients with pollen allergies are at risk for serious allergic reactions. Allergic reactions can include itching, swelling, shortness of breath, light headedness, and anaphylaxis (5, 6).

#### **Dosage/Administration:**

**ORAL:** For premenstrual syndrome (PMS), two tablets twice daily of a specific combination containing royal jelly 6 mg, bee pollen extract 36 mg, and bee pollen plus pistil extract 120 mg (Femal, Natumin Pharma) per tablet for 2 menstrual cycles has been used (12008).

#### **Editor's Comments:**

Pollens come from various plants, including buckwheat, maize, pine (songhuafen), rape, and typha (puhuang) (11). Avoid confusion with bee venom, honey, and royal jelly.

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