



MYRRH

Also Known As:

Abyssinian Myrrh, African Myrrh, Arabian Myrrh, Bal, Balsamodendron Myrrha, Bdellium, Bol, Bola, Commiphora, Didin, Didthin, Gum Myrrh, Heerabol, Mo Yao, Murrah, Myrrh Gum, Myrrha, Opopanax, Resina Commiphorae, Somalien Myrrh, The Bitter, Yemen Myrrh.

CAUTION: See separate listing for Guggul.

Scientific Name:

Commiphora myrrha, synonyms Commiphora molmol, Balsamodendrum myrrha; Commiphora habessinica, synonyms Commiphora abyssinica, Balsamodendrum habessinicum; Commiphora madagascariensis; Commiphora kataf, synonyms Commiphora erythraea, Amyris kataf, Hemprichia erythraea; other Commiphora species.

Family: Burseraceae.

People Use This For:

Orally, myrrh is used for indigestion, ulcers, colds, cough, asthma, bronchial congestion, arthritic pain, cancer, leprosy, and syphilis. It is also used orally as a stimulant, antispasmodic, and to increase menstrual flow.

Topically, myrrh is used for mild inflammation of the oral and pharyngeal mucosa, aphthous ulcers, gingivitis, chapped lips, hemorrhoids, bedsores, wounds, abrasions, furunculosis, bad breath, and loose teeth.

In foods and beverages, myrrh is used as a flavoring component.

In manufacturing, myrrh is used as a fragrance and fixative in cosmetics.

It is also used in embalming and as incense.

Safety:

LIKELY SAFE ...when consumed in amounts commonly found in food (11). Myrrh is approved for use in foods in the US (11).

POSSIBLY SAFE ...when used orally and appropriately (12). ...when used topically and appropriately (2, 4, 5, 11, 18).

POSSIBLY UNSAFE ...when used orally in excessive doses (12).

PREGNANCY: LIKELY UNSAFE ...when used orally because myrrh stimulates uterine tone and blood flow, and possibly has an abortifacient effect (4, 12, 19). There is insufficient reliable information available about the safety of the topical use of myrrh during pregnancy.

LACTATION: Insufficient reliable information available; avoid using.

Effectiveness:

There is insufficient reliable information available about the effectiveness of myrrh.

Mechanism of Action:

The applicable part of myrrh is resin. Myrrh resin contains a volatile oil and mucilage that have antimicrobial (4, 6), deodorizing (8), anti-inflammatory (4, 8), antitumor (1536), and astringent effects (4, 6). In animals, it exhibits antipyretic and hypoglycemic effects (4), as well as protects against the development of gastric ulcers (1535). Myrrh can stimulate smooth muscle (6, 12) and possibly peristalsis (6). It stimulates uterine tone (6, 12) and promotes uterine blood flow (12, 19).

Adverse Reactions:

Topically, dermatitis has been reported with the use of myrrh (6).
Orally, amounts greater than 2-4 grams can cause kidney irritation and diarrhea (12).
Large amounts can affect the heart rate (19).

Interactions with Herbs & Supplements:

None known.

Interactions with Drugs:

ANTIDIABETES DRUGS

Interaction Rating = **Moderate** Be cautious with this combination
Severity = Moderate " Occurrence = Possible " Level of Evidence = D

Myrrh might have hypoglycemic effects (4). Theoretically, myrrh might have additive effects with antidiabetes drugs and increase the risk of hypoglycemia.

WARFARIN (Coumadin)

Interaction Rating = **Moderate** Be cautious with this combination
Severity = High " Occurrence = Possible " Level of Evidence = D

There is some concern that myrrh might decrease the effectiveness of warfarin. In one case, a patient who was previously stable on warfarin had a significant decline in international normalized ratio (INR) following consumption of an aqueous extract of myrrh (14425).

Interactions with Foods:

None known.

Interactions with Lab Tests:

BLOOD GLUCOSE: Theoretically, myrrh can lower blood glucose and test results.

Interactions with Diseases or Conditions:

DIABETES: Theoretically, myrrh can interfere with diabetes therapy (4).

HEART CONDITIONS: Use myrrh with caution in individuals with heart conditions, because large amounts can affect the heart rate (19).

OTHER: Use myrrh with caution because it can exacerbate uterine bleeding (12, 19), fever, and systemic inflammation (19).

Dosage/Administration:

TOPICAL: For mild mouth and throat irritation, dab the undiluted tincture of myrrh on affected areas two to three times daily. Myrrh is also commonly used as a rinse or gargle with 5-10 drops in a glass of water (2, 8). A typical mouthwash can contain 30-60 drops in a glass of water also (8). The tooth powder contains 10% powdered resin (2, 18).

Editor's Comments:

Myrrh is the oleo-gum resin exuded from fissures or cuts in the bark of Commiphora species trees. Commiphora mukul, a related species, is not a source of myrrh (8).

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