Dandelion

This fact sheet provides basic information about dandelion—common names, what the science says, potential side effects and cautions, and resources for more information.

Common Names—dandelion, lion’s tooth, blowball

Latin Name—Taraxacum officinale

Dandelion greens are edible and are a rich source of vitamin A. Dandelion has been used in many traditional medical systems, including Native American and traditional Arabic medicine. Historically, dandelion was most commonly used to treat liver diseases, kidney diseases, and spleen problems. Less commonly, dandelion was used to treat digestive problems and skin conditions. Today, traditional or folk uses of dandelion include use as a liver or kidney “tonic,” as a diuretic, and for minor digestive problems.

The leaves and roots of the dandelion, or the whole plant, are used fresh or dried in teas, capsules, or extracts. Dandelion leaves are used in salads or as a cooked green, and the flowers are used to make wine.

What the Science Says

There is no compelling scientific evidence for using dandelion as a treatment for any medical condition.

Side Effects and Cautions

- Dandelion use is generally considered safe. However, there have been rare reports of upset stomach and diarrhea, and some people are allergic to the plant.
- People with an inflamed or infected gallbladder, or blocked bile ducts, should avoid using dandelion.
- Tell all your health care providers about any complementary health practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care. For tips about talking with your health care providers about complementary and alternative medicine, see NCCAM’s Time to Talk campaign at nccam.nih.gov/timetotalk/.
Sources


For More Information


NCCAM Clearinghouse

Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-888-644-6226
TTY (for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers): 1-866-464-3615
E-mail: info@nccam.nih.gov

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NIH Office of Dietary Supplements

Web site: www.ods.od.nih.gov

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