

What Are the Benefits of Valerian Root?

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What is it?

Valerian is a flowering plant with light pink, purple, or white flowers that appear in early June. People have used the root of the plant throughout the years as an alternative medicine. Valerian has been used as early as the second century, although it became especially popular in the 7th century as a way to help people sleep better.

Benefits

What are the benefits of valerian root?

Many [studies](#) have found that valerian root could be helpful as a sleep aid. The plant root is thought to have a mild sedative effect, although scientists aren't entirely sure just exactly why or how it works.

One [2016 study](#) found that valerian root can be helpful for treating severe PMS symptoms. Researchers found that the extract made a significant difference in decreasing PMS symptoms.

[Evidence](#) suggests that valerian root is effective when used with St. John's wort to help treat depression and anxiety disorders together. A [2016 study](#) also found that valerian root might be helpful as an anti-inflammatory for certain medical conditions, such as arthritis.

Use

How to use valerian root

You can buy prepared valerian root capsules at your local supermarket or health food store. You shouldn't crush or separate the capsule. Instead, you should swallow it all at once.

The correct dosage will depend on what you're using valerian root for. If your doctor has recommended that you use valerian root, they'll likely provide you with an advised dose.

Valerian root is generally sold in 500-milligram tablets. For PMS, [one study](#) suggested taking 530 milligrams of valerian root twice per day. You can take 500 milligrams daily to help you sleep.

Although the most common way to use valerian root is by taking a prepared capsule, you can also drink it in a tea. Many herbal remedies also combine valerian root with other ingredients. For example, some sleeping pills mix valerian root and melatonin for better results.

Valerian root is also found in over-the-counter sleep agents, such as [Valerian Sleep](#) and [Nature's Way Valerian Nighttime](#).

Takeaway

What you can do now

If you're interested in adding valerian root to your routine as a supplement or aid for a specific disorder, talk to your doctor about it first. They can advise you about how to best use valerian root for your specific medical condition, such as using it as a sleep aid, for depression and anxiety, or for PMS symptoms.

You should also make sure that it's safe to take with any medications you're currently taking. Although it's generally safe to use, valerian root interacts with many different medications, alcohol, and other herbs. If you're at risk of having medicinal interaction, your doctor may advise you about how to correctly wean yourself off of any other medications you're taking before trying valerian root.