

## HERBS FOR THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Several herbs stand out when it comes to strengthening, rehabilitating, or enhancing the immune system. All of them can be used over the long term; few have any side effects. Though some of them are active against specific disease organisms, their strength lies in enhancing various aspects of the immune system, offering protective activity against toxins or disease for specific organs in the body, antitumor activity, and/or tonifying and restoring a debilitated body or immune system. Many of these herbs are also considered antistressors. They seem to protect the body from the effects of stress — and stress, it has been shown, will actually impair immune effectiveness over time.

### Five Herbs for the Immune System

Ashwagandha  
Astragalus  
Boneset  
Red Root  
Siberian Ginseng

### ASHWAGANDHA (*Withania somnifera*)

**Family:** Solanaceae.

**Part used:** The root is used in Western practice; all parts of the plant are used in the rest of the world.

**Collection:** The plant is little grown (or known) in this country but common in India, Sudan, Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Rwanda. The root is usually harvested in the fall; the leaves, at any time; the seeds, in season.

**Actions:** Root: immune tonic, stress-protective, antibacterial, diuretic, antipyretic, astringent, nerve sedative, alterative.

Leaves and stem: antipyretic, febrifuge, bitter, diuretic, antibacterial, antimicrobial, astringent, nerve sedative.

Seeds: hypnotic, diuretic, coagulant.

Fruit (of related species): immune tonic, antibacterial, alterative.

**Active against:** *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Salmonella* spp.