

Side Effects and Contraindications

Do not use during pregnancy. Some clinicians report abdominal cramping, nervous tremors, and excessive drying of the mucous membranes when large doses are used.

Alternatives to Goldenseal

Probably the closest herb to goldenseal is goldthread, *Coptis* spp. The Chinese species, *Coptis chinensis*, has a root larger than goldenseal; the American species, *Coptis trifoliata*, has a tiny threadlike root system, and it takes a great deal of it to make sufficient medicine. However, they are used almost identically. Laboratory study verifies their actions against antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and their historical use indicates that they are an efficient substitute for goldenseal. One species in India, *C. teeta*, has been traditionally used as an effective anti-malarial herb and it has been verified *in vitro* to be active against the malarial parasite.

Other substitutes for specific uses include:

Mucous membrane tonic: yerba manza (*Anemopsis californica*).

Topical infections: usnea, coptis, Oregon grape root (*Mahonia* spp.), barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*).

Eye wash: Oregon grape/usnea/rose hip; equal parts, infused in water.

Vaginal douche: usnea/calendula tincture; equal parts, in 1 pint water.

Gum infections: elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*) or myrrh (*Comiphora* spp.), oak bark or rhatany (*Krameria* spp.) tinctures in combination.

Intestinal infections with diarrhea: cryptolepsis or artemisia combined with either oak bark or rhatany.

Snuff: skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton* spp. or *Lysichitum* spp. or *Symplocarpus foetidus*), Oregon grape, barberry, coptis.

GRAPEFRUIT SEED EXTRACT (GSE) (*Citrus paradisi*)

Family: Rutaceae.

Part used: Seed and fruit peel, although there is evidence that the leaves are equally effective (see comment under Preparation and Dosage).

Collection: The seed and peel from the fresh ripe fruit (see comment under Preparation and Dosage); the leaves at any time.