

artichoke*Cynara scolymus* (leaf)**Common uses****Dyspepsia**

Evidence: A double-blind RCT with 244 participants and an open RCT with 454 participants, found artichoke leaf extract provided moderate relief of symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, flatulence, and abdominal pain in functional dyspepsia or dyspepsia associated with biliary disease.^{12,13}

Hyperlipidaemia

Evidence: A 2002 Cochrane systematic review found few studies had rigorously researched use in individuals with raised cholesterol levels. Analysis of two RCTs involving 167 participants found some beneficial effects, but the evidence was not considered compelling.¹⁴

Other reported uses: Alcohol-induced hangover symptoms and irritable bowel syndrome.³

Notes

- *Cynara scolymus* should not be confused with Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*).
- Increased bile flow may worsen bile duct obstruction or symptoms of gall stones.¹⁵
- Nephrotoxicity has been reported.¹⁶

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Insufficient reliable data.

Interactions

Anticoagulants (e.g. warfarin), *antiplatelet drugs* (e.g. aspirin, clopidogrel) and *NSAIDs* (e.g. ibuprofen): Artichoke extract has caused reduced platelet aggregation (both spontaneous and ADP-induced) and increased risk of bleeding.¹⁶ Monitor for signs of bleeding and possible increase in INR if taking warfarin.

Common dosage ranges¹⁶

Optimal doses for efficacy and safety have not been established. Some products are standardised to 15% chlorogenic acid, 2–5% cynarin per dose, or 1% caffeoyl acid derivatives.

Tablets/capsules (dried leaf extract): 250–750 mg of cynarin or 1,800–1,900 mg dried leaf extract daily have been used in trials. 320–640 mg dried leaf extract daily has been used for dyspepsia. For dyslipidaemia, 320 mg standardised dried leaf extract four to six times daily for a minimum of six weeks.

Liquid extract (1:2): 3–8 mL daily.

astragalus*Astragalus membranosus* (root)**Common uses****Immune system stimulant**

Evidence: A 2005 Cochrane systematic review of four clinical trials in a total of 342 colorectal cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy found a decoction of *Astragalus* spp. *Huangqi* provided minor stimulation of immunocompetent cells and reduced the number of patients experiencing chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. Trials were considered to have methodological limitations, however, and further research is needed.¹⁷

Other reported uses: The common cold, upper respiratory infections and hepatitis.

Notes

- The intended use of CAMs by individuals undergoing chemotherapy should be discussed with their medical practitioner(s) and be medically supervised. For further information, refer to the 'Notes' section under 'Purpose and content of the CAM monographs'.
- Astragalus is commonly used in combination with other traditional Chinese medicine herbs.
- Anecdotal reports suggest it may cause mild diuresis and reduction in blood pressure.¹⁶
- Avoid use during acute infections.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Insufficient reliable data.

Interactions

Many anecdotal and theoretical interactions have been reported, with uncertain clinical importance.¹⁶

Immunosuppressant agents (e.g. corticosteroids, cyclosporin): Theoretically, the immunostimulating properties of astragalus may reduce the efficacy of immunosuppressants.

Common dosage ranges

Tablets/capsules: 500–1,000 mg of the dried root three times daily has been used.¹⁶

Powder: 1–30 g daily. 4–7 g daily is commonly used for prevention of the common cold.¹⁸