

Herbal Laxative Tablets



Product Summary:

This naturally sourced herbal laxative can be used for comfortable, overnight relief of occasional constipation.

Properties/Uses:

The claim as approved by the *Natural Health Products Directorate* (NHPD): Stimulant laxative for short term relief of occasional constipation.



DIGESTIVE



Pharmacology:

The medicinal use of senna (*Cassia. angustifolia*) traces back to Arabian physicians who used it in the 9th century A.D.¹ The leaves were brewed into a tea and administered as a laxative, but effects were unpredictable since it was difficult to control the concentration of the active sennosides. Today, standardized dosage forms solve the unpredictable nature of the laxative effect.


Senna contains anthraquinones, including dianthrone glycosides, sennosides A, B, C, and D and minor sennosides, all of which contribute to the potent laxative effect.¹ The plant also contains chrysophanic acid, flavonols, carbohydrates, and mucilage, including galactose, arabinose, rhamnose, mannose, and fructose.

The use of senna in treating constipation, especially in elderly patients, is well documented. Senna is the stimulant laxative of choice in the elderly and in psychiatric and spinal cord injury patients. Sennosides exhibit a strong cathartic effect by altering colonic motility, absorption, and secretion and causing fluid accumulation.^{1,2}

Cascara (*Rhamnus pushiana*) is also known as cascara sagrada, bitter bark, purshiana bark, and sacred bark.² The use of cascara traces back to at least 1805 and it was commonly used by indigenous American people and immigrants as a natural laxative. Cascara contains the active anthracene derivatives including the glycosides or cascariosides A, B, C, and D, and a number of dianthrone derivatives including emodin, chrysophanol, and the heterodianthrone, as well as palmidin A, B, and C. Similar to senna, the active ingredients cause secretion of water and electrolytes, causing an increase in bowel content volume and stimulating peristalsis. Emodin has been studied for a number of beneficial effects, including anti-cancer, anti-fibrotic, anti-inflammatory, and immune system effects.

Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is used historically for gastrointestinal complaints. The therapeutic use dates back to the Roman Empire, where Hippocrates (460 B.C.), and later Pliny the Elder (23 A.D.) recommended licorice for use as a carminative and expectorant. Licorice has also been used traditionally in China and Japan to treat chronic viral hepatitis. Licorice root contains a variety of compounds, including triterpenoids, polyphenols, polysaccharides, and the active glycoside glycyrrhizin. Studies have found chemical constituents of licorice exhibit anti-viral, anti-cancer, and anti-inflammatory activity.

Gentian (*Gentiana lutea*), also known as bitter root and gall weed, has traditionally been used to stimulate appetite, improve digestion by stimulating the flow of gastric juices and bile, and treat gastrointestinal complaints. Gentian contains a number of bitter glycosides, including iridoid glycosides such as gentiopicrin and gentiopicroside, and also contains xanthenes and triterpenes. Gentiopicroside has been demonstrated to possess anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect, and some gentian extracts have been found to have anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and anti-protozoal effects in vitro, including activity against *Helicobacter pylori*. Clinical trials have demonstrated that gentian increases the stimulation of gastric secretions and reduces the incidence of gastrointestinal symptoms such as abdominal pain, constipation, dyspepsia, and heartburn. Gentian extracts exhibit radical scavenging and antioxidant effects, and gentiopicroside was found to relax the smooth muscle in animal ileum.





Rhubarb (*Rheum officinale*) is extensively used in traditional Chinese medicine (as early as 22 A.D.) for the management of constipation and gastrointestinal disorders. It has also been used in the treatment of renal disorders, hyperlipidemia and cancer. Rhubarb contains a number of anthraquinone derivatives, including rhein, emodin, physcion, and chrysophanol, as well as glycosides, tannins, sennosides, gallic acid, and cinnamic acid. Sennosides, emodin and other anthraquinones affect absorption, secretion and motility in the gastrointestinal tract and it may increase peristalsis without affecting the stomach or duodenum. Studies have found rhubarb extract increases the perfusion of gastric mucosal blood flow, increases excretion of bacteria and toxins, and decreases permeability of intestinal mucous membranes. Long term administration of rhubarb extract has been used for lazy bowel syndrome in Kampo medicine (the practice and adaptation of traditional Chinese medicine) in Japan.





Manufactured product information

Manufacturer:

WN Pharmaceuticals® Ltd.

Size/UPC:

100's 7 77747 10262 4

NPN:

80027819

Expiry Date:

42 months from date of manufacture

Active Ingredients:

Each tablet contains:

Senna 4:1 Extract (<i>Cassia angustifolia</i>) (leaf)	60 mg
(equivalent to 240 mg crude herb)	
Cascara Sagrada (<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>) (bark)	130 mg
Licorice (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>) (root)	40 mg
Gentian (<i>Gentiana lutea</i>) (root)	5 mg
Rhubarb (<i>Rheum palmatum</i>) (root)	4 mg

Non-Medicinal Ingredients (in descending order):

Dibasic calcium phosphate dihydrate, microcrystalline cellulose, peppermint leaf, croscarmellose sodium, magnesium stearate, peppermint oil.

Appearance:

Round light brown speckled tablet.

Packaging:

175 cc white round bottle with safety seal under a 38 mm white induction sealed cap with vented interior seal and a label applied to the bottle. Lot number and expiry date are printed on label applied to exterior of bottle.

Storage:

Store in tightly closed containers in a dry place.





Dose:

Doses of senna leaves of 0.6 to 2 grams per day provide a cathartic laxative effect.¹

Typical doses of cascara are 1 gram of bark or 325 mg of dried extract.²

Licorice root has been used in daily doses from 2 to 15 g for ulcer and gastritis.

Gentian root has been used as a bitter digestive tonic in doses of 1 to 4 grams per day.

Doses of 20 to 50 mg/kg daily of dried rhubarb have typically been used.

Directions:

(Adults): 2 tablets at bedtime or as recommended by a physician. Allow 6 to 12 hours for laxative effect to occur. Take a few hours before or after taking other medications or health products. Take two to three times per week. If results are not observed, the frequency of use may be increased up to once daily. Do not use for more than 7 days.

Caution:

The caution as approved by the *Natural Health Products Directorate* (NHPD): KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN. Consult a physician prior to use if you have a kidney or liver disorder, faecal impaction or symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting or fever, or if you are taking additional licorice root, cardiac medications or antiarrhythmic medications. Consult a physician if symptoms persist or worsen. Reduce dose or discontinue use if you experience abdominal pain, cramps, spasms, and/or diarrhea. Do not use if you have hemorrhoids, hypokalemia, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disorder, acute stomach irritation, inflammation, stomach or duodenal ulcers or if you have a chronic gastrointestinal disorder, or if you are taking thiazide diuretics, cardiac glycosides, corticosteroids, stimulant laxatives or other medications which may aggravate electrolyte imbalance. Do not use if you have abnormal constrictions of the gastrointestinal tract, potential or existing intestinal blockage, atonic bowel, appendicitis, inflammatory colon disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, abdominal pain of unknown origin, undiagnosed rectal bleeding, severe dehydration with depleted water or electrolytes. Do not use if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Some people may experience headaches. Overuse or extended use may cause dependence for bowel function. Hypersensitivity is known to occur, in which case discontinue use. STORE AT ROOM TEMPERATURE IN A DARK, DRY PLACE. DO NOT USE IF SEAL UNDER CAP IS BROKEN OR MISSING.

Deficiency Symptoms:

N/A





Drug Interactions/Contraindications:

Drug Interactions:

Laxatives should not be taken within 2 hours of other medications or natural health products because the desired effect of the other medicine may be reduced.¹ Chronic use of senna or cascara may cause potassium deficiency that can potentiate the effects of cardiac glycosides, antiarrhythmics, and corticosteroids or increase the effects of cardiac complications. Because of the risk of hypokalemia, senna and cascara should not be used concurrently with drugs known to deplete potassium, such as certain diuretics.

Because senna and cascara may cause diarrhea, and diarrhea can reduce the absorption of vitamin K, patients receiving warfarin should exercise caution due to the increased risk of bleeding.¹⁻³

The glycyrrhizin in licorice may inhibit the metabolism of prednisolone and increase prednisolone levels.⁵ Electrolyte imbalance may occur with licorice, and there is one report of digitalis toxicity which may be related to this effect. Several, but not all, studies suggest glycyrrhizin found in licorice may reduce serum testosterone.

With chronic use rhubarb may cause potassium loss potentially increasing the toxic effects of cardiac glycosides (digoxin) and decreases intestinal transit time which may potentially reduce the absorption of orally administered drugs.⁶ Use of rhubarb during pregnancy should be avoided due to potential uterine-stimulant and genotoxic effects of anthraquinones.


Contraindications:

Laxatives such as senna and cascara should not be used in the presence of abdominal pain, nausea, fever, vomiting, intestinal obstructions, stenosis, atony, appendicitis, inflammatory colon disease (such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis), abdominal pain of unknown origin, or in cases of severe dehydration and electrolyte depletion.^{1,2} Rectal bleeding or failure to have a bowel movement after use of a laxative may indicate a serious condition. Laxative use should be discontinued and a physician should be consulted.

Dosage should be reduced if cramping occurs.¹ Consult a physician or health care practitioner if there are sudden changes in bowel movements that persist for more than two weeks.

Laxatives should not be used for longer than one week, unless advised by your physician or health care practitioner.¹ Chronic use or overuse may cause dependence on laxatives for bowel function. A health care practitioner or physician should be consulted if symptoms persist or worsen. Prolonged use or overuse of senna and cascara may cause diarrhea, leading to electrolyte imbalance and excessive water loss.

Consult a health care practitioner or physician before using this product if you are pregnant or nursing.¹ Licorice should not be used during pregnancy due to its estrogenic and potential abortifacient effects.





Toxicity/Adverse Reactions:

Hypersensitivity to any of the ingredients could occur.

Adverse effects of senna are generally mild and associated with high doses, and include gastrointestinal cramping, nausea, or vomiting.¹ Prolonged use could cause laxative dependency syndrome characterized by poor gastrointestinal motility and atonia of the colon. Natural senna contains chrysophanic acid which may cause discoloration of urine, feces, or breast milk.

Stimulant laxatives such as senna and cascara may cause loss of fluids, depletion of potassium, diarrhea, and abdominal pain and cramping.¹⁻³ Chronic use may alter electrolytes and increase the risk of cardiac complications.

Chronic daily administration of senna over many years has been associated with cachexia, colon pigmentation and reversible finger clubbing.¹ Senna may cause hepatotoxicity due to high amounts of toxic metabolites of anthraquinone glycosides. Although there have been concerns regarding the carcinogenicity of senna and cascara laxatives, the evidence suggests that neither is carcinogenic nor mutagenic.^{1,2}

Chronic use of cascara may cause melanin pigmentation of the colon mucous membranes, and urine discoloration.²

At recommended dosages few adverse effects have been reported for licorice.⁴ Large amounts of licorice may cause ocular effects resulting in visual disturbances. Licorice may potentially cause electrolyte imbalance, hypokalemia, mineralocorticoid hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, and metabolic alkalosis in high doses.

Gentian extract may cause headache, nausea, or vomiting.⁵ Gentian is contraindicated in gastric or duodenal ulcer and hypertension. Extracts of gentian have exhibited mutagenicity.

Rhubarb has been reported rarely to cause mild adverse gastrointestinal effects.⁶ Emodin, found in rhubarb, may be mutagenic.



Allergen Content/Ingredient Sensitivity:

NO	YES
Artificial Colors	Corn Products
Artificial Flavors	Starch/Modified Starch
Artificial Sweeteners	
Egg Products	
Fish	
Gluten	
Hydrolyzed Plant Protein	
Lecithin	
Milk Products	
Peanuts	
Preservatives	
Sesame Products	
Shellfish	
Soy Products	
Sulphites	
Tartrazine	
Tree Nuts	
Wheat Products	
Yeast	

NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING DIETARY RESTRICTIONS:

Free of animal products

Kosher





References:

1. The Review of Natural Products, 2010. Senna Monograph. www.online.statref.com. Facts and Comparisons, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.
2. Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS), 2012. Senna Monograph. p.2419. Canadian Pharmacists Association, Ottawa ON, Canada.
3. The Review of Natural Products, 2010. Cascara Monograph. www.online.statref.com. Facts and Comparisons, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.
4. The Review of Natural Products, 2008. Licorice Monograph. www.online.statref.com. Facts and Comparisons, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.
5. The Review of Natural Products, 2008. Gentian Monograph. www.online.statref.com. Facts and Comparisons, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.
6. The Review of Natural Products, 2009. Rhubarb Monograph. www.online.statref.com. Facts and Comparisons, St. Louis, MO, U.S.A.

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