

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Licorice – Possible Contra-Indications

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Most Christopher formulas and many herbs are tonic, which means they may be taken for extended periods of time for chronic problems.

In addressing possible contra-indications or side effects of tonic herbs such as Licorice it is important to keep in mind that most studies showing side effects were done using concentrated extracts. When herbs are extracted to a concentrate elements are lost which normally assure the safety of these tonic herbs. Also, tonic herbs are traditionally used in small amounts over a long period of time. By greatly increasing the dosage, you lose the tonic effect, which opens the door to side effects.

Licorice and Blood Pressure

The main side effect that has been noted in large doses of extracted licorice (like you find in licorice candy) is an elevation in blood pressure. One might ask, "Why would such a wonderful herb have such a terrible side effect?" The answer is because of another therapeutic action possessed by licorice. This wonderful herb is a God-send to people who have low blood pressure, like many who have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. This syndrome can be accompanied by low blood pressure and adrenal exhaustion which are both resolved with the prudent use of licorice. However, if you have high blood pressure whole licorice root powder in small amounts may help lower your blood pressure because it is a "tonic" (it can raise or lower actions of the body). If you do not already have a blood pressure problem whole licorice root will not affect your blood pressure either way.

Licorice and Potassium Levels

One of the ways licorice works is by helping regulate sodium retention and water balance. Just like the action of your own hormones secreted by the adrenal glands, this action may reduce potassium levels. This is why we always recommend eating more vegetables which resolves low potassium levels.

Licorice and Kidneys

People with weak kidneys might also have side effects with licorice. These people should use Dr. Christopher's Kidney formula and go on a fresh produce diet. After six weeks they will not react adversely to whole licorice root powder.

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Licorice and Liver Disorders

People with severe liver disorders should drink fresh carrot juice, take Dr. Christopher's Liver formula and eat a fresh produce diet. Then after six weeks they will not have problems with licorice root.

Licorice and Heart Conditions, Pregnancy and Lactating Women

People with heart conditions that rely on digitalis glycosides perhaps should not use licorice until they "grow up and eat like adults" and get off the Standard American Diet (SAD). The same goes for pregnant and lactating women.

Just eat right and the tonic use of whole licorice root powder will not be contra-indicated.