

Ginkgo biloba in Neuropsychiatric Disorders and Age-Related Diseases

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EDITORIAL

Ginkgo biloba is a traditional Chinese medicine that has been used in many different disorders for many centuries. *Ginkgo biloba* extract (EGb) is derived from the leaves of the maidenhair tree. Extract from *Ginkgo biloba* leaves has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries to treat circulatory disorders, asthma, tinnitus, vertigo, and cognitive problems. *Ginkgo biloba* extracts are one of the most commonly taken phytomedicines. Ginkgo contains high levels of flavonoids and terpenoids, antioxidants that provide protection against oxidative cell damage from harmful free radicals. Antioxidants are believed to help reduce the risk of cancer. Extracts of ginkgo leaves contain phenolic acids, proanthocyanidins, flavonoid glycosides, such as myricetin, kaempferol, isorhamnetin and quercetin, and the ginkgolides, terpene trilactones, and bilobalides. The leaves also contain unique ginkgo biflavones, as well as alkylphenols and polyphenols.

The tree is considered to be a “living fossil,” meaning that it has continued to survive even after major extinction events. *Ginkgo biloba* may offer a range of health benefits, including improving cognitive function. Traditional uses are wide-ranging, but not all of them have been confirmed by research. It may help with cognitive function. Now a days researchers have focused more on EGb (*Ginkgo biloba* extracts) instead of *Ginkgo biloba* itself, EGb (*Ginkgo biloba* extracts) is now widely used in research and clinical trials on age-associated diseases including brain dysfunction, cardiovascular system diseases, carcinogen metabolism and some sensorial tissues diseases. *Ginkgo biloba* extract contains mainly flavonol glycosides, terpenoids, and proanthocyanidins. Ginkgo seeds, leaves, and nuts have traditionally been used to treat various ailments such as dementia, asthma, bronchitis, and kidney and bladder disorders.

However, there is no conclusive evidence that ginkgo is helpful for these conditions.

Ginkgo may help alleviate the symptoms of anxiety. People who should not take *Ginkgo biloba* include: children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, those with epilepsy, people taking blood thinners. Ginkgo can precipitate serotonin syndrome in patients that are on other antidepressant medications. Possible side effects of *Ginkgo biloba* include: nausea, diarrhoea, dizziness, headaches, stomach ache, restlessness, vomiting.

Patients with blood circulation disorders or individuals on anticoagulants, such as aspirin, are at risk of experiencing undesirable effects after taking ginkgo. As with any medication, care is needed to prevent interactions with other drugs and other risks. Even ibuprofen combined with ginkgo can increase the risk of internal bleeding. Effects of ginkgo on cardiovascular disease and risk factors, including hypertension and diabetes. Studies have examined the role of *Ginkgo biloba* in treating depression and other psychiatric disorders.

Several studies have suggested the neuroprotective effects of *Ginkgo biloba* extract. The effects of ginkgo on the cardiovascular system are widely studied and mostly observed as protective. Ginkgo's role includes a regulator of metabolism, membrane stabilizer, and vasodilator. Although extracts of *Ginkgo biloba* leaf are often marketed as cognitive enhancers, there is no evidence for effects on memory or attention. Systematic reviews have shown there is no evidence for effectiveness of ginkgo in treating high blood pressure, menopause-related cognitive decline, tinnitus, post-stroke recovery, or altitude sickness. One of the reviews showed weak preliminary evidence for ginkgo affecting dementia.

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