

# DONG QUAI

## Latin Name

Angelica sinensis

## Common Names

Chinese Angelica, Dong Quai

## Origin

Asia

## Description

Chinese Angelica, "Dong Quai" is the most important female tonic remedy in Chinese medicine. It is used for debility and poor vitality, convalescence and tiredness in women as well as all kinds of gynecological, menstrual, or menopausal symptoms. Dong Quai is the Chinese name of the root of the plant *Angelica sinensis* belonging to the family Umbelliferae. It is related to the European Angelica but its medicinal actions are more potent. The plant is a tall umbelliferous plant with branched celery-like leaved and a tall umbel of white-green flowers.

## Pharmacological Properties

Ligustilide, butylene phthalide and butyl phthalide are found in the volatile aromatic oil while ferulic acid and various polysaccharides are found in the non-aromatic fractions. Dong Quai has an immediate and stimulating effect on the uterus, especially during pregnancy or delivery. It has in pregnancy and delivery clinically observed to strengthen and normalize uterine contractions. These effects are thought to be due to components of the volatile oil, particularly ligustilide. Symptoms such as menstrual pain and irregularities, habitual abortion, chills in hands and feet, anemia and in some cases sterility have also responded well to Dong Quai. Animal and human studies have shown that Dong Quai also improves peripheral circulation and reduces blood viscosity. The research suggests that both ferulic acid and ligustilide are responsible, preventing spasms, relaxing vessels, and reducing blood clotting in peripheral vessels. It is a blood tonic, promoting its production and circulation. It is therefore used in treating anemia, boils, headache, venous problems, low immunity, and problems of peripheral blood flow.

Dong Quai has been used as the main female tonic in the Orient while ginseng has been the more traditional male adaptogen. Dong Quai is used to provide energy, vitality, and resistance to disease. It regulated female hormones, in the treatment of most menstrual and menopausal problems and material is of the correct identity, variety and good quality.

## Active Substances

ligustilide, butyl phthalide, butylene phthalide, ferulic acid, polysaccharides.  
Standard #2920- 0.008% to 0.011% ligustilide & #2922- 0.1% Ferulic acid

## Contraindications / Toxicity

No toxicity. Side effects are extremely rare. Rare cases of pyrogenia but requiring no need of treatment. People with gastro-intestinal disease may experience diarrhea. Avoid in case of hemorrhagic disease, hypermenorrhea, first three months of pregnancy, spontaneous abortion, and during severe flu.

## Suggested Use

200 mg. standardized extract 3 times daily

## Synergistic Agents

Licorice root, black cohosh, red raspberry, peony, rehmannia, ginger root, wild yam.

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## Processing

Seeds are planted in autumn. The plant is carefully tended for three years before the roots are ready for harvest. The Dong Quai is dried and selected according to required standards, graded for size of root, strength of taste, growing location and other factors. All raw material is subject to careful checking and analysis in laboratories. Extraction is exhaustive, using a special method to extract all the active ingredients. Only water/alcohol is used similar to traditional methods. No organic solvents are used. The extract is spray dried without carriers to produce a stable pure powder extract which is then standardized.

## Part Of Plant Used

Root

## References

- Mowrey, D. (1990) Guaranteed Potency Herbs. A Compilation of writings on the subject.
- Mowrey, D. (1986) The Scientific Validation of Herbal Medicine. Cormorant Books.
- Teeguarden, R. (1984) Chinese Tonic Herbs. Japan Publications Inc., NY and Tokyo.
- Yaozu, C. et al. (1984) Analysis of the ingredients of Angelica sinensis. Kexue Tongbao (Foreign Lang. Ed.) 29:560-562.

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