

Nature's Aide® Vitamins

# St. John's Wort Pure-Calm FORMULA



RESEARCH REPORT

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### RESEARCH REPORT



### ***How Many Times a Day Do You Wish You Could Smooth Out a Few of Life's Bumps?***

**M**olecular medicine has discovered that many of the emotional

“bumps” most of us suffer can be traced back to a deficiency of one vitally important messenger molecule: serotonin. Brain cells use serotonin to signal other brain cells. A breakdown in this neurochemical chain of communication can fuel anything from chronic

fatigue to depression with a lot of unpleasantness in between.

Although there are dozens of neurochemicals to help modulate the complex workings of our minds and behaviors, serotonin has been singled out for intense scrutiny.

Why? The answer is simple: because it governs so much of our behavior and modulates our emotions.

Doctors Schloss and Williams at the Biochemistry Department, Trinity College, University of Dublin, sum it up neatly in a 1998 paper, “The serotonergic system is known to modulate mood, emotion, sleep, and appetite and thus is implicated in the control of numerous behavioral and physiological functions.” (Schloss P, Williams DC, “The Serotonin Transporter: A Primary Target for Antidepressant Drugs,” *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 1998; 12(2):115-21)

The answer to a few simple questions can tell you if you are one of the estimated 1 in 15 Americans affected by depression. Questions like: Have I been “down” lately? Have I experienced feelings of anxiety or emptiness? Have I

had trouble sleeping? Have I experienced a loss of sexual drive? Or energy? Or the desire to socialize? Have I lost interest in my work or in any other activities I once enjoyed?

If you answered “yes” to one or more of the above, you—like hundreds of thousands of others—may be experiencing clinical depression.

Depression is not voluntary. It is not a character flaw. According to the latest reports from research groups like those at the National Institutes of Health, depression may be as simple as a breakdown in serotonergic brain cell to brain cell communication.

Fortunately, there are well-researched answers in the alternative medicine chest.

## **St. John's Wort Prescription of Choice In Germany**

**D**octors in Germany prescribe almost 66 million daily doses of St. John's Wort for psychological complaints. In fact, German doctors prescribe St. John's Wort about 20 times more often than Prozac®, one of the most widely prescribed antidepressants in the United States. Why? Because St. John's Wort works, and works without many of the side effects that may occur with the use of pharmaceutical drugs.

Recently developed antidepressant drugs have proven to be effective in overcoming depression but patients report unpleasant side effects including dry mouth, nausea, headache, diarrhea, impaired sexual function, and loss of sleep.

An analysis of 23 European clinical studies of St. John's Wort published in the British Medical Journal in 1996 concluded that the herb has provable antidepressant effects. Clinical trials in this country have gone a step further. Researchers report that St. John's Wort compares favorably with conventional

antidepressants in treating mild to moderate depression. (for example: Harrer G., et al. "Effectiveness and Tolerance of the Hypericum Extract LI 160 Compared to Maprotiline: A Multicenter Double-Blind Study." *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology*, 1994. 1:3-8.)

The results of these early clinical trials are so promising that a new large-scale study has been funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM). Coordinated by the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, this study is comparing the effectiveness of St. John's wort with Zoloft® as well as with a placebo.

## **St. John's Wort Has a Long and Illustrious Track Record**

**S**t. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a long-living, shrubby herb with yellow flowers. The uninformed might call it a weed, but doctors and herbalists have valued the medicinal qualities of St. John's wort down through the centuries. According to early medical literature it was used—successfully—to treat mental disorders, neuralgia, sciatica, back pain, malaria, wounds, burns, and insect bites.

Today, St. John's Wort stars in the herbal arsenal against depression. In 1998 it was among the top-selling botanical products in the United States with estimated sales of \$400 million.

As for safety, the *Physician's Desk Reference for Herbal Medicines*, published by Medical Economics Company, Montvale, New Jersey, says, "No health hazards are known in conjunction with the proper administration of designated therapeutic dosages."

In animal studies, photosensitiza-

tion has occurred following intakes of huge amounts of the herb, amounts equivalent to 150 grams for the average human. Since the normal therapeutic dose ranges from 300 to 900 milligrams (a milligram is one thousandth of a gram) it is highly unlikely that a problem would develop, but it might be wise on many counts to avoid excessive exposure to the sun.

## **How St. John's Wort Works**

**W**e know that the major components of St. John's Wort include flavonoids, kaempferol, luteolin, hyperforin, polycyclic phenols, hypericin and pseudohypericin. The latest research indicates that the last four may be the substances active against depression. No one knows exactly how the herb works, but several mechanisms of action have been proposed.

The first brings us right back to serotonin, because St. John's Wort appears to reduce the rate at which brain cells reabsorb serotonin, which

makes more serotonin available for use as a neurocommunicator. This action, similar to that of prescription monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, also spares dopamine and norepinephrine, two other important neurochemicals.

But St. John's Wort apparently does more. Researchers also believe that it modulates interleukin-6 (IL-6) activity. High levels of IL-6, a protein involved in communication between cells of the immune system, can lead to an increase in adrenal regulatory hormones that are, in themselves, a hallmark of depression. Researchers postulate that St. John's Wort attacks depression on these two fronts.

We don't know all there is to know about St. John's Wort. Research money for natural substances remains hard to come by because natural substances hold little promise of future profits for pharmaceutical companies. But, however it works, St. John's Wort performs extremely well in clinical trials. It relieves mild to moderate depression with little risk of unpleasant side effects, and at a much lower cost than its prescription big brothers.

## **Valerian Instead of Valium**

I first became aware of just how valuable an addition Valerian was to the herbal medical kit when I read *The Scientific Validation of Herbal Medicine* by Dr. Daniel B. Mowrey (published by Keats Publishing, 1990). Mowrey, who has conducted extensive original research into the healing properties of various herbs, presented Valerian as a tranquilizer without equal. A tranquilizer, moreover, that worked without dulling the senses or shortening the attention span. Even more important than its effectiveness was the news that Valerian, unlike the prescription tranquilizer Valium®, presented no danger of addiction even with long-term use.

Mowrey also recounted information from European trials where Valerian replaced the drug Ritalin® in treating children with hyperactivity or attention deficit disorders. Unlike Ritalin® (a powerful "upper" used to treat ADHD), Valerian calmed the subjects while it increased attention span, and did all this without side effects.

Dr. Mowrey may have been the first proponent of today's complementary medicine to extol the virtues of Valerian but he is certainly not the last.

According to Dr. PJ Houghton of the Department of Pharmacy, King's College, London, the pharmacological basis of the action of Valerian's active constituents have been "clearly shown in a number of animal and clinical studies," and may do something prescription tranquilizers can't do: "correct a variety of underlying conditions which necessitate a general sedative or tranquilizing effect." In other words, Valerian may address the cause while alleviating the symptoms.

Actually, Valerian has been mentioned in medical books since the late 1600s, and was used as a sedative and sleep aid for more than a thousand years before that. On June 7, 1994, the European-American Phytomedicines Coalition filed a petition with the Food and Drug Administration requesting that Valerian be sold as an over-the-counter drug for use as a nighttime sleeping aid. The petition argues that unlike prescription drugs that reduce REM sleep and

cause "hangover," Valerian is not a hypnotic agent and has been proven to be effective as a sleep-aid and mild sedative without side effects and limitations.

The compounds in Valerian (valpotriates, valeric acid, and volatile oils) have been found to stimulate the release of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) (Carvalho, et al. "Synaptosomal GABA Release as Influenced by Valerian Root Extract-Involvement of the GABA Carrier." *Archives of International Pharmacodynamic Therapy* 327(2): 0-31, 1994).

GABA is an amino acid that acts as another of the important neurotransmitters. It is, according to Dr. James F. Balch in *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, essential for brain metabolism and aids in proper brain function by decreasing neuron activity and keeping nerve cells from overfiring, thereby decreasing anxiety.

According to other studies reported by Grieve in *A Modern Herbal*, Valerian influences the cerebro-spinal system and has a beneficial effect on conditions like St. Vitus dance, neuralgia,

and insomnia by allaying pain and promoting sleep without the aftereffects of narcotics.

Tests on the physiological effects of Valerian as a mild sedative have been confirmed through superficial and deep electro-encephalograms (EEG). Those who took Valerian fell asleep more quickly, woke up less often, and experienced relatively no hangover effect.

A recent finding indicates that a lignan in Valerian, hydroxypinoresinol, has the ability to bind to the same receptors on nerve cells as benzodiazepine (the generic family of Valium®). It is postulated that, in addition to increasing levels of GABA, Valerian may also operate through the same mechanism as benzodiazepine.

Still other studies indicate that Valerian may have some anti-fungal qualities, and that a particular variety known as *Valeriana officinalis* var. *latifolia* may be highly effective in the remission of angina symptoms, restoring the blood supply to the myocardium, and lowering cholesterol without toxic action. (Yang, GY, et al. "Clinical Studies

on the Treatment of Coronary Heart Disease with *Valeriana officinalis* var. *latifolia*." *Chung Kuo Hsi I Chieh Ho Tsa Chih* 41(9):540-542, 1994).

## **Together, St. John's Wort and Valerian Make the Days Brighter and the Path a Little Smoother**

In combination, St. John's Wort and Valerian address the primary biochemical glitches that can lead to depression. With a little Coenzyme Q10 added to boost cellular energy The St. John's Wort Pure-Calm Formula smoothes out life's bumps.

A friend asked what would happen if he took a double dose. "Would I become euphoric?" The answer to that is emphatically, "No."

Never, ever take more than recommended dose of anything, not even relatively safe food supplements. Just because supplements are safe in

comparison to most prescription drugs does not mean that they are not powerful in their own right. Too much of a good thing can be just as dangerous as too little. Use common sense. None of the information in this booklet is intended to substitute for advice from your physician or other qualified health care provider. And, always check with your health care provider before taking anything new, including this formula.

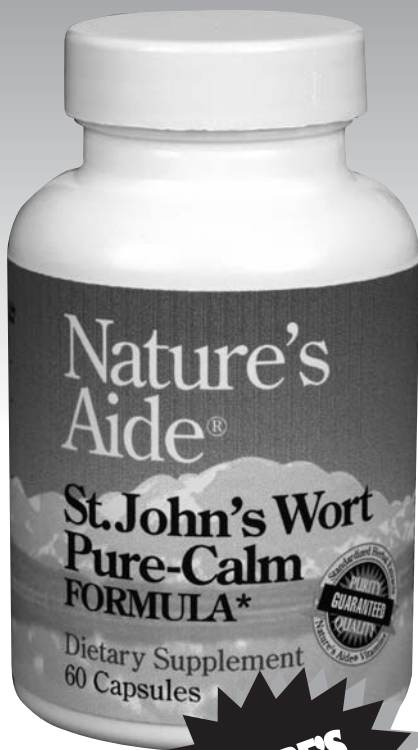
Back to the workings of the Pure-Calm Formula: It does not make one “happy,” the formula merely unsnarls biochemical tangles so that each of us can be the person we really are without major handicaps like too little serotonin or GABA.

# Nature's Aide® Vitamins

## St. John's Wort Pure-Calm

FORMULA

*for a Peaceful Feeling!*



Research sponsored by National Institute of Mental Health. St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is now under-going clinical trials in a three year study at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC to study the plants role in helping patients to have a happier and more positive outlook on life.

### INGREDIENTS -

Serving Size 2 capsules	Each Capsule Contains	%US RDA
St. John's Wort	300 mg	*
Co-enzyme Q10	500 mcg	*
Valerian Root Extract ( <i>Valeriana officinalis</i> )	25 mg	*

\*Daily value not established.

Note: If taking anti-depressant drugs, consult your physician before taking this product.

**NATURE'S  
PUREST  
FORMULA**

### In 60 Capsule Bottles

Item No.	Qty.	Reg \$ Each
SJ- 60	1	\$21.95

## Nature's Aide® Vitamins

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