

## Yohimbe

This fact sheet provides basic information about the herb yohimbe—common names, uses, potential side effects, and resources for more information. The yohimbe tree is a tall evergreen that is native to western Africa. The bark of the tree contains a chemical called yohimbine. The amount of yohimbine in dietary supplements may vary; some yohimbe products have been found to contain very little yohimbine. However, a standardized form of yohimbine—yohimbine hydrochloride—is available as a prescription medicine that has been studied and used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction.

**Common Names**—yohimbe, yohimbe bark

**Latin Name**—*Pausinystalia yohimbe*

### What It Is Used For

- Yohimbe bark has traditionally been used in Africa as an aphrodisiac (to increase sexual desire).
- The herb is currently used for sexual dysfunction, including erectile dysfunction in men.

### How It Is Used

As a dietary supplement, the dried bark of the yohimbe tree is used as a tea and taken by mouth. An extract of the bark is also put into capsules and tablets.

### What the Science Says

It is not known whether yohimbe is effective for any health conditions because clinical trials have not been conducted on the bark or its extract.\*

### Side Effects and Cautions

- Yohimbe has been associated with high blood pressure, increased heart rate, headache, anxiety, dizziness, and sleeplessness. Yohimbe can be dangerous if taken in large doses or for long periods of time.
- People should use caution if taking yohimbe with MAO inhibitors or medicines for high blood pressure. Yohimbe should not be combined with tricyclic antidepressants or phenothiazines (a group of medicines used mostly for mental health conditions such as schizophrenia).
- People with kidney problems and people with psychiatric conditions should not use yohimbe.

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\* Although numerous studies of the prescription medicine yohimbine hydrochloride have been conducted, their results cannot be interpreted as evidence for the dietary supplement yohimbe.

- Tell your health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

## Sources

Yohimbe bark extract. Natural Standard Database Web site. Accessed at <http://www.naturalstandard.com> on February 5, 2007.

Yohimbe. Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database Web site. Accessed at <http://www.naturaldatabase.com> on February 5, 2007.

Yohimbe bark. In: Blumenthal M, Goldberg A, Brinckman J, eds. *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs*. Newton, MA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2000:429-431.

## For More Information

Visit the NCCAM Web site at [nccam.nih.gov](http://nccam.nih.gov) and view:

- *What's in the Bottle? An Introduction to Dietary Supplements* at [nccam.nih.gov/health/bottle/](http://nccam.nih.gov/health/bottle/)
- *Herbal Supplements: Consider Safety, Too* at [nccam.nih.gov/health/supplement-safety/](http://nccam.nih.gov/health/supplement-safety/)

## NCCAM Clearinghouse

Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-888-644-6226

TTY (for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers): 1-866-464-3615

E-mail: [info@nccam.nih.gov](mailto:info@nccam.nih.gov)

## CAM on PubMed

Web site: [nccam.nih.gov/camonpubmed/](http://nccam.nih.gov/camonpubmed/)

## NIH Office of Dietary Supplements

Web site: [www.ods.od.nih.gov](http://www.ods.od.nih.gov)

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