

Does Ashwagandha Have Side Effects?

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is a medicinal herb that contains adaptogens. Research shows that adaptogens may offer many potential health benefits to the body, including support for the thyroid, hormone levels, and more.

However, there is a possible risk of side effects when seeking to make a positive change in the body, whether through exercise, diet, medication, and even herbal supplementation. Reports of side effects when taking ashwagandha are rare, but they can happen.

People use ashwagandha for some of the following medicinal reasons:

- Thyroid health
- Hormone management
- Weight loss
- Acne
- Stress and anxiety
- Sleep

If you are taking ashwagandha for any of the above reasons and think you might be having a bad reaction, or if you are thinking of taking ashwagandha for the first time, keep reading to learn more about potential ashwagandha side effects.

Ashwagandha Side Effects

Research points to ashwagandha being well tolerated by most people. But you should still be aware of bodily changes when taking ashwagandha and act accordingly to maintain overall health and wellness.

You may be at a greater risk of side effects with certain health conditions. If, when taking ashwagandha, you notice a change in your health, stop or avoid using ashwagandha until you consult with your healthcare provider.

Allergic Reaction (Food Allergy, Itching, Hives, and Rashes)

Ashwagandha belongs to the nightshade family of plants. These include tomatoes, peppers, and potatoes. If you have trouble digesting these plants and experience gas, bloating, or diarrhea, you may want to avoid ashwagandha. (1)

After eating ashwagandha, if you experience trouble breathing, chest pain, abdominal pain, or swelling, contact medical help immediately. Nightshade allergies are rare, but those who have them should always avoid ashwagandha.

Some people using ashwagandha have self-reported itching, hives, or rashes after taking ashwagandha. (2) If you experience these problems, stop using ashwagandha until the symptoms are manageable. Reintroduce ashwagandha into your diet in a smaller dose to see if the symptoms reappear.

[Summary: Ashwagandha can cause a serious and life-threatening food allergy. Some people report mild skin discomfort, including itching, hives, or a rash after taking ashwagandha.]

Ashwagandha Acne

The effects of ashwagandha on raising testosterone levels in the body may worsen skin conditions such as acne. (3) High testosterone levels in the body may contribute to excess sebum (oils in the skin) that contribute to skin inflammation, acne, painful nodules, and more.

However, some people report seeing positive results from taking ashwagandha for acne. (4) The reason for this may be linked to the potential for ashwagandha to help manage cortisol production, resulting in lower sebum levels.

[Summary: Ashwagandha may improve the appearance of the skin for some but make it worse for others. Consider trying other treatment methods before using ashwagandha if you are unsure how it will affect your skin.]

Pregnant Women

Pregnant women should avoid ashwagandha. (5) Preliminary studies show that overconsumption of ashwagandha may affect hormone levels in the body and could cause spasmolytic activity in the uterus, resulting in early delivery and possible miscarriage.

Not enough is known about the effects of taking ashwagandha during breastfeeding, so new mothers should abstain from using it.

Gastrointestinal Disorder

Ashwagandha has been shown to irritate the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, so people with stomach ulcers, constipation, or other digestive issues should steer clear. (6) If you take ashwagandha and experience minor bloating or gas, consider reducing the dosage until the symptoms are manageable.

Thyroid and Hormones

Research has found that ashwagandha affects testosterone and cortisol levels and may raise or lower levels of each, resulting in potentially serious health consequences if you have a thyroid condition. (7)

Autoimmune Disorder

Ashwagandha has properties that may activate the immune system and exacerbate autoimmune disorders. (8)

Upcoming Surgery

Preliminary studies have shown that ashwagandha may be capable of slowing down the activity of neurons that transmit messages between the central nervous system and the brain. (9) Because anesthesia and other medications given to patients during and after surgery could enhance this effect, medical experts suggest discontinuing ashwagandha at least two weeks before a scheduled surgery.

Drug Interactions with Ashwagandha

Do you take medication for a chronic health issue? (10) You'll want to be cautious with ashwagandha, because it can interact with prescription drugs. A few examples include medications for the following:

- Lower blood sugar: Ashwagandha can interfere with drugs that help control blood glucose levels and insulin sensitivity.
- Lower blood pressure: Ashwagandha may interfere with medication regulating blood pressure, possibly causing blood pressure levels to bottom out.
- Immunosuppressants: Ashwagandha contains free radical scavenging antioxidants and other properties that stimulate the immune system. Taking this herb with corticosteroids and other drugs for autoimmune diseases may weaken the effects of these drugs, leading to a worsening of disease, including pain, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, oxidative stress, and more.
- Sedatives: Lab studies have shown that ashwagandha may have a mild tranquilizing effect on the brain. Taking it with sedatives could enhance the strength of sleeping pills, possibly causing excessive drowsiness or sleepiness.
- Thyroid Management: Ashwagandha supports endocrine function and may enhance hormone production in the thyroid. There is a small amount of evidence that taking ashwagandha with thyroid hormone pills for a disorder, such as hypothyroidism, could overproduce thyroid hormones in the body.

[Summary: Before adding an herbal supplement to your regimen, speak with your healthcare provider first to make sure it doesn't conflict with any medications or health issues you may have.]

Health Benefits of Ashwagandha

Also known as Indian ginseng or winter cherry, ashwagandha is an ayurvedic herb in alternative medicine and belongs to an elite class of herbs known as a Rasayana. According to Eastern cultures, a rasayana herb has a greater ability to promote vitality and longevity when compared to other plants.

Research shows that ashwagandha contains compounds known as withanolides, which interact with the body in a way that provides medicinal support. If you are curious to learn more about the potential benefits of ashwagandha, then keep reading to learn more about its many medicinal uses.

[Summary: Ashwagandha is an ancient medicinal herb used for centuries to help balance the health of mind and body.]

Thyroid Health and Hormone Management

Research suggests that ashwagandha may be beneficial for the thyroid and hormone levels of some people. However, as mentioned in the side effects section of this article, if you have a thyroid condition or issues related to hormone levels in the body, you should not take ashwagandha without consulting with your healthcare provider.

Research suggests that taking ashwagandha may help maintain hormone levels already within the normal range. (11) Ashwagandha root extract contains antioxidant factors that may stimulate thyroid activity and help protect hepatic tissue from oxidative damage.

One study assessed a group of 50 subjects between the ages of 18 and 50 who took 600 milligrams of ashwagandha root or a placebo daily. (12) Researchers found that ashwagandha did help to improve normal hormone levels.

[Summary: Depending on the health of your thyroid and hormone levels in your body, ashwagandha may or may not be beneficial. Use extreme caution when taking ashwagandha for thyroid health or the management of hormone levels.]

Weight Loss

One study evaluating the effects of ashwagandha on adults experiencing chronic stress found that taking 300 milligrams of ashwagandha twice daily positively affected eating habits, body weight, blood cortisol levels, and overall happiness. (13)

[LINK to Weight Loss Article]

Allergies

Some people have tried ashwagandha for common seasonal challenges, such as ragweed, pollen, and other allergens. (14)

Ashwagandha may be beneficial due to its antioxidants that have the potential to help the body deal with stressors, such as seasonal allergies. (15) However, research into the benefits of ashwagandha for allergies is limited.

Stress, Anxiety, and Sleep

Stress, anxiety, and poor sleep are a continued source of poor health for many living in developed countries. One eight-week study examined the potential benefits of 300 milligrams of ashwagandha taken twice daily over eight weeks on people with issues related to stress, anxiety, and sleep. (16) The study found that sleep quality among participants improved due to reduced levels of stress and anxiety.

Male Virility

Traditional Ayurvedic Medicine has described ashwagandha as an aphrodisiac for use with male sexual dysfunction and infertility. One study examined a potential link between low testosterone and sperm count and suggested that ashwagandha does have the potential to improve sperm quality. (17)

Ashwagandha Dosage

There are no dosage guidelines established by the government for ashwagandha. Some studies and manufacturers of ashwagandha have administered or suggested using a small dose of just 1 to 2 teaspoons of the powder; 3 to 6 grams of the dried root; or 300–2,000 milligrams of a capsule supplement daily.

Ashwagandha has a bitter taste, so it's best to ingest with food and start with smaller amounts before working your way up to a full dose. Additionally, if you want to counteract ashwagandha side effects, starting with a lower dosage may help your body tolerate it as you increase the dosage in the following weeks and months.

[Summary: When taking ashwagandha for the first time, start with a smaller dose and build up to a larger dose, or simply follow the manufacturer's instructions if taking ashwagandha in supplement form.]

Safety and Quality Warnings

While several studies have noted positive therapeutic effects and no toxicity associated with using ashwagandha, more clinical trials are needed to understand the safety of ashwagandha and its impact on human health. (18)

There is currently no clinical research evaluating the safety of taking ashwagandha continuously over an extended period, which means its long-term effect on the body is still unknown.

It's important to read the labels of any herbal products or supplements and make sure you purchase the highest quality, organic varieties of ashwagandha from sources you can trust.

[Summary: Research into the benefits and safety of ashwagandha is ongoing. Always consult with your primary care physician before taking ashwagandha, and only purchase supplements from trusted sources, like Natural Healthy Concepts.]

Ashwagandha Supplements

Ashwagandha is available in many forms. You can find the dried and sifted roots, stems, leaves, and fruits in some grocers; it can be grown in certain climates, and it is available in supplements as ashwagandha powders, liquid ashwagandha extracts, and as part of cosmetics.

All ashwagandha products sold by Natural Healthy Concepts are first reviewed by certified nutritionists to ensure each product meets the highest possible quality standards, potency, and trustworthiness.

Here are some ashwagandha supplement products you should try!

Adaptoplex Plus by Natural Healthy Concepts

Adaptoplex Plus by Natural Healthy Concepts includes a blend of essential micronutrients and adaptogenic botanicals, including ashwagandha, specifically formulated to strengthen the body's stress response and support healthy energy levels.

Ashwagandha Complex by Standard Process

Ashwagandha Complex by Standard Process contains ashwagandha, licorice, skullcap, and Korean ginseng to support the body in adapting to stress during the day. Whether that be during your morning routine, in the office, at the gym, and anywhere else you may find yourself!

Ashwagandha SAP by NFH

Ashwagandha SAP by NFH is an Ayurveda formula with a blend of medicinal herbs that seek to support memory, sleep, and stress management. When challenged daily with a list of tasks at home and work, having a supportive aid to keep you on track is important.

[Summary: Natural Healthy Concepts evaluates all products to ensure the highest possible quality. This includes ashwagandha products for stress, sleep, hormone levels, thyroid health, and much more. Shop our wide selection of ashwagandha products and find the one that is right for your needs.]

Use Ashwagandha With Caution

Research suggests that the adaptogens found in ashwagandha are key to its potential medicinal benefits.

People take ashwagandha to help deal with stress, anxiety, trouble sleeping, and much more. There is also ongoing research into its other benefits, such as the potential to help maintain hormone levels in the normal range and to support a healthy thyroid.

However, clinical research in many of these areas is limited. If you are unsure how ashwagandha may affect you, consult with your healthcare provider to learn more about the risks to minimize or avoid any side effects.

Sources

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META DESCRIPTION:

Ashwagandha side effects are rare, but those with a nightshade allergy or taking a large dose should be wary; keep reading to learn about the risks and benefits.

