

# PLANET HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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## HIGH POTENCY ASHWAGANDHA FOR IMPROVING SLEEP, STRESS, MOOD, TESTOSTERONE, AND VITALITY

In Africa, the Mediterranean and India, the Indigenous, small, woody shrub known as ashwagandha has been used in ayurvedic medicine for more than 3,000 years.



Ashwagandha has been referred to as “royal herb” due to its rejuvenating effects on neurological, immune, energy production, endocrine and reproductive systems of the body. It is of Ashwagandha’s adaptogenic properties, helping the body to adapt by normalizing physiological processes in times of increased stress, which results in these broad-ranging effects.

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## Ashwagandha, Stress and Anxiety

Ashwagandha is certainly an herb traditionally used to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing—and current scientific studies provide further validation to this use. One such 60-day, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study was conducted to investigate its anxiety-reducing effects on healthy adults with self-reported high stress, and to examine potential mechanisms associated with its therapeutic effects. Sixty adults were randomly allocated to take either a placebo or 240 mg of standardized ashwagandha extract once daily. The potential effects of ashwagandha and the placebo were measured using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A), Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), and hormonal changes in cortisol, dehydroepiandrosterone-sulphate (DHEA-S), and testosterone. All participants completed the trial with no adverse events reported. Results showed that, in comparison with the placebo, Ashwagandha supplementation was associated with a statistically significant reduction in the HAM-A and a near-significant reduction in the DASS-21. Ashwagandha intake was also associated with greater reductions in morning cortisol, and DHEA-S compared with the placebo. Testosterone levels increased in males but not females over time, although this change was not statistically significant compared with the placebo.

## Ashwagandha and Sleep

Non-restorative sleep (NRS) affects 10 percent of people worldwide, leading to poor sleep quality, as well as physical and cognitive fatigue. In this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, 150 healthy subjects scoring high on non-restorative sleep measures were given 120 mg of

standardized ashwagandha extract one daily for six weeks to evaluate potential effects in improving overall sleep quality. Subjects were evaluated using the Restorative Sleep Questionnaire-weekly version and World Health Organization Quality of Life-Bref (WHO-QOL) scale. Sleep actigraphy was used to measure the onset of sleep latency, sleep efficiency, total sleep time, and wake after sleep onset. Safety of the treatment was determined by testing vitals, hematology, biochemistry, and urinalysis. A total of 144 subjects completed the study with no dropouts due to adverse events. Results were that a 72 percent increase in self-reported sleep quality was found for the treatment group, compared with 29 percent in the placebo group. Based on activity monitoring data, the treatment group showed significant 2 percent improvement in sleep efficiency, 18 minutes longer total sleep time and sleep latency and 10.5 minutes less waking after sleep onset versus placebo after six weeks.

## Ashwagandha and Hormones

In this 16-week, randomized double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover study, the effects of placebo or ashwagandha extract on steroid hormones in overweight men aged 40-70 years, with mild fatigue, were investigated. Fifty-seven participants were enrolled, with 50 people completing the first eight-week period of the trial and 43 completing all 16 weeks. Improvements in fatigue, vigor, and sexual and psychological well-being were reported for both groups. Ashwagandha intake was associated with an 18 percent greater increase in DHEA-S and 14.7 percent greater increase in testosterone compared to the placebo. In conclusion, the intake of standardized ashwagandha extract for eight weeks was associated with increased levels of DHEA-S and testosterone.



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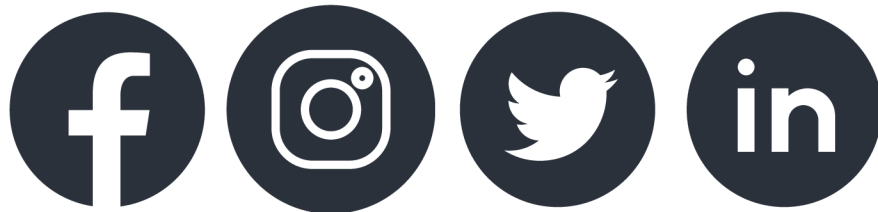


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