

What is Maritime Pine Bark Extract ?

The History:

If you have read the pycnogenol literature you will know the story about the Quebec Indians of eastern Canada who advised members of Jacques Cartier's expedition in December 1534 to boil up a tea of the bark and leaves of a pine tree native to the area, to cure scurvy. At that time Cartier's vessel was trapped in the ice and he had lost 25 of his original 110 man crew to Scurvy with a further 50 so ill that he expected them to die shortly. Of the remainder, only 3 men were unaffected by the disease.

Within a week of feeding this tea to his men, they had recovered sufficiently to return to the duties, and they continued to improve thereafter.

During the 1960's a French professor researched the properties of the flavonoids found in many species of Pine Bark as well as in Grape Skins and the shells of various nuts and found that the richest source of the most bio-available and bio-active flavonoids were to be found in an extract of the Pinus Pinaster or Maritime Pine.

In 1987 some of the substances were taken from the whole extract and patented under the name of Pycnogenol which was registered as a therapeutic agent having free radical scavenging effects. In the early 1990's Pycnogenol began to appear on the market as an extremely expensive multi-level marketing item and as an ingredient in some expensive health food store formulations.

For my human patients I prepare each season, an extract from the fresh bark and sapwood of the Maritime Pine.

The Medical Strength Extract:

This extract is made by concentrating the ingredients of 1 Kg of the dried bark into each liter of an alcohol/water mixture. This is a medical strength concentrate and is prescribed in very small doses. I am working on the assumption that 1 drop contains at least 50mg of pycnogenol. As an immune system tonic and antioxidant for patients with cancers and other serious illnesses, I generally prescribe a dose of up to 20 drops twice daily in water. Smaller doses of 5 or 10 drops are enough to maintain a healthy immune system at peak.

Research Results:

Extensive research has shown that ingredients found within the Pine Bark Extract have positive results in the following areas of human health;

- a. Allergies, Histamine Response and Inflammation as in Allergic Reaction and Hay

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Fever.

- b.** Capillary Protection both in strengthening weakened capillaries and in minimizing damage occurring during strenuous physical activity.
- c.** Inflammation, Edema and Varicosity.
- d.** Skin Health, Collagen Reactivation and U.V. Radiation Damage
- e.** Heart Disease both in reducing cholesterol deposition on arterial walls and the antioxidant effect of reducing stickiness of platelets and reducing clotting problems.
- f.** Cancer prevention and treatment in as far as the antioxidant properties protect the body against the activities of carcinogens and free radical damage to DNA.

More recent studies are showing other important ways Pine Bark Extract helps maintain optimal health. These include;

- a.** Brain Function in as far as the bio-flavonoids pass through the blood brain barrier and are available to maintain the health of brain cells and facilitate oxygenation to improve memory.
- b.** Illnesses like Ulcers, Diabetes, Arthritis and protection from Viral Attacks.
- c.** I have researched the benefits to children diagnosed with A.D.D and A.D.H.D (Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) over the past five years with extremely positive results.

Safety:

Toxicology studies done from the 1970s right through to the 1990s have shown no toxicity beyond that found in very large doses of normal food and other human nutrients. The Pine Bark Extract is very concentrated indeed and I advise not exceeding the recommended dose levels. As with most herbal medicines there is absolutely no benefit in very large doses of substances. The body is completely unable to assimilate excessive doses of any substance and over certain levels the normal benefits can be reversed. Toxicology studies suggest that acute toxicity could occur in a 75Kg adult male at a dose level of approximately 336,000mg or more than 250 times my maximum recommended dose.

Ordering Pine Bark Extracts:

Pine Bark Extract is supplied in glass dropper bottles either 50ml or 100ml for \$41.00 or \$81.00 respectively plus postage at cost. Dosage is 5-10 drops twice daily. The 50ml bottle is sufficient for 6 - 12 weeks at the recommended dose rates.

Robert McDowell
Medical Herbalist.
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