

Three Popular Weight Loss Herbs – Do They Really Work?

Some herbal remedies for weight loss have been popular for years. But before you run out and buy a weight loss herb, be sure to find out if it really works – and if it's even safe. For instance, Cascara sagrada, (buckthorn) has been recommended for years, and is easily bought online from herbal pharmacies. But this natural laxative can become habit-forming, and can cause diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and stomach or intestinal cramps, according to Dr. David Charles Dodson, co-author of *The Diet Pill Guide*. Although this herb has been used for centuries, no controlled scientific studies have ever been published to prove the remedy even works, and it may even be dangerous if the bark has not been properly harvested and dried. Clearly, Cascara shouldn't be your first choice if you're looking for a natural supplement that can help you lose weight. Another commonly used weight loss herb is chickweed (*Stellaria media*). This herb is a diuretic, laxative and possibly an appetite suppressant. It grows wild in many parts of the world, and may be one of the weeds attempting to take over your garden. Many people enjoy eating this herb, which is supposed to taste like spinach, and it is particularly recommended as a healthy fresh green food for caged birds and chickens. There appears to be no reason for concern about any bad side effects from either eating chickweed, or using it as a dietary supplement. But there is also no scientific evidence that it will actually help you lose weight. However, the next time you're weeding your garden you might bring some of this flavorful little plant inside for your lunch instead of throwing it on the compost pile. You can find excellent photos of *Stellaria media* by using Google's image search. One herb that does have some scientific backing as a weight loss remedy is *Citrus aurantium* ("bitter orange," or zhi shi). Unfortunately, studies have been done on animals, not people, but one scientific study in 1999 found that rats given an extract of zhi shi in their food ate significantly less, and lost weight. We're still waiting for a study using humans. Marketers who sell this product state that the herb is a rich source of many important vitamins and flavonoids, and they say it contains some alkaloids that have been shown to break down fat and raise your resting metabolism levels. They also state that your energy will increase and your digestion will improve. This herb is easily found on the Internet and in natural food stores, and although it is said to improve your metabolism, it does not appear to increase your heart rate or blood pressure. Has it been "proven" to work? Not yet, so more studies are needed. Although the numbers of studies are obviously limited, there have been no reported side effects from the use of this herb. However, pregnant or breast-feeding women should always discuss things with their doctor before using any herbal remedy. This is probably good advice for just about anyone, in fact, whether you're pregnant or not. It should go without saying that you should not use this information for self-diagnosis or self-treatment, but should always consult a medical professional regarding any medical problems and before undertaking any major dietary changes. Don't accept any information on the Internet as a substitute for medical advice. And if you do decide to use a weight loss herb, you'll obviously have better results if you make time for more exercise, and choose a healthy, long-term diet.

About the Author

Information regarding digestive health and causes, diagnosis and treatment.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>