

**Featured Topic: Adaptogens –  
Ashwaghandha and Rhodiola  
(4 slides)**

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# New interest in ancient medicines

- Used medicinally for thousands of years, modern research continues to find new uses for ashwagandha
  - For people with mild cognitive impairment, 8 weeks of ashwagandha supplementation **significantly improved memory and attention**
  - In patients treated for **breast cancer**, ashwagandha was associated with a 34% reduction in cancer fatigue and about a 30% increased survival rate at 24 months post-treatment
  - **Reduced cortisol levels** (the stress hormone) by almost 30%
  - **Increased sperm concentration** 167%, sperm motility 57%, and serum testosterone levels 17% in men with infertility and low sperm counts
  - 77% reduction in **depression** score, 75% reduction in **anxiety** score, and 64% reduction in **stress** score in a clinical study of people with a history of chronic stress

# Ashwaghandha and other Adaptogens

- “Adaptogens” are herbal medicines
  - Have **no side effects** (non-toxic)
  - **Restore the body** – bring up what is too low, bring down what is too high
  - Help the body **adapt and resist** the negative effects of stress and illness
- Adaptogens
  - Fight fatigue
  - Increase energy
  - Help fight off illnesses
  - Can be both calming and energizing *without* excessive stimulation

# Rhodiola – also an important adaptogen

- Boosts energy during physical exertion
- Increases mental performance and concentration
- Relieves the symptoms of anxiety
- Alleviates mild to moderate depression
- Improves physical fitness and reduces mental fatigue
- Shown to help regulate menstrual cycles and may help increase fertility
- Well known for its ability to increase libido

# How to use Ashwagandha and Rhodiola

- Can be taken daily for energy, immune support, mental clarity, etc.
- Or, use when needed during times of increased stress or illness
- Take on an empty stomach if possible
- 500 – 1500 mg of the combination daily

**2 Ways to Prevent a Fall:  
Exercise and Vitamin D  
(2 slides)**

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# Exercise prevents falling

- Every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the ER for a fall; every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall
- Researchers pooled data from 20 studies of adults aged 65 and older, many at high risk of falling
- Results: exercising 3 times a week (most studies lasted a year) reduced risk of falls by up to 20%
  - All types of exercise was effective: strength and resistance training, balance training, or group exercise classes

# Vitamin D Builds Muscle and Prevents Falls

- Nine month study of 91 frail, elderly people living in a long-term care facility (where people often don't get much direct sunlight) receiving either
  - 2 or 3 exercise sessions a week (balance exercises, and resistance exercise with an elastic band)
  - 900 IU of oral vitamin D daily
  - 2 exercise sessions a week AND 900 IU vitamin D daily
- Result – risk of falls declined
  - 52% in the exercise only group
  - 42% in the vitamin D only group
  - **72% in the exercise AND vitamin D group**
- This confirms early research on vitamin D and muscle showing that for each 1 ng/ml increase in vitamin D status, quadriceps muscle strength increased by 14.2%

# Help for Nervous Dogs (4 slides)

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# What makes dogs nervous

- Being alone (“separation anxiety”)
- Thunder storms
- Groomers
- Veterinarians
- Riding in the car
- Fireworks
- Boarding (kennels)

**Nervous dogs:** pant, bark, excessively lick, hide, and may relieve themselves in the house despite being housebroken

Extreme anxiety may lead to pacing, destroying walls and doors, breaking through doors or windows, or even biting and aggression

# Natural relief for anxiety and nervousness

- *Echinacea angustifolia*
- Key compounds: alkamides
  - Certain alkamides are similar to anadamide
  - Anadamide (called the “bliss molecule”) is naturally produced by dogs (and humans!); it triggers receptors in the brain and nervous system that control mood, fear, and stress
  - The alkamides in echinacea can “unlock” the same receptors as anadamide and reduce fear, nervousness, and tension

# Research on alkamides from echinacea

- Animals (rats) given echinacea extract standardized for alkamides
  - More than doubled the time spent exploring a strange environment versus placebo [increased confidence]
  - Reduced fearful behavior by 30%
  - Worked quickly – reduction in anxiety was noted 30 to 60 minutes after administration
  - Caused no adverse effects, even at extremely high doses

## How to use alkamides from echinacea for nervous dogs

- Dosage: 20-40 mg of extract from *Echinacea angustifolia* (narrow leaved coneflower) standardized for alkamide profile
  - NOT ALL ECHINACEA IS THE SAME: Hungarian researchers have verified that it is the unique alkamide profile from *E. angustifolia*, at this dosage, that is effective
- Safe to use daily (for example, when leaving the dog alone for the day) or give before situations that cause the dog to be nervous