

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

SENNA

Senna alexandrina



Part Utilized:
Leaf



PROPERTIES:

Stimulant, Cathartic, Laxative

SYSTEMS AFFECTED:

Digestive (bowels)

POSSIBLE USES:

as a cathartic, constipation (sparingly and only occasionally)

INGREDIENT IN:

CAC, PARA

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Senna acts on the smooth muscles of the colon. It is said to support the colon—support being an interesting word since Senna is listed as a strongly cathartic herb. Used as a cathartic or laxative, Senna's action usually comes about 10 hours after administration. Senna should be administered on an empty stomach but possibly accompanied by a little Cloves, Ginger, Cinnamon, Coriander, or Fennel to minimize the cramping.

Senna should NOT be used where there is bowel inflammation, hemorrhoids, or intestinal bleeding of any sort. Monitor this carefully. THIS IS IMPORTANT! Large doses of Senna can cause severe vomiting and diarrhea and are generally not recommended. The action of Senna is so prompt and thorough that it often creates a form of dehydration in the bowel which results in further constipation. Extra fluids should be taken. Senna does nothing to establish normal function or the presence of healthy bacteria in the colon. Enzymes and acidophilus should be promptly added to the diet after Senna has been used.

I would be remiss if I did not take one more opportunity to remind you that treating a condition such as chronic constipation by producing periods of diarrhea between the bouts of constipation is not healthy, and does not usually accomplish anything beneficial in the long run. The gradual softening of the stool and establishment of normal peristalsis should always be the goal. This may require a long-term change in dietary and living habits instead of the taking of an herbal remedy from time to time.

If you have gotten the impression that I am not overly fond of cathartic herbs such as Senna, you would be right. Experience in my own family has taught me a great wariness of this type of treatment. The use of Senna as a stool softener might be appropriate if there is anal fissure or some reason for a need to have a soft stool for a period of time.