

Herbs for the Treatment of Low Thyroid Function

Bladderwrack

Fucus vesiculosus has been traditionally used for the treatment of obesity, particularly when associated with hypothyroidism.¹ It contains iodine which may be responsible for stimulating production of thyroxine and an increase in basal metabolism.

Withania

Withania somnifera is a tonic and adaptogen, traditionally used in Ayurveda for promoting growth in children, general debility, aiding recovery from illness, loss of muscular energy and to promote learning and memory retrieval. It is also said to 'provide fresh energy and vigour in a system worn out by any constitutional disease'.² Studies in animals have shown promising thyroid stimulating activity.^{3,4,5} Withania also provides immune modulating, anti-inflammatory and antianaemic activity. (Anaemia is common in hypothyroid patients.)

Bacopa

Bacopa monnieri (*B. monniera*) is a nervine tonic also used in the Ayurvedic tradition. It has been used to treat debility and run-down conditions as well as nervous breakdown.² It has also been shown in an animal study to stimulate thyroid function.⁶

Synergistic Formulation

These three herbs would complement each other in a very potent formulation with the following actions:

- thyroid stimulating,
- anti-inflammatory,
- immune modulating,
- anti-anaemic,
- adaptogenic,
- tonic,
- nervine tonic.

Indications

- Obesity, particularly associated with low thyroid function or slow metabolism.
- Hypothyroidism.

Cautions and Contraindications

Contraindicated in hyperthyroidism. Contraindicated in pregnancy and lactation. Bladderwrack may interact with thyroid replacement therapy (thyroxine).

REFERENCES

¹ British Herbal Medicine Association's Scientific Committee. *British Herbal Pharmacopoeia*. BHMA, Bournemouth, 1983. ² Kapoor LD. *CRC Handbook of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, 1990. ³ Panda S, Kar A. *J Ethnopharmacol* 1999; **67**: 233 ⁴ Panda S, Kar A. *J Pharm Pharmacol* 1998; **50**: 1065 ⁵ Panda S, Kar A. *Indian J Anim Sci* 1997; **67**: 575 ⁶ Kar A et al. *J Ethnopharmacol* 2002; **81**: 281

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