

Please Take One!



SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTH: Valerian

What is valerian and where is it found?

Valerian is an herb that comes from the root of the valerian plant. It is sold as a nutritional supplement. It comes in capsules or tablets, but it is also incorporated into teas and tinctures.

What are the benefits?

Valerian is used as a sedative, anticonvulsant, pain reliever, and migraine treatment. It is mainly used to treat insomnia and other sleep disorders by giving people better quality sleep and helping them fall asleep faster. The benefit of valerian over prescription medication is that it may not have as much of a "hangover effect" on next day mental and physical functioning. Additionally, valerian has been used to treat anxiety.

Are there interactions with food or medications?

Valerian should not be taken with alcohol, narcotics, barbituates, over the counter sleep aids, or any other sedatives. The combination may cause increased drowsiness, since it may increase the sedative effect.

Are there side effects?

Valerian may cause stomach upset, headaches, dry mouth, apathy, and mild depression. In rare cases, valerian may also cause an allergic reaction, resulting in itchiness with rash or hives, or difficulty breathing.