Egyptian Herbal Monograph

Volume 3

Herbal Formulations Used in Egypt

Egyptian Drug Authority (EDA)

2026

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Korean Ginseng, Nigella **جنسنج / حبة البركة**

1. Names & Synonyms

Korean Ginseng

***Panax ginseng* C. A. Meyer.**
Family: Araliaceae.
Syns.: *Aralia ginseng* (C. A. Mey.) Baill, *Panax verus* Oken (1).
Arabic: Ginseng جنسنج
English: Korean Ginseng, Red Ginseng, White Ginseng (2), Asian Ginseng (3).

Nigella (4, 5)

***Nigella sativa* L.**
Family: Ranunculaceae
Syns: *Nigella cretica* Mill., *Nigella indica* Roxb. ex Flem., *Nigella truncata* Viv.
Arabic: al-haba-el-sauda الحبة السوداء, habat-al-baraka حبة البركة
English : Nigella, black seed, black cumin, black caraway.

2. Parts used for medicinal purpose

Korean Ginseng: Dried root (6-9).
Nigella: Dried seeds (10,11).

3. Major chemical constituents

Korean Ginseng

- **Triterpenoid saponins (Ginsenosides)**: A complex mixture of compounds including Rb1, Rb2, Rc, Rd, Re, and Rg-1 (8,12).
- **Polysaccharides:** Pectins and glucans (13).
- **Others**: Peptides, polyacetylenic alcohols, fatty acids (8), starch, *β*-amylase, vitamins (B1, B2, B12, pantothenic acid, biotin), choline, minerals (8).

Nigella (14 – 16):

-Fixed oil: Unsaturated fatty acids (linoleic, oleic, eicosadienoic and dihomo-gamma- linolenic acid (DGLA)) and saturated fatty acids (palmitic and stearic acids).

-Essential oil: Thymoquinone, thymohydroquinone, dithymoquinone (nigellone), *p*-cymene, carvacrol, 4- terpineol, *t*-anethole, sesquiterpene longifolene, *α*-pinene and thymol.

-Alkaloids: Isoquinoline alkaloids (e.g. nigellicimine and nigellicimine-N-oxide) and pyrazole alkaloids (e.g.: nigellidine and nigellicine).

-Others: Sterols (*β*-sitosterol, stigmasterol) , protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

4. Medicinal Uses (Indications)

- As a prophylactic and restorative agent for enhancement of mental and physical capacities.

- For symptoms of asthenia such as fatigue and weakness, exhaustion, tiredness, loss of concentration, and during convalescence.

5. Herbal preparations correlated to medicinal use

Combination of Korean ginseng root dry extract (extraction solvent: Ethanol/Water) and nigella seeds powder

Herbal preparations are in pharmaceutical dosage forms. The pharmaceutical form should be described by the pharmacopoeia full standard term.

6. Posology and method of administration correlated to medicinal use

Adults and elderly: Combination of 100-200mg of Korean ginseng extract and 100-200mg of Nigella powder.

Duration of use: up to 3months.

If the symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks during the use of the medicinal product, a doctor or pharmacist should be consulted.

Method of administration: Oral use.

7. Contraindications.

- Hypersensitivity to active substance(s) and to other plants of the same families.
- It should not be used in breast cancer or if other estrogen dependent conditions are present (17-19).

8. Special warnings and precautions for use

- If the symptoms worsen during the use of the medicinal product, a doctor or a pharmacist should be consulted.
- Use in children and adolescents under 18 years of age has not been established (9).
- General cautions should be taken to patients with cardiovascular diseases or diabetes (7, 8).

9. Interactions with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction (10,17-19)

- **Anticoagulants, antiplatelets, salicylates:** may decrease the action of these products and may increase the risk of bruising and bleeding.
- **Antihypertensive drugs:** may decrease blood pressure levels. Blood pressure should be monitored closely.
- **Immunosuppressants**: may diminish the effect of immunosuppressants; do not use immediately before, during, or after transplant surgery.
- **Immunosuppressants:** concurrent use might decrease the effects of these medications.
- **MAOIs:** Concurrent use of MAOIs may result in manic-like syndrome.
- **Stimulants**: Use of stimulants (e.g., xanthines) concurrently is not recommended; overstimulation may occur.
- **Caffeine**: Concurrent use with caffeine-containing preparations or drinks should be avoided (20).
- **Ephedra:** Concurrent use may increase hypertension and central nervous system stimulation; concurrent use should be avoided.
- **Anti-diabetic drugs:** may decrease blood sugar levels. Blood sugar should be monitored closely.
- **CNS depressants:** may cause breathing problems and/or too much sleepiness.
- **Diuretic drugs:** may make potassium levels drop too low.
- **Serotonergic Drugs:** may increase serotonin too much. This might cause serious side effects including heart problems, seizures and vomiting.

Lab Test

- **Blood glucose**: may decrease blood glucose (decoctions, infusions).
- **Plasma partial thromboplastin time, INR**: may increase plasma partial thromboplastin time and INR.

- **Serum, urine estrogens**: may have an additive effect on serum and 24-hour urine estrogens.
- **Serum digoxin**: may falsely increase serum digoxin.

10. Fertility, pregnancy and lactation

- Safety during pregnancy and lactation has not been established. In the absence of sufficient data, the use during pregnancy and lactation is not recommended (8,9,21).
- No fertility data available.

11. Effects on ability to drive and use machines

No studies on the effect on the ability to drive and use machines have been carried out.

12. Undesirable effects (9, 17-19,22,23)

- It may cause hypersensitivity reactions (urticaria, itching) allergic rashes, insomnia, anxiety, discomfort, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and headache and gastrointestinal disorders like stomach constipation.
- Hypertension, chest pain, palpitation, decreased diastolic blood pressure and increase QTC interval.
- If adverse reactions occur a doctor or a pharmacist should be consulted.

13. Overdose (19,22,23)

- Restlessness, nausea, vomiting, anorexia and diarrhea.
- Ginseng abuse syndrome: edema, insomnia and hypertonia.
- Hypertension resulting from ginseng abuse syndrome is associated with prolonged high dose ginseng with concomitant use of caffeine.

14. Relevant biological activities

Not required as per Egyptian guidelines for registration of herbal medicines.

15. Additional information

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Date of compilation/last revision

23/04/2026.

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