

Egyptian Herbal Monograph

Volume 3

Medicinal Plants used in Egypt

Egyptian Drug Authority (EDA)

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Vitex agnus-castus L.

فايتكس

1. Names and Synonyms

Vitex agnus-castus L.

Family: Lamiaceae (Labiatae).

Arabic: فايتكس vitex

English name: Agnus castus fruit (1), Chaste tree, Chasteberry, Monk's Pepper (2), Vitex (3).

2. Parts used for medicinal purpose

Fruits (1-4).

3. Major chemical constituents

- **Iridoid glycosides:** Agnuside, aucubin, agnucastosides A-C (1, 5).
- **Flavonoids:** Casticin, penduletin, chrysosplenol D, vitexin, isovitexin, eupatorine, orientin and luteolin glycosides (1, 5).
- **Essential oil:** 1,8-Cineole, β -caryophyllene, sabinene (1) and bicyclogermacrene (5, 6).
- **Diterpenoids:** Rotundifuran, vitexilactone and vitetrifolines B and C (1, 5).
- **Fatty acids:** Linoleic, oleic (6), palmitic, stearic and linolenic acids (1).
- **Others:** Fiber and sitosterol (6).

4. Medicinal Uses (Indications)

- A. For menstrual cycle irregularities and premenstrual syndrome (1, 3).
- B. Menopause symptoms such as hot flushes (3).

5. Herbal preparations correlated to medicinal use

1. Powdered herbal substance (1).

2. Dry extract

2.1. (DER 7-13:1), extraction solvent ethanol 60% m/m (1).

2.2. Extraction solvent ethanol 50-52% m/m

2.3. (DER 6-12:1), extraction solvent ethanol 60% m/m (1).

3. Fluid extract extraction solvent 70% alcohol (v/v) (3).

4. Tincture

4.1. Extraction solvent ethanol 68-70% V/V (1:5) (1).

4.2. Extraction solvent ethanol 50-70% (1:5) (2).

4.3. Extraction solvent ethanol 62% (1:10) (7).

6. Posology and method of administration correlated to medicinal use

Preparation 1

Indication A:

Female adults: Single dose: 400 mg, 2 times daily. Daily dose: 800 mg (1, 8).

Indications A and B

Female adults:

30 – 2000 mg dried fruit, daily (3).

0.5 – 1.0 g, 3 times daily (2).

Preparation 2

Indication A (1):

Preparation 2.1: Single dose: 4 mg once daily. Daily dose: 4 mg.

Preparation 2.2: Single dose: 2-3 mg once daily. Daily dose: 2-3 mg.

Preparation 2.3: 20 mg, once daily.

Duration of use:

To achieve an optimal treatment effect, continued use over three months is recommended. If the symptoms persist after a continued use over three months, a doctor should be consulted.

Method of administration: Oral use.

Preparation 3 (7)

Indications A: 0.5–1.0 ml, daily.

Preparation 4**Indication A**

Preparation 4.1: Single dose: 165 mg, once daily (1).

Preparation 4.3 162 mg, twice daily (7).

Indications A, B:

Preparation 4.2 (2)

0.15–0.2 ml, daily (2).

40 drops once daily, corresponding to approximately 33 mg herbal substance (7, 8).

7. Contraindications

Hypersensitivity to the active substances and to other plants of the same family.

8. Special warnings and precautions for use (1)

- If the symptoms worsen during the use of the medicinal product, a doctor or a pharmacist should be consulted.
- The use in pubertal children and adolescents under 18 years of age is not recommended.
- Patients under hormonal therapy or have hormone sensitive condition should consult their doctor before using agnus castus fruits.
- Agnus castus fruit is thought to act on the pituitary-hypothalamic axis and therefore patients with a history of a pituitary disorder should consult a doctor before use.
- In cases of prolactin secreting tumors of the pituitary gland the intake of agnus castus fruit can mask symptoms of the tumor.

9. Interactions with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction

- *Agnus castus* has dopamine agonist properties and therefore may interact with drugs with dopamine agonist or dopamine antagonist action.
- Active constituents of *Agnus castus* may also have additive effects with opioids due to similar pharmacological activity.
- Presence of oestrogenic compounds in *Agnus castus* may result in additive or opposing effects with oestrogens or oestrogen antagonists (8).

10. Fertility, pregnancy and lactation

- The use during pregnancy and lactation is not recommended.
- 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 performed.

12. Undesirable effects

- If adverse reactions occur, a doctor or a pharmacist should be consulted.
- Immune system disorders (severe allergic reactions with face swelling, dyspnoea and swallowing difficulties), skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders (allergic skin reactions such as rash and urticaria, acne), nervous system disorders (headache, dizziness), gastrointestinal disorders (nausea, abdominal pain) and reproductive system disorders (menstrual disorders) have been reported (1, 8).

13. Overdose

No case of overdose has been reported.

14. Relevant biological activities

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

15. Additional information

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16. Date of last revision

14/9/2022.

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