



ASHWAGANDHA (WITHANIA SOMNIFERA): AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is a well-established Rasayana herb in Ayurveda known for its rejuvenative, adaptogenic, anti-stress, and neuroprotective properties. Modern research highlights its role in cortisol regulation, cognitive enhancement, and immune modulation.

KEYWORDS: Ashwagandha, Adaptogen, Rasayana, Withanolides, Neuroprotection, Cortisol Regulation

INTRODUCTION

Ashwagandha has been described extensively in Ayurvedic classics as Balya, Medhya, Vatahara, and Ojovardhaka. Modern pharmacology recognizes it as a potent adaptogen that supports stress resistance, neural recovery, energy metabolism, and hormonal balance.

RASA PANCHAKA

Rasa: Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura

Guna: Laghu, Snigdha

Veerya: Ushna

Vipaka: Madhura

Prabhava: Rasayana, Balya, Vatahara

Useful Part: Root

PHYTOCHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS

Key bioactive compounds include Withanolides, Withaferin-A, Alkaloids, Saponins, Flavonoids, and Iron. Withanolides exhibit strong adaptogenic, anti-inflammatory, anti-stress, and antioxidant actions.

THERAPEUTIC USES

- Reduces stress, anxiety, and insomnia
- Enhances muscle and nerve strength
- Acts as Rasayana for longevity
- Improves sexual vitality
- Effective in Vata disorders including neuropathy and arthritis

MODERN RESEARCH FINDINGS

Multiple clinical studies confirm Ashwagandha's ability to reduce cortisol levels, enhance cognition, improve stamina, support thyroid function, and protect neurons from oxidative damage.

ASHWAGANDHA FORMULATIONS (CLASSICAL & MODERN)

Ashwagandha Churna: Pure root powder; Dose: 3–6 g with milk; For strength, sleep, and stress relief.

Ashwagandha Avaleha: Ashwagandha, ghee, jaggery; Dose: 10–20 g; For rejuvenation and fertility.

Ashwagandharishta: Ashwagandha + Musali + Haritaki; Dose: 15–30 ml; Nervine and digestive tonic.

Ashwagandha Ghrita: Medicated ghee; Dose: 5–10 g; Improves memory and mental health.

Standardized Extract Capsules: 300–600 mg (5% withanolides); For stress, stamina, and immunity.

Ashwagandha Rasayana Yoga: Ashwagandha + Shatavari + Yashtimadhu; For hormonal balance.

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Ashwagandha Oil: For massage; relieves neuropathy and muscle stiffness.

Ashwagandha Protein Blend: Modern sports formulation; improves recovery and strength.

CONCLUSION

Ashwagandha is a holistic Ayurvedic adaptogen supported by classical evidence and modern scientific validation. Its multi-dimensional actions on the nervous, endocrine, immune, and musculoskeletal systems make it an essential herb for integrative medicine.

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