Hops is best known as one of the primary ingredients in beer. It is also an effective medicinal herb, and I find it very useful for nervous stomach or stress-induced Gi symptoms including IBS, diarrhea or constipation, along with Chamomile and Catnip. It is a bitter tonic and promotes appetite, digestion and bile secretion.

For stress-induced insomnia use Hops with Passion Flower and Chamomile. For menopausal insomnia, use it with Motherwort, Pulsatilla and Blue Vervain and a standardized Hops extract was found to be of modest benefit for relieving menopausal hot flashes (Heyerick, et al, 2006).

For bladder spasms or vaginismus, a combination of Hops with Kava and Black Cohosh can be effective. Drinking beer can actually help to pass kidney stones and relieve some of the pain. If drinking a six-pack per day is not your cup of tea, you can use Hops with Khella, Yucca root, Hydrangea, Lobelia and Kava to dilate the ureters, hasten the passage of urinary calculi and help relieve the intense pain.

The Eclectic physicians used a combination of Hops and Capsicum for treating delirium tremens with reportedly excellent results.

A bath with Hops is useful for muscle aches and pain, anxiety and insomnia. A Hops poultice can be used topically for boils, infected wounds, bruises and neuralgic pain (including toothaches).

Hops can be used with Mugwort and Lavender in dream pillows.

In an animal study, Hops inhibited obesity and improved glucose tolerance (Sumiyoshi & Kimura, 2013). In a second study, long-term administration of Hops extracts strongly inhibited amyloid deposition in a mouse model of Alzheimer’s disease (Sasaoka, et al, 2014).

There are a significant number of in vitro studies indicating Hops constituents (prenylflavones, humulene) reduce mutagenesis, enhance apoptosis, and inhibit prostate, colon, breast, lymph and neuroblastoma cell lines.

### Dosage

| Tea (Decoction): 1-2 tsp. dried strobiles, 8 oz. water, decoct 5-10 minutes, steep covered for 15 minutes, take 2 cups/day |
| Tincture (1:5 or 1:3), 60-70% ETOH Dose: 1.5-2.5 mL (30-50 gtt.) QID |
| Triune: 1/9 part Capsules: 2 (00) capsules BID |

### Preparations

*A for insomnia, take 3-5 mls after dinner and then again before bedtime. The longer Hops is stored, the less effective it becomes. Use only recently dried Hops for making teas or tinctures.*

A topical gel made from Hops phytoestrogens, vitamin E and hyaluronic acid was effective in treating vaginal atrophy and the symptoms of atrophic vaginitis including vaginal dryness, burning, itching and dyspareunia (Morali, et al, 2006).

### Contraindications & Drug Interactions

Do not use standardized Hops extracts during pregnancy.

Beer (which contains Hops), can deplete zinc, potassium and B vitamins if taken in excess, which can exacerbate BPH in men.

Hops may potentiate alcohol, sedatives and anxiolytics.

Regular handling of Hops or lupulin can cause contact dermatitis. Occupational inhalation of Hops dust can cause irritation of the respiratory tract and increased allergies, asthma and COPD.

Women who pick Hops (farm workers) have reported breast swelling and menstrual irregularities from constantly handling the lupulin-rich strobiles. The estrogenic effects of Hops as a tea or tincture are minimal and unlikely to pose any significant risk or benefit for hormonal issues. Pure lupulin or standardized Hops extracts have a potential for greater hormonal activity.

### Special Notes

Hops is used to give beer its bitter taste, to help clarify it and as a preservative (antibacterial agent).

### Additional Resources & References

- Morali, G., Polatti, F., et al, Open, Non-Controlled Clinical Studies to Assess the Efficacy and Safety of a Medical Device in Form of Gel Topically and Intravaginally Used in Postmenopausal Women With Genital Atrophy [Article in German], Arzneimittelforschung, 2006;56(3):230-8