

Top 4 Adaptogens

Today, we're talking about adaptogens. We're going to go over the top four adaptogenic herbs that can help support your stress response and your immune system. I want you to think of adaptogens like a thermostat. They modulate your stress response, whether it's too high [00:00:30] or too low to keep it nice and steady. It's not that we only should take them under stress, they're really helpful all the time, just like the thermostat in your house is really helpful all the time to keep your temperature regulated.

The first one we're going to discuss is Tulsi or Holy Basil. Now, this would be your go to adaptogen of choice if your genetic weak spot is your immune system. Whenever you're under stress, if you tend to get sick, [00:01:00] then you're going to tend to go towards holy basil, and you can do it in tea form called Tulsi tea, or you can take it in supplement form. There was a really good study at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, where they took 24 healthy people and they split this group. Half of the group had a placebo, which is nothing, right? The other half of the group took 300 mg of Holy Basil a day, which would be the equivalent of one pill or two tea bags. [00:01:30] They did this for four weeks, and at the end of the four weeks when they tested the group, those who had taken the holy basil had significantly improved T helper cells, which are the cells that then inform and help all the rest of your immune system.

They also had significantly improved natural killer cells, which are the front lines of your immune system that keep infection out. We know that Holy Basil is tried and tested, and is wonderful, not only for emotional [00:02:00] stress and mental stress, but also for chemical stress that we fight within our environment. It's also been known to protect the liver and so the suggested dose is anywhere from 150 mg to 300 mg up to three times a day therapeutically.

Next, we have Rhodiola. This is one of my personal favorites, because rhodiola, if you have any propensity towards depression or low energy, rhodiola is going to be your go to adaptogen [00:02:30] of choice. This hails from Eastern Europe and Russia, and it has been clinically proven in double blind randomized placebo controlled studies, using 161 patients to prove that within several weeks on 300 mg a day, that it can significantly reduce fatigue levels, but can also work in the brain, because it helps to preserve your neurotransmitter levels specifically and very importantly [00:03:00] dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine, so this way you're feeling calm and relaxed, yet focused and productive, and there's kind of the best of both of worlds in terms of the feeling state.

Now, therapeutically if you're really low, you're really under a lot of stress, then you can go all the way up anywhere between 200 and 600 mg a day, which would be almost taking two pills twice a day. You want to be guided by a practitioner and you want to start off slow. You'd want to start off with [00:03:30] only 200 mg a day and see how that affects you.

Even more so than Rhodiola is Ashwagandha. This is my personal favorite, because this is for very sensitive souls with sensitive nervous systems. If you have a tendency where you need some help with stress resilience, with sleeping, you tend to go into adrenal fatigue pretty quickly under stress, or your thyroid gets knocked off its kilter, Ashwagandha is going to be your go to. That's going to be anywhere from 250 [00:04:00] to 500 mg one to three times a day, depending on the level of stress that you're under. It's really a powerful and gentle herb. At the same time, it translates... this name literally translates to the strength of 10,000 horses, and it comes from India. It's been used for millennia, and that one's my personal favorite.

We also have to talk about number four, which is Ginseng. Ginseng is native to China and Korea, [00:04:30] and it's been used for over 2,000 years in traditional Chinese medicine, to help support brain function. When you're under stress, your brain is the first thing to go, then you're going to want to go towards Ginseng. It's going to help the brain and brain fog, and therefore it's going to also help your energy. There was a 12-week study done giving 720 mg of Ginseng one to three times a day. There was significantly improved brain function, and also [00:05:00] it has been shown to protect against Alzheimer's, or to slow Alzheimer's once the onset is there.

There you have it. You've got Holy Basil for your immune system, you've got Rhodiola for energy or depression, you've got Ashwagandha for your nervous system, adrenals and thyroid, or you have got Ginseng for your brain. Pick whichever one resonates with you, start off slow, and remember the caveat. You cannot consume [00:05:30] adaptogens if you are pregnant or nursing, because they have not been studied for those conditions, so we are going to be safe and leave them out. I wish you happy adapting and I thank you for watching. We'll catch you next time on Food as Medicine TV.