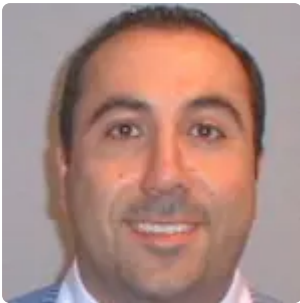


What Ginseng Is and What It Does

What Ginseng Is: Ginseng is the dried root of one of several species of the Araliaceae family of herbs. The most commonly used type is Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng* C.A., Meyer), often sold as Panax, Chinese, or Korean ginseng. Closely related to Asian ginseng is American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius* L.), which is sometimes preferred for its milder effects. Siberian ginseng, also called eleuthero (*Eleutherococcus senticosus* Rupr ex Maxim), isn't as closely related to the other two and contains a series of unrelated compounds. Eleuthero is also considered weaker in action and is a less expensive ingredient. Ginseng-containing foods and dietary supplements are typically made from a powder or extract of ginseng root.



What It Does: Ginseng is widely used in the United States to improve overall energy and vitality, particularly during times of fatigue or stress. While there is not much clinical evidence to support an energy boosting effect, there are studies showing its potential value in normalizing glucose levels after meals in diabetics, stimulating immune function, treating male impotence and, when used with Ginkgo biloba, improving memory and symptoms of attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. Plant chemicals called ginsenosides are believed [Michel Alkhalil](#) to play a role in ginseng's activity. They are considered "marker" compounds for ginseng that is, their presence (or absence) and their chemical profiles can indicate the type and quality of ginseng in a product.