

## **Ashwagandha vs. Ginseng?**

Herbal medicine has fascinated the world of science and nutrition in many ways. Herbs from various parts of the world can provide magical benefits for human health, including enhancing physical strength, improving metabolism, reducing anxiety, and promoting sexual health. A significant area for the use of herbs is improving physical health in men, especially their sexual health.

You might already know the name of the two most notable herbs for men's health –

Ashwagandha and Ginseng. The use of these two herbs dates back to around a couple of thousand years, with the former originating from India and the latter used in Chinese/Korean herbal medicine. These herbs provide long-term benefits for male physical and sexual performance; however, according to modern literature, ashwagandha is associated with lesser risks. Therefore, using ashwagandha could be a better option overall. If you are a male trying to enhance your endurance and sexual health and are confused about which herb to go with, this is the right place to figure it out.

### **Ashwagandha**

Ashwagandha's use in Indian ayurvedic medicine dates back to around 3000 years. Since then, people have been using it to treat various health conditions, primarily decreased sexual performance. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), also known as the 'Indian Ginseng,' is predominantly grown in India. It is classified as an aphrodisiac herb, i.e., an herb used to enhance sexual desire, pleasure, and performance. Although notable drug regulatory bodies like FDA haven't authorized its use, research has shown promising results with **non-existent side effects**.

### **Ashwagandha and sexual performance**

Ashwagandha promoting male reproductive health isn't just a myth. Many studies have entitled ashwagandha as the male-reproductive-system-friendly herb. One study including 75 men eluded that five grams of ashwagandha daily increased sperm count, motility, and overall sexual performance. These effects were related to better testosterone levels and other reproductive hormones. Furthermore, the improved sexual hormones and reproduction were accredited to reduced oxidative stress and increased antioxidant levels in the body.

Considering some factors affecting male sexual health, stress is one of the top culprits. Intuitively, ashwagandha's documented stress-relieving properties greatly help the male reproductive capacity. Another study, including 60 men, concluded that treatment with ashwagandha reduced stress in the subjects, improved antioxidant levels, and enhanced the overall semen quality. Moreover, 14% of the subjects' partners became pregnant. Ashwagandha indeed has the potential to improve your sexual strength.

### **Physical or Muscle strength**

Certain clinical studies assessing the usefulness of ashwagandha have provided significant results. In one 8-week study, the daily use of 500 mg ashwagandha increased the muscle mass while the subjects given placebo had no improvements. The study concluded that the use of ashwagandha could provide significant improvements in muscle weakness, enhance speed and lower-limb muscular strength, as well as neuromuscular coordination. Various other studies have shown similar results and aim to assess these beneficial effects of ashwagandha on a more significant population.

### **Ashwagandha and Testosterone levels**

Some of the effects described above might be due to the increased levels of testosterone (T) in the body. Testosterone promotes sperm production, muscle growth, and healthy libido (sexual

drive) in men. Having decreased T levels will put you in an inactive state with reduced strength and sexual drive. A clinical study of around 50 men showed a 15% increase in testosterone levels with ashwagandha intake.

### **Safety and side effects**

Ashwagandha has little-to-no side effects and is safe for most people. Most people in various clinical studies experienced no adverse effects with its use. However, pregnant and breastfeeding women should consult their physicians before using ashwagandha. Moreover, people with hyperthyroidism should always take advice from their healthcare provider before starting ashwagandha intake.

### **Ginseng**

Ginseng is regarded as one of the king-of-herbs by many. It comes from traditional Chinese medicine and has been used primarily for enhancing energy levels, muscular strength, sexual performance, and much more.

Multiple pieces of research have shown the beneficial effects of ginseng in countering fatigue, lethargy, and decreased sexual performance. A systematic review of the literature indicates that ginseng has moderate effectiveness for treating these conditions. The actions of ginseng appear to be similar to those of ashwagandha, i.e., reduced oxidative stress, decreased LDL (bad cholesterol), and increased antioxidants providing a healthy overall body.

### **Safety and side effects**

Despite its extensive use, ginseng is associated with some side effects. The typical side-effect of ginseng is agitation (due to increased energy levels). Other side effects include hypertension, allergies, increased heart rate, etc. Most of the side effects are related to excessive use of ginseng, which is relatively common amongst many people. This abuse could partially be

attributed to considering ginseng an entirely safe drug for enhancing energy. Lastly, specific populations should use it with caution in certain population groups similar to ashwagandha.

### **What is best for you?**

Choosing between these two herbs could be a bit hard as they have similar benefits and effects on the male body. Considering today's stressful lifestyle, a herb that increases your energy levels while providing you with calmness would be a great option. Ashwagandha does this job very nicely, as shown by research. Moreover, in a direct pharmacological comparison, ashwagandha was shown to have a better-growing effect on muscle mass than ginseng.

On the contrary, the use of ginseng might be beneficial for reducing fatigue and lethargy. Still, it appears to have a lower safety index (more side effects) than ashwagandha. Using ginseng is associated with agitation or anxiety, and it is potentially not the best for improving relaxed energy levels.

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