Oat Straw

En Español (Spanish Version)

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Avena sativa

- Green Oats; Oat Straw; Wild Oat Extract

**Principal Proposed Uses**
- None

**Other Proposed Uses**
- **OAT STRAW ALONE:** Enhancing Male Sexual Function; Stop-smoking Aid
- **IN COMBINATION WITH SAW PALMETTO:** Enhancing Female Sexual Function; Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (Prostate Enlargement)

When the oat plant matures, it produces a fruit that becomes the grain “oats,” a heart-healthy, high-fiber food. This article does not address this form of oat. Rather, it describes products made from the green, unripe oat straw, sold under the names *Avena sativa*, green oats, and wild oat extract.

Traditionally, oat straw was considered a mild “nervine,” an herb thought to calm and heal nervous symptoms. On this basis, it was used to treat insomnia, stress, anxiety, and nervousness. In addition, oat straw tea was used for arthritis, and an alcohol extract of oat straw for the treatment of narcotic and cigarette addiction. However, there is no evidence that it is effective when used for any of these purposes.

**What Is Oat Straw Used for Today?**

Oat straw is widely marketed for enhancing male sexual function, and a combination of oat straw and saw palmetto is said to help sexual dysfunction in women. The same combination is supposedly helpful for enlargement of the prostate. However, the only evidence for these claims comes from unpublished studies conducted by the manufacturer of oat straw products. Because these studies are not available in full, it is not possible to judge their validity.

For example, one double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 75 men and women reportedly found that use of an oat straw product enhanced sexual experience for men, but not for women. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the results were statistically significant or exactly how the researchers arrived at their conclusions. Another study discussed on the same web page supposedly found that oat straw combined with saw palmetto produced similar benefits for women, but it is not clear whether this trial was double-blind.

It has been claimed that oat straw works by increasing the amount of free testosterone in the blood. Many oat straw websites state that, with advancing age, testosterone in the body tends to become bound up and inactivated, that this leads to numerous problems including failing sexual function, and that oat straw reverses this process. However, none of the parts of this argument are fully substantiated: the argument is speculation piled on speculation.

Oat straw has also been advocated as a stop-smoking treatment. However, despite promising results in one rather informal study, reported in a letter to the journal *Nature* in 1971, the balance of the evidence suggests that alcohol tincture of wild oats is not helpful for quitting smoking.
Dosage

Oat straw extract should be taken according to the manufacturer's directions. Alcohol tincture of oat straw is typically used at a dose of 1/2 to 1 teaspoon three times per day.

Safety Issues

There are no known or suspected health risks with oat straw. However, comprehensive safety studies have not been reported.

References [ ]


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