

DRAGON' S BLOOD

Dragon tree

Dracaena draco



Dragon's blood is a red substance (resin) that is removed from the fruit of a tree called *Daemonorops draco*. People use dragon's blood for **diarrhea and other digestive tract problems**. Some people apply dragon's blood directly to the skin as a drying agent.

Dragon's blood is a natural plant resin. It's dark red in color, which is part of what gives dragon's blood its name.

The resin is extracted from many different tropical tree species commonly called dragon trees. These may come from the plant groups *Croton*, *Pterocarpus*, *Daemonorops*, or *Dracaena*.

The plant resin has been used for thousands of years for distinct purposes. There are records of its use among the ancient Greeks and Romans and in India, China, and the Middle East.

Some of its uses are for health. It's also been used as dye, paint, incense, or for spiritual purposes. It has strong, somewhat sweet fragrance not unlike vanilla and spices.

Dragon's blood products from the *Dracaena* and *Daemonorops* genus are the most common and widely used today. But are they worth the hype? Let's take a look.

How is dragon's blood used?

Common uses of dragon's blood have changed over time. Today, its most common use is for digestive health.

The plant resin was formerly ascribed cure-all properties, though this is not the case anymore. It was once thought to speed wound healing, and some healers used it for respiratory issues.

Dragon's blood was also employed for different gastrointestinal conditions. Its claimed benefits for the digestive system are still held to this day, along with many other touted benefits.

The resin continues to be an important feature in certain spiritual practices, too. These include wiccan, hoodoo, voodoo, shamanism, and certain other folk magic rituals.

It's also still found in some natural dyes, paints, varnishes, and incense.

What does the research say?

Dragon's blood has risen from humble folk healing traditions to become a widely used health supplement today. The following are some research-supported benefits of this health-boosting plant resin.

Ulcers

Dragon's blood is shown to possibly be beneficial for a few different types of ulcers. Note that most of these ulcers are topical, not internal.

One 2015 case study showed dragon's blood helped pressure ulcers or bed sores. The evidence was limited, however, and was only shown in the *Daemonorops draco* species. This species is a common commercial source of dragon's blood.

Another 2011 study showed it helped diabetic ulcers. In the study it was only one ingredient in an herbal ointment full of other ingredients, though.

Dragon's blood may help topical ulcers, but the research is not yet completely solid. Its topical benefit may be owed to its purported antimicrobial properties. But it's certainly no replacement for doctor-recommended treatment approaches.

Antimicrobial

Dragon's blood may offer some protection against or even kill pathogens like bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

One 2011 laboratory study^{Trusted Source} considered dragon's blood from *Dracaena cinnabari* to have substantial antimicrobial properties, enough to be considered a source of food preservative.

Another 2013 study showed antimicrobial effects, but this was only tested in vitro (inside a test tube or other vessel outside the body).

Dragon's blood can't be considered a replacement for infection-fighting medical approaches like antibiotics, though it could bring mild benefits for minor conditions.



Antidiarrheal

One of dragon's blood's most common uses in ancient times was for digestive health.

Some research suggests, references, and supports this common use through the past and present. The plant resin was especially used for treatment of diarrhea or dysentery.

This may be due to its antimicrobial properties which can kill pathogens that cause these conditions. Research is still needed before considering it a replacement for mainstream treatments, however.

Anti-inflammatory

Some studies have also revealed antioxidant potential in dragon's blood. This indicates some anti-inflammatory properties, confirmed in another 2017 study.

Evidence of this is incomplete, however. It's only pieced together through studies of different dragon's blood sources, *Daemonorops draco* and *Dracaena draco*. It's also not proven to be a property in all sources.

Taking a dragon's blood supplement may possibly confer some antioxidant benefits just like other antioxidant-rich foods. Still, more research is needed.

Antidiabetic

Though research isn't complete, there are signs dragon's blood could support diabetes treatment or prevention.

One 2016 study showed antidiabetic actions from the resin, but this was only in vitro. A 2013 study Trusted Source showed evidence of this as well, but the study was on animals. Both studies were on source species of the *Dracaena* genus.

It's not yet proven that dragon's blood prevents or treats diabetes in humans. It does open a door to future research on possible use for diabetic medicines.

Anticancer

Research related to dragon's blood and cancer is in its early stages. There may be anti-tumor potential in dragon's blood.

For one, this medicinal plant resin has some antioxidant benefits. This means it may be able to scavenge free radicals that may possibly lead to cancer.

Studies have also shown anticancer effects, though they have only been in vitro. Lots more research is needed before using or considering dragon's blood a cancer treatment or preventative.

What to consider while taking dragon's blood

Taking dragon's blood is generally considered safe. Few side effects have been reported.

Regardless, lack of data on side effects doesn't deem a supplement completely safe.

If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, it's especially important to talk to your doctor about taking dragon's blood supplements internally or topically. There is no research showing it does not cause harm during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Similarly, there is no research showing it does not cause harm in children or infants. It's best to avoid giving dragon's blood supplements to children or infants.



Make sure to always follow dosage directions on products closely. There are no reports of overdose or adverse effects from taking too much, but it's still best to use dragon's blood cautiously.

A 2011 study on animals showed certain types of dragon's blood may have blood-thinning effects. This was specifically shown in products sourced from *Daemonorops draco* and *Dracaena cochinchinensis*.

For this reason, avoid taking dragon's blood if you take blood-thinning medications. Other medication interactions are unknown, but still possible.

Always talk to your doctor or health professional before regularly taking a health supplement. Discuss with them whether or not this is right for you and which manufacturers are best.

Taking and using dragon's blood

Dragon's blood comes in powder supplement capsules as well as alcoholic extracts and tinctures. You can also use dragon's blood ointments for topical conditions.

Depending on what you're using dragon's blood for, the form will be different. Make sure to use the right supplement form and approach after talking with your doctor or naturopath.

Always make sure to source your products from reputable and trustworthy companies.

For ulcers

Apply dragon's blood ointment, cream, or other product to a topical ulcer. Make sure to read and follow label directions.

You can also use tincture or extract diluted in water. Combine 3 to 5 drops for every ounce of water and use as a wound wash.

Don't rely on these approaches to replace doctor-recommended treatments for your topical ulcer.

For digestive system health, diarrhea, cancer support, and as an antidiabetic. Take a supplement or tincture extract internally. Make sure to follow label directions closely. Follow any advice from your healthcare practitioner as well.

Don't rely on dragon's blood to replace doctor-recommended treatments for these conditions. It's not yet proven to be a cure or treatment for any of them.



The bottom line

Dragon's blood has been used as a powerful health supplement for centuries. Research is starting to look into some of its benefits in modern times.

While dragon's blood does show some potential, keep in mind that it still hasn't been shown to cure, treat, or prevent any condition. Make sure to educate yourself on side effects, interactions, and risks. Consider treatment recommended by your doctor as your first approach.

Trying dragon's blood as a supplement or ointment to enhance your health — or to support some of your health conditions — is likely safe.

But discuss with your doctor first to determine if dragon's blood could really help you as a complementary or supplemental treatment and whether it will interfere with any medication you're taking. Also find out what sources of the supplement your doctor recommends.

