

SLOW FLOW

MENSTRUAL FLOW SUPPORT

Ingredients: 3 capsules: Vitamin A (as retinyl) - 10,000 iu, Vitamin C (as calcium ascorbate, buffered) - 500 mg, Vitamin K1 (as phytonadione) - 150 mg, Bioflavonoids (from citrus) - 500 mg, Ginger root - 500 mg, Cranesbill root - 200 mg, Greater periwinkle herb - 200 mg, Yarrow flower - 200 mg, Liferoot herb - 200 mg, Shepard's purse herb - 150 mg, vegetable capsule

Heavy menstruation and/or prolonged menstruation are two problems that can occur in abnormal menstrual bleeding patterns. A visit to a licensed primary care practitioner is warranted if the bleeding is excessive or consistently prolonged in duration. Several nutrients have been studied in regards to heavy menstrual bleeding. A deficiency of vitamin A may be a contributing factor in the heavy bleeding of adult women. Vitamin A has been successfully studied and has been able to return menstruation to normal or significantly decrease the amount of blood and the duration of the menses or both.⁶⁵ Vitamin C helps to reduce heavy bleeding by strengthening the capillaries and preventing their fragility. In at least one study vitamin C was able to reduce heavy bleeding in 87 percent of the women.⁶⁶ Like vitamin C, bioflavonoids have demonstrated a significant ability to reduce heavy menstrual bleeding by strengthening the vessel walls of the capillaries in women with menorrhagia.⁷ Bioflavonoids can also have an antiestrogen effect on the uterus by occupying the estrogen receptor sites and thus limiting the estrogen-stimulating effect on the endometrium (uterine lining). This effect can then help to reduce bleeding. Lastly, the antiinflammatory effect of bioflavonoids also helps to reduce heavy bleeding. Vitamin K is involved in the manufacture of clotting factors like prothrombin and clotting factors VII, IX, and X and has obvious implications for women with heavy or prolonged menses.

Ginger has been shown to inhibit prostaglandin synthetase,⁶⁷ the enzyme believed to be related to the altered prostaglandin-2 ratio associated with excessive menstrual blood loss. Inhibition of prostaglandin and leukotriene formation could explain ginger's traditional use as an antiinflammatory agent, and as an antiinflammatory it can reduce the flow from heavy and protracted menses.

Astringent herbs form a large category of tannin containing plants that are used to reduce blood loss from the reproductive tract. The astringents that are most effective in uterine blood loss are often high in tannins, but other constituents also explain their mechanism of action. Yarrow, greater periwinkle, cranesbill and shepherd's purse are the major astringent and hemostatic herbs used in gynecological problems. Even though shepherd's purse is an astringent without tannins, chemical analysis shows it can coagulate blood and is best used in combination with other astringent and hemostatic herbs for uterine bleeding, particularly when there is extremely heavy flow.

In traditional herbal medicine, uterine tone determines the ease of menstrual flow. If the uterus is hypotonic, there may be heavy bleeding. Life root is an important uterine tonic or amphoteric, which regulates tone and in clinical practice, has been one of the consistent herbs Dr. Hudson has relied upon to manage heavy abnormal bleeding.

Key Clinical Concepts: Acute heavy menses, menses longer than seven days; use at a lower dose in between menses to prevent heavy, prolonged or frequent menses.

Contraindications and Cautions: Pregnancy. Vitamin K may counteract the anticoagulant actions of drugs like Warfarin and Coumadin, which work to prevent clot formation. Aspirin, certain antibiotics, Dilantin, and possibly vitamin E greater than 600 iu per day also antagonize vitamin K action.

Naturopathic Principles: Seek and utilize a health care practitioner who will distinguish acceptable abnormal bleeding from other important causes. Consume a whole foods diet and emphasize the use of soy and flax seeds to regulate the menstrual cycle, and fish high in omega-3 oils. Reduce saturated animal fats. Eat foods high in iron: brewers' yeast, wheat germ, blackstrap molasses, apricots, eggs. Foods such as yogurt, sour fruits, and citrus juices can aid the absorption of iron.

Complementary Products: Women's Symmetry, Iron Extra, Ginger, Chaste Tree Berry

