



Patient Resource: Coriolus



What is *Coriolus*?

Coriolus versicolor (*Coriolus*) is one of the most highly studied medicinal mushrooms known as a polysaccharopeptide.

Coriolus is a fungus that grows in wooded temperate zones year round on tree trunks, stumps, dead logs, and branches. The majority of research on *Coriolus* originates from China and Japan, where its healing properties were first discovered. The most common commercial extracts of *Coriolus* include polysaccharopeptide Krestin (PSK), the Japanese version, and polysaccharopeptide (PSP), the Chinese version.

Why do people use *Coriolus*?

Coriolus is most commonly prescribed in cancer care to:

- Stimulate the immune system
- Inhibit the growth of cancer cells
- Reduce side effects from chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy
- Improve cancer related symptoms
- Slow disease progression
- Improve quality of life

How does *Coriolus* work?

Polysaccharopeptides such as *Coriolus versicolor* are classified as biological response modifiers that have a broad range of physiological activity including immune system enhancement, antitumor and anticancer effects, antimicrobial effects, and various other effects that contribute to increased quality of life.

Coriolus works to enhance the immune system by activating a number of immune boosting cells and antibodies as well as being able to restore immunosuppression that results from common cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation and blood transfusions. *Coriolus* also appears to have cytotoxic, antitumor effects against multiple tumor cell lines and cancer types. In multiple other studies, *Coriolus* has been found to have antiviral, antifungal, and antibacterial activities against a large number of common pathogens including *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Candida albicans*, *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Klebsiella pneumonia*.

Coriolus is thought to improve quality of life through multiple processes including relieving pain, protecting the liver, improving appetite, reducing intestinal disorders and generally calming the central nervous system.

Does *Coriolus* work?

Coriolus has been extensively studied over the last several decades to assess its effectiveness as a treatment in cancer care. Human relevant research ranging from case reports to meta-analyses and systematic reviews of clinical trials have been published all over the world with a large number originating from China and Japan. Overall, the research shows that *Coriolus* extracts appear to be a safe and effective treatment for improving survival, immune response, quality of life, and symptom management. *Coriolus* has been studied alone as well as in combination with chemotherapy and radiation and appears to be particularly effective when used as a co-therapy.



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What are the side effects of *Coriolus*?

Side effects associated with the administration of *Coriolus* are mild and are generally limited to gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and liver dysfunction. Depending on the type of administration, *Coriolus* may result in increased coughing if administered in powder form, or in pigmentation of nails.

Is *Coriolus* safe?

Coriolus may be contraindicated in patients receiving a bone marrow transplant or in those suffering from autoimmune diseases. Further, caution should be used in individuals with profoundly suppressed immune systems. *Coriolus* should also be used cautiously in patients with known bleeding or clotting disorders and in those using anticoagulant or antiplatelet agents, as it has been associated with thrombocytopenia. Finally, rare reports have been made of liver damage, therefore liver enzymes should be monitored closely in all patients undergoing long-term therapy.

Several studies have demonstrated the safety of *Coriolus* combined with various forms of chemotherapy.

What is the recommended dose of

***Coriolus*?**

At the OICC, people are typically prescribed the recommended oral doses of *Coriolus* extract decocted with water at 9-15 g daily, while the dose for dried *Coriolus* extracts is typically 2-6 grams daily.