Patient Fact Sheet

SLIPPERY ELM

SLIPPERY ELM (*Ulmus rubra* or *Ulmus fulva*) is a kind of elm tree. The herbal medicine comes from the inner bark. It is available as a tincture (in alcohol), in packaged teas and throat lozenges, and as dried bark for making tea. The main biochemical ingredient is a thick, slippery substance called *mucilage*.

WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

♦ Slippery elm bark is commonly used to soothe irritated skin and mucous membranes like sore throats.
♦ Some herbalists recommend it for stomach ulcers.
♦ It is an ingredient in the alternative cancer treatment, Essiac.

WHAT HAVE STUDIES SHOWN?

There have been no scientific studies of slippery elm bark's effects.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

♦ Allergic reactions are possible but very rare.
♦ There are no other known side effects.
♦ No long-term problems have been found from slippery elm bark.

IS IT SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN?

Herbalists consider slippery elm bark safe for children and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, but there have not been any scientific studies to confirm this.

WILL IT INTERFERE WITH MY OTHER MEDICATIONS OR MY MEDICAL CONDITION?

The mucilage in slippery elm bark could interfere with the absorption of other medicines if they are taken close together.

WHAT ARE TYPICAL DOSAGES?

♦ A typical dose for an adult is one teaspoon of powdered bark mixed in two cups of boiling water. One to three teaspoons may be taken three times per day.
♦ Doses for children are not known.

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♦ Follow your health care provider's instructions.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

♦ Always tell your doctor or nurse practitioner if you are taking any herb, and before starting any new herb. Your health care provider needs to know everything you are taking to help you make decisions about your health care. Herbs can cause problems with other herbs, dietary supplements, or medications.
♦ Herbal products may be contaminated with chemicals or other species of plants.