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Feverfew

Feverfew is a natural product commonly used in the management of headaches. It is also commonly known as featherfew or bachelor's button; it can also be seen by its scientific names *Chrysanthemum parthenium* and *Pyrethrum parthenium*. Feverfew was commonly grown in southeastern Europe, but is now more worldwide in areas like North American, Europe, and Australia. It only grows during warm or fall weather, July to October. It appears to be a daisy like flower with green or yellow leaves. Feverfew is commonly made out of the leaves of the plant but, the flower itself can also be used. It is available fresh, dried, or manufactured into capsules, liquid extracts and teas. Its main pharmacologic properties are anti-inflammatory and analgesic. Feverfew can be found at any local health or vitamin store.

Over time it has also been used in the treatment of pain, arthritis, asthma, constipation, muscle spasms, stomach aches, and inflammation. There is little evidence or clinical trials that show its effects on any of these other symptoms. Parthenolide is the main agent that is believed to prevent migraines, relieve spasms, reduce inflammation and stop the multiplication of cancer cells. Feverfew supplements are regulated to contain 0.2% parthenolide. The standard dose for an adult is 100-300 mg four times a day and this contains 0.2-0.4% parthenolide.

Fever few has been studied in two main clinical trials. The first study was a double blind trail utilizing 17 people who were already chewing feverfew leaves. Half the test group was given a 50mg capsule a day, while the other half was given the placebo. After 6 months the patients receiving the placebo experienced increased migraine frequency and severity with

nausea and vomiting, while the patients who received the capsule had no change. The second trial with 72 subjects was a double cross over study. For 4 months the patients received a capsule of feverfew or the placebo and then received the opposite for the remaining 4 months. 59 patients completed the study and this resulted in a twenty-four percent reduction of migraine attacks, but it did little to alter the duration of the attacks.

Side effects of feverfew include gastrointestinal irritation, abdominal pain, vomiting and nausea. When feverfew is chewed raw it can also lead to swelling of tongue and lips, loss of taste, and sores. Feverfew is contraindicated in pregnant women due to the risk of early start of uterine contractions. Rarely have allergic reactions to feverfew have been reported. People with allergies to chamomile, ragweed, or yarrow may be allergic to feverfew and should not take it. Due to possible interactions patient taking blood thinning medications should not take feverfew due to the increase effects. Feverfew can also interact with any medications that are metabolized by the liver.

Feverfew's main acting ingredient is parthenolide. Currently there is no prescription medication that uses the same active ingredient. One of the main classes of prescription migraine medication is Triptans. A few brand name medications that include Triptans are Relpex, Maxalt, and Imitrex. Triptan medications can have side effects like chest pain, nausea, dizziness, and xerostomia. Prescription medication can seem more attractive to patients because of their FDA approval and that doctors are the ones prescribing it. Patients are more likely to take a medicine that their doctor is giving them. Feverfew can also be more attractive to a customer due to the decreased severity of the side effects when compared to a prescription medication. As a health care provider it is important to know about the more common natural products that are being

used in the area you are working in. Health care providers should know the main side effects that could have an impact on the treatment being given to the patient. Sources should be verified by a drug handbook or a certified web source. When treating a patient who is using a natural product it is important to discuss with the patient any side effects that could impact their treatment. When treating a patient who is taking feverfew it is important to discuss with the patient that feverfew can have blood thinning or anticoagulant properties and may be unsafe to be taking during any major medical procedures, but to always consult their doctor.



Flower and leaves of feverfew

Raw feverfew

Capsules of feverfew



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