

GRAVIOLA TREE SUPPLEMENTS

Mar 31, 2011 | By Megan Ashton

Megan Ashton began writing professionally in 2010. When she isn't writing, she works with clients as the owner of Total Health & Hypnotherapy. She graduated from Western University with a Bachelor of Arts in communications then continued her education at the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition, where she became a Registered Holistic Nutritionist. Megan is also a Clinical Hypnotherapist.

Annona muricata is the scientific name for graviola, which is a small evergreen tree that is native to tropical areas in South America. Graviola has dark green leaves and edible fruit, and extracts of graviola are sold in supplement form in North America for a variety of health-promoting purposes. As with any supplement, you should consult with your health-care practitioner before taking graviola.

Active Ingredient

The exact mechanism of action of graviola is unknown. Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, or MSKCC, states that scientists believe the major active ingredient responsible for graviola's health benefits is a substance found in the leaves, bark and twigs called annonaceous acetogenins. Annonaceous acetogenins are phytochemicals, potent antioxidants that have been found to help prevent and treat disease in humans.

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Purported Uses

According to MSKCC, graviola extract supplements have anti-viral, antibacterial, anti-fungal, antiseptic and anti-rheumatic properties. Rain-Tree.com states that graviola has been used traditionally as a sedative, to support nervous system health, to relieve muscle tension and painful muscle spasms, and to treat malaria, parasites, infections and diabetes. In addition, extracts of graviola have been found to inhibit the herpes simplex virus, and graviola may be a useful supplement for the prevention and treatment of cold sores and genital herpes. Some researchers believe that graviola may also help cure HIV and AIDS, but no studies have been done confirm that theory.

Heart Health, Cancer and Depression

Graviola supplements may also support heart health by reducing high blood pressure and dilating the blood vessels, which enhances blood and oxygen flow to the heart. Rain-Tree.com states that graviola demonstrates anti-cancer properties and helps destroy tumors. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy are cytotoxic forms of therapy, meaning that they kill cancerous cells in your body, and graviola has been found to demonstrate similar cytotoxic properties with fewer toxic side effects. In addition, graviola stimulates serotonin receptors. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter in your brain that is often referred to as the "happy neurotransmitter" due to its ability to enhance mood. Many anti-depressants target serotonin to relieve depression, making graviola a potentially useful supplement for the relief of depression.

Dosage and Precautions

The therapeutic dose of graviola is 5 to 7 g a day in capsule or tablet form or 2 to 4 ml of a 4-to-1 extract tincture, once daily. Graviola may cause movement disorders with symptoms that mimic Parkinson's disease. Graviola may also stimulate uterine activity and is not recommended for pregnant women. Finally, many of the purported benefits of graviola supplements are based on preliminary research or anecdotal reports and have not yet been scientifically substantiated.

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- [Rain-Tree.com: Technical Data Report for Graviola; Leslie Taylor; 2002](#)
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