

# iMedix: Your Personal Health Advisor.

## CASCARA SAGRADA

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### Description

**Uses & Effectiveness Overview** Cascara sagrada (*Frangula purshiana*) is a shrub. The dried bark used to be FDA approved as an OTC laxative for constipation. It's now used in supplements. Cascara sagrada contains chemicals that stimulate the bowel and have a laxative effect. People use cascara sagrada for constipation, emptying the colon before a colonoscopy, and other conditions, but there is no good scientific evidence to support these uses. Cascara sagrada used to be approved by the US FDA as an over-the-counter (OTC) drug for constipation, but this approval was taken away in 2002 due to a lack of evidence. Today, you can buy cascara sagrada as a dietary supplement, but not as a drug. Cascara sagrada is not actually a vitamin, but a natural laxative derived from the bark of a tree. It has been used for centuries by Native Americans for its powerful effects on relieving constipation and promoting bowel movements.

**Side Effects** When taken by mouth: Cascara sagrada is possibly safe when used for less than one week. Side effects include stomach discomfort and cramps. But cascara sagrada is possibly unsafe when used for more than one week. This could cause more serious side effects, including dehydration, low levels of electrolytes, heart problems, muscle weakness, and others.

**Interactions** **Moderate Interaction** Be cautious with this combination. Digoxin (Lanoxin) interacts with CASCARA SAGRADA. Cascara sagrada is a type of laxative called a stimulant laxative. Stimulant laxatives can decrease potassium levels in the body. Low potassium levels can increase the risk of side effects from digoxin. Medications for inflammation (Corticosteroids) interacts with CASCARA SAGRADA. Cascara sagrada is a type of laxative called a stimulant laxative. Stimulant laxatives can cause diarrhea and decrease potassium levels. Some medications for inflammation, called corticosteroids, can also decrease potassium levels. Taking these products together might cause potassium levels to drop too low. Stimulant laxatives interacts with CASCARA SAGRADA. Cascara sagrada is a type of laxative called a stimulant laxative. Stimulant laxatives can cause diarrhea and decrease potassium levels. Taking cascara sagrada with other stimulant laxatives might cause more diarrhea and very low potassium levels.

**Warfarin (Coumadin) interacts with CASCARA SAGRADA** Cascara sagrada can work as a laxative. In some people, cascara sagrada can cause diarrhea. Diarrhea can increase the effects of warfarin and increase the risk of bleeding. If you take warfarin, do not take large doses of cascara sagrada.

**Water pills (Diuretic drugs) interacts with CASCARA SAGRADA** Cascara sagrada is a laxative. Some laxatives can cause diarrhea and decrease potassium levels. "Water pills" can also decrease potassium levels. Taking cascara sagrada along with "water pills" might make potassium levels drop too low.

**Minor Interaction** Be watchful with this combination. Medications changed by the liver (Cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4) substrates) interacts with

**CASCARA SAGRADA** Some medications are changed and broken down by the liver. Cascara sagrada might change how quickly the liver breaks down these medications. This could change the effects and side effects of these medications. **Special Precautions and Warnings** When taken by mouth: Cascara sagrada is possibly safe when used for less than one week. Side effects include stomach discomfort and cramps. But cascara sagrada is possibly unsafe when used for more than one week. This could cause more serious side effects, including dehydration, low levels of electrolytes, heart problems, muscle weakness, and others. **Pregnancy:** There isn't enough reliable information to know if cascara sagrada is safe to use when pregnant. Stay on the safe side and avoid use. **Breast-feeding:** Cascara sagrada is possibly unsafe when taken by mouth while breast-feeding. Cascara sagrada can cross into breast milk and might cause diarrhea in a nursing infant. **Children:** Cascara sagrada is possibly unsafe when taken by mouth in children. Don't give cascara sagrada to children. They are more likely than adults to have serious side effects, including dehydration and low potassium levels. **Gastrointestinal (GI) disorders** such as intestinal obstruction, Crohn disease, ulcerative colitis, appendicitis, stomach ulcers, or unexplained stomach pain: People with any of these conditions should not use cascara sagrada. **Dosing** Cascara sagrada used to be approved by the US FDA as an over-the-counter (OTC) drug for constipation, but this approval was taken away in 2002 due to a lack of evidence. Today, you can buy cascara sagrada as a dietary supplement, but not as a drug. There isn't enough reliable information to know what an appropriate dose of cascara sagrada might be. Keep in mind that natural products are not always necessarily safe and dosages can be important. Be sure to follow relevant directions on product labels and consult a healthcare professional before using.

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## **Side Effects**

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## **Uses**

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## **Interactions**

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## **Other Details**

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