

Cat's Claw

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!



**TEXAS AIDS HEALTH
FRAUD INFORMATION
NETWORK**

Phone: 800-758-5152

Web: www.tahfin.org

Email: info@tahfin.org

Also known as:

Aun, huasca, Garabato, Griffes Du Chat, Hawk's claw, Life-giving Vine of Peru, Paraguayo, Samento, Saventaro, Tambor huasca, Toron, Uña De Gato, Una de gavilan. *Uncaria tomentosa*, *Uncaria guianensis*

What is it?

A large woody vine found in tropical places in South America. It has thorns that look like claws. The roots, bark, and leaves are used as a dietary supplement. There are 34 types throughout the world. Only *Uncaria tomentosa* and *Uncaria guianensis* are discussed here.

History of use:

The people of South America have used cat's Claw for nearly 2000 years. It has been used to treat asthma, to recover from childbirth, and for wound healing. Cat's claw has also been used for joint pain, treating stomach problems and tumors, birth control, a tonic to ward off disease, to treat bone pains and to cleanse the kidneys. Cancers of the urinary tract, inflammation, cirrhosis, gonorrhea and diarrhea have also been treated by cat's claw. Today, cat's claw is used for joint and muscle pain, irregularities of the menstrual cycle, acne, fungus, wound healing, and nerve pain. It is also used to treat cancer, immune disorders, diverticulitis, peptic ulcers, colitis, gastritis, hemorrhoids, parasites, and leaky bowel syndrome. It has been used with zidovudine (AZT) to treat HIV. Cat's claw continues to be studied to see how effective it is against viral infections.

Safety and Effectiveness:

Cat's Claw has a low toxicity. Juices from the stems and roots may help boost the immune system. Do not give to children, pregnant women, or women who breastfeed.

Adverse Reactions:

High doses may cause diarrhea, low blood pressure, dizziness, and bruised or bleeding gums. **DO NOT CONFUSE** Cat's Claw with other dietary supplements (ie. cat's foot, devils'claw). Many different plants are identified as "Cat's Claw," so some people who think they are using Cat's Claw are using something else. Cat's Claw may interact with some medications. Use caution if you are taking lovastatin (Mevacor), ketoconazole (Nizoral), itraconazole (Sporanox), fexofenadine (Allegra), and triazolam (Halcion).