



DIETARY SUPPLEMENT FACT SHEET

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Wellness.aspx>

Glucomannan

Also Known as: Glucomannan, Amorphophallus konjac, Devil's Tongue, Elephant-foot Yam, Konjac, Konjac Mannan, Konnyaku, Snake Plant. Marketed as a weight loss supplement by the name of Propylene.

Historical Perspective: In Japan konjac is considered a health food because of its effects on intestinal function. Traditional Japanese foods such as shirataki noodles or konnyaku are good sources of konjac.

Common Uses: As a dietary supplement, glucomannan has been used for weight loss, to control blood sugar for those with diabetes and to reduce cholesterol levels, and controlled studies have verified these effects; it is also used as a laxative. Glucomannan is the vegetable fibers from the Asiatic plant from the konjac family. It is a water-soluble dietary fiber. Studies have shown that glucomannan may promote weight loss because when consumed it creates a feeling of fullness as the fiber "swells in the stomach," which in turn causes an individual to eat less. Carbohydrate in the diet may be absorbed more slowly when glucomannan is consumed before a meal, which may promote improved blood sugar levels. This water-soluble fiber may reduce cholesterol levels by increasing the elimination of cholesterol and its components from the body.

Form(s) Used: Powder and capsule

Common and/or Recommended Dosage: For all dosages, it is recommended that glucomannan be taken with plenty of water. For weight loss the recommended dose is one gram three times a day. For blood sugar regulation the recommendation is 3.6 to 7.2 grams once a day. For cholesterol control the recommended dose is 3.9 grams once a day. As a laxative, the recommended dose is 3 to 4 grams once a day; this can be repeated every 12 hours as need.

Potential Side Effects: It is **not** recommended to take glucomannan in capsule form because the fiber has been found to expand in the esophagus when water is consumed to swallow the capsule, resulting in a potentially life-threatening blockage. Glucomannan may also cause a low blood sugar event (hypoglycemia) in people with diabetes and should therefore be taken with caution, particularly if already on diabetes medication. Given its laxative effect, individuals who do not normally consume a high fiber diet may experience abdominal discomfort due to intestinal gas.

Food Drug-Supplement Interactions: Because of its potential to lower blood sugar levels, glucomannan may interfere with medications taken to lower blood sugar, namely increasing the effects. No other interactions are known.

Contraindication to Use: Young children and women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should not take glucomannan. People with diabetes should consult with a healthcare provider before using this supplement to avoid potentially dangerous hypoglycemic events.

Research Data on Safety and Efficacy: Glucomannan is safe when used as recommended and with appropriate guidance (particularly for individuals with diabetes). As with any effort to improve health, this supplement in and of itself will not produce the weight loss, blood sugar and cholesterol control desired; changes in eating and exercise habits are also required to obtain the most benefit.

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Bottom-Line: Glucomannan can be used safely to assist with weight control, blood sugar control and cholesterol reduction if used in combination with improvements in eating and exercise habits. It is also an effective laxative. To limit undesirable side effects, increase the amount of fiber in the diet gradually and consume plenty of water.

References:

Diabetes Care, Volume 23, Number 1, January 2000.

www.cfsan.fda.gov

www.drweil.com

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