



HOLISTIC HEALTH > HERBAL MEDICINE

# The Health Benefits of Mulungu

## A natural remedy with sedative properties

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Verywell / Anastasia Tretiak

Mulungu (*Erythrina mulungu*) is a natural remedy said to offer a variety of health benefits related to relaxation, including better sleep and improved [anxiety](#). It is also

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Extracted from the ornamental mulungu tree, native to South America, mulungu is available in dietary supplement form. Though popular throughout Brazil and Peru, mulungu's safety and effectiveness are unclear due to very limited research.

## Health Benefits

Support for the use of mulungu is mainly anecdotal. Preliminary animal studies have focused on a few key areas of potential use.

Results, however, are only somewhat informative because they cannot automatically be considered applicable to humans. As such, it's too soon to recommend mulungu as a treatment for any condition.

Here's a look at what is known about this herb.

### Anxiety

Mulungu is thought to possess sedative properties, and studies performed on rodents show that the remedy may hold promise for the treatment of anxiety.

For example, a [study](#) published in the *Journal of Pharmacy & Pharmacology* found that extracts of mulungu bark helped lower anxiety in mice by depressing the central nervous system.

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decrease in anxiety. Given this finding, the study's authors suggest that mulungu may help manage such conditions as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and panic disorder.

Human research investigating these benefits in humans is lacking.

One small [study](#) published in 2014 examined the role of mulungu bark extract on anxiety experienced by patients waiting to undergo molar extraction. Study authors found that mulungu provided a tranquilizing effect without significant negative side effects. They concluded that it could be considered an alternative to medication for the management of anxiety in adult patients undergoing dental surgery.

Still, more research is needed before mulungu can be recommended for the treatment of anxiety-related conditions in humans.

## **Pain**

Mulungu may help lessen pain, according to a 2003 [study](#) from *Biological & Pharmaceutical Bulletin*.

Researchers tested the pain-blocking effects of a combination of *Erythrina mulungu* and *Erythrina velutina* on mice with abdominal contractions and found the extracts effectively reduced contractions better than the control group.

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are independent of the opioid system.

While the study shows promise for the herbal duo, it is unclear if mulungu is an effective pain reliever on its own. More research, including human trials, is needed before recommending mulungu for pain relief.

**Related:** [Herbs for Natural Pain Relief](#)

## **Epilepsy**

Mulungu may have [anticonvulsant](#) effects, according to an animal-based [study](#) published in *Epilepsy & Behavior* in 2012. Researchers found that erysothrine, a compound extracted from the flowers of the mulungu plant, helped inhibit seizures and produced mild anti-anxiety effects.

Investigators induced seizures in the study subjects using GABA antagonists and glutamate agonists and found erysothrine effectively inhibited seizure activity. In addition, the herbal preparation was well tolerated and did not alter behavior in the animals.

While the research shows promise for stopping seizures, human trials are needed before mulungu can be recommended as a treatment for epilepsy and other seizure disorders.

## **Possible Side Effects**

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that it may cause drowsiness. Additionally, mulungu may be harmful to people with low blood pressure.

The safety of supplements in pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and those with medical conditions has not been established.

As you consider the potential side effects of using mulungu, also remember that self-treating a chronic condition may have serious consequences because it means you are avoiding/delaying standard care.

If you're considering using mulungu, make sure to talk to your healthcare provider first.



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Mulungu is sold as a [tincture](#) and as a powder. The tincture is applied under the tongue or the powder is dissolved in warm water.

Some sources suggest taking mulungu about 20 minutes before bed for relaxation and better sleep. But there is not enough scientific evidence to determine an appropriate or safe dose, and those recommended by brands vary.

You may be able to find mulungu in some natural-foods stores and shops specializing in dietary supplements. However, it is not as popular in North America and Europe as it is in South America, so online vendors may be your only option.

When shopping for mulungu or any supplement, remember that these products are largely unregulated and haven't been tested for safety. In some cases, a product may deliver doses that differ from what is specified on the label. In others, a product may be contaminated with other substances, such as metals.

Look for products that have been certified by ConsumerLabs, U.S. Pharmacopeia, or NSF International. These independent organizations don't guarantee that a product they certify is safe or effective, but they do provide a certain level of testing for quality.

Finally, keep in mind that according to guidelines established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA),

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disease.

## Common Questions

**I've heard mulungu can help me quit smoking. Is that true?**  
Investigators are starting to [look into](#) whether mulungu may be useful for coping with nicotine withdrawal during the smoking cessation process. However, it is too soon to tell if these supplements may provide any such benefit in humans.

**What are some alternatives to mulungu for anxiety relief?**  
A number of other natural remedies appear to aid in anxiety management. For example, research suggests that herbs like passionflower, kava, and [valerian](#) may each help. There's also some evidence that yoga, [meditation](#), guided imagery, massage, acupuncture, and hypnosis may help manage anxiety. When used in aromatherapy, [essential oils](#) like lavender and [rose](#) can have anxiety-relieving effects as well.

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