

With Ephedra's Fall, Hoodia May Be Weight Loss Rising Star

Hoodia, which is also known as Kalahari cactus, can be found growing in southern Africa where San Bushmen of the Kalahari have used it to lessen hunger and thirst during long hunts for many years. Actually, this traditional use of hoodia is what caused modern researchers to look into the potential of using hoodia for losing weight without feeling hungry. Hoodia is usually found in extract form normally extracted from the stems and roots of the Hoodia gordonii plant, many times, hoodia is combined with other herbs and nutrients to boost its appetite controlling properties.

After ephedra, the former leader of the weight loss field, hoodia's rise to prominence began skyrocketing. Hoodia's sudden and recent popularity as a diet aid threatens to cause a shortage of the small amount of hoodia that can be found growing wild in the desert. Since it takes five years for this plant to grow to maturity, hoodia plantations will take quite a while to catch up to the constantly growing demand for this product. This shortage among the supply can possibly contribute to the fake hoodia products that have overtaken the marketplace.

News report have even announced that eighty percent of hoodia products sold in the United States are adulterated with non-hoodia ingredients or are entirely counterfeit. Sadly, if the supplement company that manufactures its Hoodia supplement doesn't have regular testing performed on the raw materials, there's no telling what is going into their product. Thankfully, manufactures are testing their products.

So the question is, how do you know which supplements are the real deal? The safest thing for consumers and retailers to do right now are to use products that have been backed by the CITES certificate, as CITES-certified products are grown or collected with a permit, which was obtained for hoodia in 2005. All genuine hoodia that comes from South Africa will have a CITES certificate and certificate of analysis showing active ingredients.

The interest and hope for hoodia supplements seems to be whizzing by the slow, plodding pace of scientific research. There is currently not enough research to permanently establish hoodia as a weight loss tool, but researchers are beginning to determine how this herb works to cut down on the amount of food a person eats each day. A steroidal glycoside compound, called P57, has been proven in research to be the active ingredient in hoodia that results in the lessening of hunger.

There is only one clinical trial that uses human volunteers, but unfortunately, it is unpublished. During a fifteen day trial, nine adults took pills containing an unspecified amount of P57 extracted from hoodia twice a day. Compared to another group of nine adults taking placebos, the P57 group ate about 1,000 fewer calories and lost much more body fat. However, there are a handful of studies with hoodia that have been published in scientific literature.

Injecting P57 into the appetite centers of rat brains showed altered ATP levels, which may affect hunger, as those rats injected with P57 consumed less food than those rats injected with a placebo. Additionally, the safety of hoodia has been determined to be relatively safe for oral consumption. Although it is somewhat comforting to know that San Bushmen has consumed hoodia without any noticeable problems, this does not directly translate to taking high doses of hoodia extract. It is cautioned that dieters should be wary of using hoodia at high doses, starting out at lower dosages gradually increasing doses until one reaches desired results.

About the Author

More information on [Hoodia extract](#) is available at VitaNet ®, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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