



18 July 2017
EMA/366468/2017

Herbal medicine: summary for the public

Wormwood herb

Artemisia absinthium L., herba

This is a summary of the scientific conclusions reached by the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) on the medicinal uses of wormwood herb. The HMPC conclusions are taken into account by EU Member States when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines containing wormwood herb.

This summary is not intended to provide practical advice on how to use medicines containing wormwood herb. For practical information about using wormwood herb medicines, patients should read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact their doctor or pharmacist.

What is wormwood herb?

Wormwood herb is the common name for the leaves or leafy flowering tops of the plant *Artemisia absinthium* L..

The HMPC conclusions cover wormwood herb preparations which are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) or powdering the leaves or leafy flowering tops. They may also be obtained by expressing the juice of the leaves or leafy flowering tops or by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract.

Herbal medicines containing these wormwood herb preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk and in solid or liquid forms to be taken by mouth.

Wormwood herb preparations may also be found in combination with other herbal substances in some herbal medicines. These combinations are not covered in this summary.

What are the HMPC conclusions on its medicinal uses?

The HMPC concluded that, on the basis of its long-standing use, these wormwood herb preparations can be used for temporary loss of appetite or for mild heartburn and stomach/gut disorders.

Wormwood herb medicines should only be used in adults. If symptoms last longer than 2 weeks when taking the medicine a doctor or qualified healthcare practitioner should be consulted. Detailed



instructions on how to take wormwood herb medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

What evidence supports the use of wormwood herb medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these wormwood herb medicines for appetite loss and mild heartburn and stomach/gut disorders are based on their 'traditional use'. This means that, although there is insufficient evidence from clinical trials, the effectiveness of these herbal medicines is plausible and there is evidence that they have been used safely in this way for at least 30 years (including at least 15 years within the EU). Moreover, the intended use does not require medical supervision.

In its assessment, the HMPC noted the lack of studies in patients with these conditions. The HMPC considered laboratory studies which showed an anti-ulcer effect of wormwood herb medicines in rats, which is supportive of the use for mild heartburn and stomach/gut disorders. Regarding the use for loss of appetite, the HMPC considered this use to be plausible due to the bitter taste of some of the components of wormwood herb, which may stimulate the gut.

For detailed information on the studies assessed by the HMPC, see the HMPC assessment report.

What are the risks associated with wormwood herb medicines?

At the time of the HMPC assessment, no side effects had been reported with these medicines.

Wormwood herb medicines must not be taken by patients who are hypersensitive (allergic) to wormwood and other plants of the Asteraceae family. They must also not be taken by patients with bile duct obstruction, cholangitis (inflammation of the bile ducts) or liver disease.

Further information on the risks associated with these wormwood herb medicines, including the appropriate precautions for their safe use, can be found in the monograph under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use.

How are wormwood herb medicines approved in the EU?

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing wormwood herb have to be submitted to the national authorities responsible for medicinal products, which will assess the application for the herbal medicine and take into account the scientific conclusions of the HMPC.

Information on the use and licensing of wormwood herb medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

Other information about wormwood herb medicines

Further information on the HMPC assessment of wormwood herb medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use. For more information about treatment with wormwood herb medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.