



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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## Herbal medicine: summary for the public

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### Blackcurrant leaf

*Ribes nigrum* L., folium

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

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

#### **What is blackcurrant leaf?**

Blackcurrant leaf is the common name for the leaf of the plant *Ribes nigrum* L.

The HMPC conclusions only cover blackcurrant leaf preparations which are obtained by drying and either comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) or powdering the leaves, or by putting the plant material in water to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract. The water is then evaporated to obtain a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing these blackcurrant leaf preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk and in solid forms to be taken by mouth.

Blackcurrant leaf 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 blackcurrant leaf preparations can be used for minor joint pain and for minor complaints affecting the urinary tract (structures that carry urine). For urinary tract complaints, it is used to increase urine production in order to achieve flushing of the urinary tract.

Blackcurrant leaf medicines should only be used in adults. If symptoms get worse or last longer than 4 weeks when taking the medicine for minor joint pain or more than 2 weeks when taking the medicine

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30 Churchill Place • Canary Wharf • London E14 5EU • United Kingdom

Telephone +44 (0)20 3660 6000 Facsimile +44 (0)20 3660 5555

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for minor urinary complaints a doctor or qualified healthcare practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take blackcurrant leaf medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

### **What evidence supports the use of blackcurrant leaf medicines?**

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these blackcurrant leaf medicines for minor joint pain and minor urinary complaints 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 considered laboratory studies in rats and mice reporting that blackcurrant leaf reduces pain and inflammation and increases urine production. No studies in patients have been carried out with blackcurrant leaf.

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

### **What are the risks associated with blackcurrant leaf medicines?**

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

Blackcurrant medicines, used for minor urinary complaints, must not be used in patients with conditions where a reduced fluid intake is recommended (such as severe heart or kidney disease).

Further information on the risks associated with these blackcurrant leaf 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](http://ema.europa.eu/Find%20medicine/Herbal%20medicines%20for%20human%20use).

### **How are blackcurrant leaf medicines approved in the EU?**

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing blackcurrant leaf 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 blackcurrant leaf medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

### **Other information about blackcurrant leaf medicines**

Further information on the HMPC assessment of blackcurrant leaf 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](http://ema.europa.eu/Find%20medicine/Herbal%20medicines%20for%20human%20use). For more information about treatment with blackcurrant leaf medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.