

SAFETY

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***Taxus brevifolia* Nutt. Taxaceae**

SCN: Pacific yew

Part: needles

Quick Reference Summary

Safety Class: 2b – Not to be used during pregnancy

Interaction Class: A – No clinical relevant interactions are expected.

Contraindications

Not for use in pregnancy except under the supervision of a qualified healthcare practitioner (Krag 1976).

Precautions

None known.

Drug and Supplement Interactions

None known.

Notice

Emmenagogue (Krag 1976); see Appendix 2.

Editors' Notes

Pacific yew should not be confused with botanically similar species, *T. baccata* (English yew) and *T. cuspidata* (Japanese yew), that are recognized as toxic due to effects on heart rate and rhythm (Rowinsky et al. 1990; Vance et al. 2001). Effects on the heart are caused by taxine compounds, present at 0.5 to 1% in *T. baccata* as compared to 0.0007% in Pacific yew (Jenniskens et al. 1996; Tyler 1960).

Pacific yew is a source of the compound taxol, used in chemotherapy of several types of cancers. The concentration of taxol in Pacific yew needles is approximately 0.006%, which is substantially lower than the 0.01% found in the bark (Witherup et al. 1990).

Adverse Events and Side Effects

None known.

Pharmacological Considerations

None known.

Pregnancy and Lactation

Pacific yew has traditionally been used as an emmenagogue (Krag 1976).

I. Herb–Drug and Herb–Supplement Interactions

Clinical trials of drug or supplement interactions

No clinical trials of drug or supplement interactions were identified.

Case reports of suspected drug or supplement interactions

No case reports of suspected drug or supplement interactions were identified.

Animal trials of drug or supplement interactions

No animal trials of drug or supplement interactions were identified.

II. Adverse Events

Case reports of adverse events

No case reports of adverse events were identified.

III. Pharmacology and Pharmacokinetics

Human pharmacological studies

No relevant human pharmacological studies were identified.

Animal pharmacological studies

No relevant animal pharmacological studies were identified.

In vitro pharmacological studies

No relevant in vitro pharmacological studies were identified.

IV. Pregnancy and Lactation

Pacific yew has traditionally been used as an emmenagogue (Krag 1976).

V. Toxicity Studies

Acute toxicity

The LD₅₀ of Pacific yew powder orally administered to rats could not be determined at doses up to 5 g/kg (PSL 1999).

Literature Cited

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