The herb kudzu is recognized as a safe and effective natural dietary supplement. However, you should not take it without advising your doctor, especially if you use any other medication or are allergic to prescription, over-the-counter, or dietary supplements. Do not use this product if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have any health problems including high blood pressure, heart or blood vessel disease, endometriosis or reproductive cancer. If you are diabetic, please monitor your blood pressure carefully when taking kudzu products, as it may lower sugar levels in your blood. If you experience any breathing problems, tightness in your chest, hives, rash or itchy skin, please discontinue using kudzu, as this may indicate an allergic reaction.

Kudzu Rescue was developed as part of the six-week My Way Out nutritional supplementation program. Many individuals have also found it an effective agent in curbing their desire to drink over the long term. Please consult your health care provider if you wish to use it in this manner. The following information is provided courtesy of EDrugDigest.

**Scientific Name:** Kudzu  
**Other Names:** Daidzein, Ge Gen, Japanese Arrowroot, Pueraria, Pueraria lobata, Pueraria montana, Pueraria thunbergiana, Yege  
**Who is this for?**

**Uses**  
Chemicals extracted from kudzu include the isoflavones daidzein, daidzin, genistein, and puerarin. In the past several years, these chemicals have been studied for their potential ability to treat alcoholism and to reduce the symptoms of hangovers. At least some of them are known to block two of the natural enzymes that break down alcohol in the body. As a result, study animals given alcohol and kudzu had lower blood alcohol levels than animals given comparable amounts of alcohol alone. The kudzu-treated animals showed less interest in drinking alcohol, as well. In other laboratory studies, kudzu also appeared to protect animal brain, liver, and spine cells from damage by alcohol and other toxic chemicals. Whether these effects apply to humans is being investigated intensively.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the type of kudzu that grows in Asia has been used to relieve muscle pain. Some evidence from animal studies and human case reports suggests that kudzu may have an anti-inflammatory effect, but no controlled studies have been carried out in humans to determine how kudzu might exert this effect. It is known that chemicals in kudzu may help to lower heart rate and regulate heart rhythm, in part by widening blood vessels near the heart. Studies in animals show that puerarin and perhaps other components of kudzu may promote the formation of new blood vessels around areas of heart tissue damaged by heart attacks or low blood supply. Kudzu may also relax blood vessels in the brain, which may help to relieve migraine headaches. More research is needed to prove or disprove all of these potential uses.

The isoflavones in kudzu belong to a larger chemical group known as phytoestrogens. In the human body, phytoestrogens may exhibit weak effects like the female hormone, estrogen. The type of kudzu that grows in North America may not have enough phytoestrogens to provide natural hormone replacement. However, in one small study of menopausal women, kudzu was mildly effective in relieving hot flashes and other symptoms of menopause. Additional early results from animal studies suggest kudzu phytoestrogens may help to protect against bone loss for individuals with osteoporosis. They may also have some effectiveness in improving memory and thinking ability in postmenopausal women. An additional effect of kudzu’s phytoestrogens may help to lower cholesterol levels. For commercial use, phytoestrogens from kudzu may be combined with other herbs such as soy, which is believed to exert estrogen-like effects through different methods. Currently, not enough is understood about kudzu’s possible estrogenic effects to recommend it for use in menopause or other conditions.

In laboratory animals, chemicals derived from kudzu have reduced blood sugar levels, but not by increasing insulin release. Instead, it is thought that these chemicals increase the body’s production of a substance known as beta-endorphin. In turn, the ability of body cells to absorb blood sugar and convert it into energy also increases. In general, animals with diabetes experienced a bigger reduction in blood sugar while given kudzu than normal animals. Much more study is needed to prove or disprove kudzu’s possible role in managing diabetes.

**When should I be careful taking it?**

In animal studies, kudzu has reduced blood sugar levels. Individuals with diabetes should use kudzu with caution and monitor their blood sugar levels carefully while taking it to avoid hypoglycemia (blood sugar that is too low). Symptoms of low blood sugar include shakiness, sweating, confusion, distorted speech, and loss of muscle control. If not corrected, low blood sugar can lead to unconsciousness and even death.

Due to possible mild estrogenic effects, kudzu may aggravate hormone-dependent conditions or interfere with treatment for them. Women with endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and cancers of the breast, ovaries, or uterus should not take kudzu. Men with prostate cancer should also avoid taking it.

**Precautions**

Not enough is known about how kudzu might affect developing babies or infants to recommend its use while pregnant or breast-feeding. It has not been studied for use in children, so its use should also be avoided in children.

**What side effects should I watch for?**

In a small study of menopausal women, taking kudzu was associated with a few reports of mild and temporary anemia and elevated liver enzymes. No other side effects have been reported from the use of kudzu.

**What interactions should I watch for?**

**Prescription Drugs**

In studies and case reports, kudzu has been shown to increase the time blood needs to clot. When it is taken with antiplatelet or anticoagulant drugs, the effect of the drug may be increased, resulting in uncontrolled bleeding.

- **Antiplatelet agents** include Plavix and Ticlid  
- **Anticoagulants** include heparin and warfarin

Because it may have a lowering effect on blood sugar, kudzu may increase the effectiveness of medications used for the treatment of diabetes. Individuals using insulin or taking oral medications for diabetes should talk to their doctors or pharmacists before using kudzu.

In animal studies, kudzu has had effects on blood vessel tone, heart rate, and heart rhythm. Potentially, these effects could interfere with drugs used to treat heart conditions including angina, arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, and high blood pressure. If you take any drugs for heart problems or if you are not sure whether any of your medications is for a heart condition, discuss the use of kudzu with your doctor or pharmacist before you begin to take it.

**Non-prescription Drugs**

Kudzu can affect the ability of blood to clot after an injury. Aspirin can also delay clotting, so kudzu should not be taken at the same time as aspirin.

**Herbal Products**

Theoretically, if kudzu is used with other herbs that affect blood clotting, bleeding may occur. Some of the most common herbal products that might inhibit blood clotting are:

- **Danshen**, Devil's Claw, Garlic, Ginger (in large amounts), Ginkgo, Ginseng, Horse Chestnut, Papain, Red Clover, Saw Palmetto

Some interactions between herbal products and medications can be more severe than others. The best way for you to avoid harmful interactions is to tell your doctor and/or pharmacist what medications you are currently taking, including any over-the-counter products, vitamins, and herbs. For specific information on how kudzu interacts with drugs, other herbs, and foods and the severity of those interactions, please use our Drug Interactions Checker ([http://www.drugdigest.org/DD/Interaction/ChooseDrugs](http://www.drugdigest.org/DD/Interaction/ChooseDrugs)) to check for possible interactions.
Kudzu vines, which can grow up to one foot per day, extend as much as 100 feet from huge taproots. One taproot may produce many vines. Although the plants make seeds, the dried roots may be powdered for a flour used to thicken cooked foods or to make noodles. For medicinal purposes, small roots from kudzu plants are dug up after the leaves have died in the winter. The roots are dried and then fermented. The resulting sludge is dried, powdered, and made into capsules, extracts, or tablets. Kudzu flowers are also used for medicine in some Asian countries.

Dosage and Administration
Kudzu is available in a number of different dosage forms, most commonly as raw kudzu root (usually called crude kudzu root), as tablets made from dried and powdered root, or as a root extract. Extracts are concentrated liquid preparations usually made by soaking chopped or mashed plant parts in a liquid such as alcohol, and then straining out the solid parts.

For tablets, 10 mg is the approximate equivalent of about 1,500 mg (1.5 grams) of crude kudzu root.

Commonly recommended daily doses are: Kudzu root 9,000 mg to 15,000 mg (9 grams to 15 grams) Kudzu tablets 90 mg to 360 mg divided into two or three doses Kudzu extract 300 mg to 800 mg divided into three doses

Summary
Kudzu has been promoted for relieving hangovers and lessening the effects of alcohol ingestion. Taken by mouth, it may also treat heart conditions, lower blood sugar levels, alleviate some symptoms of menopause, and lessen the pain associated with migraine headaches.

Risks
Individuals who have conditions such as endometriosis and reproductive cancers, that may be worsened by estrogen-like effects should not take kudzu. Women who are pregnant or nursing should not take this herb. Women who are under 12 years of age should also avoid kudzu. If individuals with diabetes take it, they should also check their blood sugar levels carefully to make sure they do not develop hypoglycemia.

Side Effects
Mild and temporary anemia is the main side effect that has been reported from taking recommended doses of kudzu. No information is available about possible side effects from large or prolonged dosing.

Interactions
Because it may lower blood sugar levels, kudzu may enhance the effectiveness of insulin and oral medications for diabetes. It may also affect the actions of antidiabetic agents, anticoagulants, certain herbal supplements, and drugs used for various heart conditions.

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References
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This information is provided for your education only. Please share this information with your healthcare provider and be sure that you talk to your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and non-prescription medicines you take before you begin to use any herbal product.