An Anti-inflammatory Plant

Petadolex is butterbur (Petasites hybridus), a shrub found in Europe and in parts of Asia and North America which has been used medicinally since the Middle Ages. Modern science now supports the benefits of its active ingredients, known as sesquiterpenes. These block the production of pro-inflammatory mediators and prevent spasms in smooth muscle and the walls of blood vessels.

Migraines and Allergies

Petadolex exerts its most beneficial effects through its anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic actions. Butterbur supplementation was shown to reduce migraine frequency by up to 60%, with decreases in migraine duration and intensity. Butterbur extracts can improve lung ventilation and bronchial reactivity in asthmatics or patients with bronchitis, and they are effective in dealing with symptoms of seasonal allergies. Butterbur also protects against ethanol-induced gastric damage.

All Natural Relief

Butterbur is a well-tolerated supplement, with no reported interactions with other medications. It provides safe and natural relief for various inflammatory disorders.
*Petasites hybridus* (butterbur) is a perennial shrub whose primary therapeutic uses are for prophylactic treatment of migraines, and as an antispasmodic agent for chronic cough, asthma, and allergies. It has also been used successfully in preventing gastric ulcers and in treating patients with irritable bladder and urinary tract spasms.

**Active Ingredients**
The active ingredients that are found in petasites are called sesquiterpenes. These possess anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory activities by inhibiting spasms in smooth muscle and vascular walls and blocking the synthesis of leukotriene, an important pro-inflammatory molecule.

**Mechanism of Action**
Butterbur extracts are primarily known for the treatment of three clusters of conditions: migraines, allergy/asthma/bronchitis and gastro-intestinal disorders. All three are dependent on the anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic effects of butterbur. The former is arguably the most important, and what makes butterbur so unique is that it seems to suppress leukotriene production without impeding the biosynthesis of the more ‘constructive’ eicosanoids, especially prostaglandins.

**Migraine Headaches**
Butterbur extract is the type of supplement that exerts profound, physiologically altering effects but does so in a subtle fashion that requires sustained supplementation for longer periods of time. The most prominent studies were in fact 12 weeks long, and they were double-blind and placebo-controlled involving 128 subjects. The studies demonstrated butterbur’s effectiveness for migraine prophylaxis, with patients experiencing as much as a 60% drop in frequency of migraine attacks compared to the placebo group. Other improvements in the petasites group included a reduction in the duration and intensity of such attacks, as well as a decrease in migraine-associated symptoms.

**Asthma/Bronchitis/Allergy**
One study found that petasites has a beneficial influence on lung ventilation and bronchial reactivity in patients suffering from asthma or bronchitis. Not only did the patients receiving petasites exhibit a decrease in bronchial reactivity, but those who were not concurrently prescribed corticosteroids actually had the most pronounced results. Another study demonstrated that petasites compares favourably with the drug cetirizine in treating seasonal allergic rhinitis without the sedative effects associated with this and other antihistamines.

**Gastrointestinal Disorders**
Extracts of *Petasites hybridus* were found to be capable of blocking ethanol-induced gastric damage and reducing ulcerations of the small intestine caused by indomethacin, an anti-inflammatory drug used to treat arthritic conditions. These results were attributed to the inhibition of pro-inflammatory enzyme activity and leukotriene biosynthesis.

**Safety**
Reports of side effects from petasites extracts have been extremely sporadic. The butterbur plant’s pyrrolizidine alkaloids are thought to potentially cause hepatic damage and be carcinogenic in animals; however, extracts are commercially available in which the pyrrolizidine alkaloids have been removed. The German pharmaceutical giant Weber & Weber® have a patented procedure to remove these alkaloids in their own finished butterbur extract known as Petadolex™.