Liquorice *Glycyrrhiza glabra*



Liquorice has been used

* as an expectorant (clears catarrh)
* antitussive (stops subsequent coughing)
* demulcent (good for sore mouths)
* spasmolytic (good for stomach ache)
* a mild laxative.

Liquorice also has a very important action in raising cortisol levels by inhibiting [11β-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11Beta_Hydroxysteroid_dehydrogenase) the enzyme responsible for breaking down cortisol in the kidney.

* Liquorice has therefore been used in the treatment of inflammatory and autoimmune disease.
* This cortisol like action of liquorice is responsible for it’s most serious toxic effects, high blood pressure and low potassium levels.