



<b>St John's Wort - <i>Hypericum perforatum</i></b>	
<b>Description</b>	A shrubby perennial with bright yellow flowers. St John's wort comprises of many active components. The best-studied active components are hypericin and pseudohypericin, found in both the leaves and the flowers. Other components include flavonoids, xanthenes, phenolic carboxylic acids, essential oils, carotenoids, alkanes, phloroglucinol derivatives, phytosterols, and medium-chain fatty acid alcohols.
<b>Traditional Use</b>	The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that St John's wort could deter evil spirits. Today the herb is known for its use in mild-anxiety and low mood.
<b>Commercial Availability &amp; Dosage</b>	St John's Wort is available in standardised preparations which contain 0.3% hypericin. These are available as liquid extracts, or in tablet or capsule form. Dosage range <sup>1</sup> : 2-5g dried herb daily; 3-6mL liquid extract (1:2) daily; 1-2.7mg total hypericin daily.
<b>Precautions / Contra-Indications<sup>1</sup></b>	People with fair skin are advised to avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight while taking St. John's Wort.
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Breastfeeding<sup>1</sup></b>	Not recommended to be used during pregnancy or breast-feeding.
<b>Adverse Effects<sup>1</sup></b>	Adverse reactions reported include gastrointestinal upset, headache, skin reddening and itching, dizziness, constipation, fatigue, anxiety and tiredness.
<b>Interactions<sup>1</sup></b>	Always consult your doctor before taking prescribed anti-depressants, anti-convulsants, warfarin and St John's Wort together. St John's Wort can disrupt efficacy of the oral contraceptive pill. Not to be used when being treated with therapeutic ultraviolet light.
<b>References</b>	1. Braun & Cohen. Herbs and Natural Supplements: An evidence-based guide. Churchill Livingstone, 2005.