

BOTTOM LINE

Natural Healing

With Dr. Mark Stengler

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DEEPER CURES FROM AMERICA'S TOP NATURAL PHYSICIAN

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MISTLETOE EXTRACT CANCER BREAKTHROUGH

It's not often that there is a proven natural treatment to recommend to the approximately 12 million people in the US who currently have cancer. I'm talking about an extract made from European mistletoe (*Viscum album*), a plant that grows on apple, oak, maple and other trees. (You know it as a decoration for holiday kisses.)

Mistletoe extract has become one of the most well-studied compounds in complementary cancer therapy (with more than 120 published studies). It is widely used in Europe, particularly in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In fact, in Germany, mistletoe extract is a licensed medicine that is partly reimbursable through the health-care system...and more than 50% of cancer patients are treated with the plant in some form. In Switzerland, it is fully reimbursable through health insurance.

Mistletoe extract has been used in medicine for centuries. It had multi-dimensional uses, including treating headache, menstrual symptoms, infertility and arthritis. Interest in mistletoe extract as a treatment for cancer was ignited in the 1920s.

Today several companies manufacture mistletoe extract under the brand names Iscador, Helixor, Isorel and others. One of the most studied formulations is Iscador.

Available from conventional medical and holistic doctors in the US and around the world, mistletoe extract is

most often used in conjunction with standard cancer treatments such as chemotherapy and/or radiation. It has been found to increase the effectiveness of, and reduce the side effects from, conventional therapies and to improve patients' immunity and quality of life, including vitality, sleep and appetite.

I regularly prescribe mistletoe extract to my patients—to help those with cancer battle the disease and as a postcancer treatment.

Find out what mistletoe extract can do...

HOW IT CAN HELP

Medicinally, mistletoe extract's active compounds seem to be related to two main components—*viscotoxins*, proteins that exhibit cell-killing activity and stimulate the immune system...and *lectins*, molecules that bind to cells and induce biochemical changes in those cells. However, since the extract is made from the whole plant, including leaves, stems and berries, it contains hundreds of active compounds.

Studies have shown that mistletoe extract can help in a number of ways and with several different types of cancers. *What some studies have found...*

- Patients with cancer of the colon, rectum, stomach, breast or lung who took Iscador in addition to the conventional therapies reviewed in the study (chemotherapy and/or radiation) lived about 14 months, or 40% longer than those who did not take

mistletoe extract, according to a study published in 2001 in *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*.

- Mistletoe extract extended survival time in patients with malignant melanoma in a 2005 study published in a German journal. Patients had significantly lower rates of metastases compared with the control group.

- Patients with colorectal cancer who were treated with Iscador in addition to conventional treatment experienced fewer adverse side effects...better symptom relief...and improved disease-free survival rates compared with those treated with only conventional therapy, according to a 2009 study in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

- At last year's American Society for Clinical Oncology meeting in Washington, DC, researchers presented the results of a Phase I clinical trial that tested the safety of Helixor and the drug *gemcitabine* (Gemzar) in patients with advanced solid tumors of the breast, pancreas or colon. *Finding:* 48% of patients taking both Helixor and Gemzar benefited from enhanced immune function and an increase in infection-fighting cells. Helixor also may allow for higher doses of chemotherapy.

- Mistletoe extract improved the quality of life of 270 breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy,

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says a 2011 German study published in *Phytomedicine*. Physicians rated improvements in general well-being (87% of patients), mental health (71%) and disease coping (50%). Patients also reported improved appetite and sleep and less pain. Well-being is believed to result from mistletoe extract's anti-inflammatory effect, which can reduce pain and boost energy.

In addition, mistletoe extract has been found to inhibit growth of malignant cells and cause cancer-cell death (*apoptosis*)...and protect cell DNA.

HOW IT IS USED

Mistletoe extract typically is given by injection. It also is available as a tincture and can be given intravenously—however, all the studies used the injection form. Cancer patients should use only the injection form because that's the form that has been studied. I teach my patients how to give themselves the injection in the abdomen or upper side of the thigh three times a week. We begin after a diagnosis and before surgery and/or chemotherapy/radiation. Even if mistletoe extract is not given immediately after diagnosis, it can be started at any

time during the course of conventional cancer treatment.

Different species of mistletoe extract can treat different types of cancer. Doctors can use varying strengths depending on patients' responses to mistletoe extract. I like to have patients take mistletoe extract for five years after being diagnosed because it optimizes the immune system to continue fighting cancer.

As with most natural substances, the US Food and Drug Administration has not approved mistletoe extract as a cancer treatment. However, in this country, injectable mistletoe is available as a prescription. Any licensed primary care doctor can order and prescribe it. It costs about \$200 a month and is not covered by insurance.

Cancer patients should have this treatment only while being supervised by a doctor.

Side effects are uncommon but can include headache, dizziness, fatigue and itching. An allergic reaction is rare but possible. A normal reaction may include mild fever for one to two days after the first injection, swelling of local lymph nodes and redness or swelling at the injection site for 48 hours. Doctors look

for this reaction—it means that the treatment is working and is prompting an immune response.

People who have an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis or multiple sclerosis...high fever...active tuberculosis...or hyperthyroidism should be attentive to any symptoms that might occur because mistletoe extract can aggravate these conditions. Transplant patients and others who take immune-suppressing drugs should not use mistletoe extract.

Don't eat any part of the mistletoe plant—some species are toxic. For more information on mistletoe extract, speak to a holistic doctor who has experience using it.

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