



DOSSIER · SUBSTANCE

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus)

Chaste tree is a medicinal plant whose fruit extract relieved premenstrual complaints and cyclical breast pain more strongly than placebo in studies.

339

STUDIES IN
TOTAL

66

IN HUMANS

40

OF WHICH
CONTROLLED

6

IN ANIMALS

58

IN THE LAB

Figures from the IHR study database · Last updated 2026-10-15

How to Read This Dossier

ESTABLISHED

measured in humans, with a comparison group

PLAUSIBLE

supported by mechanism, animal studies or observation

HYPOTHESIS

a likely connection that still needs to be tested

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) at a Glance

In premenstrual syndrome (PMS), standardised dry extracts from the fruits relieved the complaints more than placebo ²¹⁶¹⁷²⁴²⁵.
In cyclic breast pain (mastalgia), chaste tree extract relieved the pain more than placebo ¹¹⁸⁴¹.
For menopausal complaints, an extract alone relieved the complaints more strongly than placebo in one study ²⁹; combination preparations do not allow any statement about chaste tree alone ²¹³⁷.

We evaluated 79 human studies on Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus), including 27 randomised controlled trials and 15 meta-analyses or systematic reviews; the controlled studies include 1,884 participants in total. As of 5 October 2026.

1. What Is Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus)? Occurrence, Origin and Forms

Chasteberry is a plant in the mint family. Its dried fruits are traditionally used for cyclical complaints in women, such as breast tenderness or symptoms before menstruation. Studies mostly investigate a dry extract of the fruits.
The plant grows in the Mediterranean region and parts of Asia. It is also cultivated in other warm regions. The ripe, dried fruits are used.
Extracts are made from the dried fruits, often as a dry extract with a defined ratio of starting material to extract. Studies mainly use standardised extracts in capsule or tablet form; tea preparations from the fruits are also common, but there are hardly any comparable investigations for them.

Forms and Preparations Studied

- Standardised dry extract of the fruits (capsule or tablet)
 - Tea infusion from dried fruits
 - Liquid extract or tincture
 - Combination products with other plant extracts
- Not covered on this page:
- Other mint family plants such as sage or peppermint
 - Hormonal medicines that affect the cycle
 - Dietary supplements with chasteberry that also contain other substances

2. What Does Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) Do? Results by Area

AREA	RESULT IN CONTROLLED STUDIES	STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE	STUDIES	PARTICIPANTS
Menstrual cycle disorders	mostly improved	high	8 meta-analyses · 9 controlled · 24 other	619
Breast tenderness (mastalgia)	mostly improved	high	5 meta-analyses · 5 controlled · 9 other	491
Fertility	reviews only	low	2 meta-analyses · 0 controlled · 3 other	0
Menopausal symptoms	mostly improved	low	0 meta-analyses · 1 controlled · 6 other	52
Other investigations	mostly improved	high	1 meta-analyses · 7 controlled · 18 other	322

How to read the table: counted are human studies whose results concern the area. “High” means at least one meta-analysis and two controlled studies showing improvement, or at least three controlled studies of which three quarters show improvement, with at least 300 participants in total. “Moderate” means at least two controlled studies showing improvement, as a majority, or one meta-analysis alongside controlled studies. “Low” means one controlled study showing improvement. Where an area has no controlled study, the strength of evidence is at most “low” (result “reviews only” or “observational data only”). Everything else is “unclear”. A study counts as showing improvement when at least half of its outcomes in this area improved. Reviews of combination products do not count as meta-analyses; results that only describe side effects or shares of users do not count as an effect. The same study is counted only once.

3. What the Studies Show in Detail

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) and Menstrual Cycle Disorders: Human Studies

In premenstrual syndrome (PMS), chaste tree extracts relieved the overall complaints more than placebo, according to two meta-analyses and four randomised studies ²⁶¹⁶¹⁷²⁴²⁵. A systematic review found chaste tree more effective than placebo, vitamin B6 or magnesium oxide in seven of eight PMS studies ¹¹. In premenstrual dysphoric disorder, in a randomised study similar numbers of women responded to the extract as to fluoxetine ³³. Fluoxetine relieved rather the psychological, the extract rather the physical complaints ³³. In women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), menstruation occurred more often with chaste tree than with placebo ²⁸. In corpus luteum weakness due to latent hyperprolactinaemia, an extract compared with placebo lowered prolactin release and normalised luteal phase and progesterone ³⁰. Against increased bleeding due to an IUD, chaste tree was weaker than mefenamic acid in the first three months, with no difference in the fourth month ²². A meta-analysis found no difference in bleeding amount compared with placebo ³. A meta-analysis regards the large pooled effect in PMS as preliminary because of high risk of bias and calls for comparisons with placebo, serotonin reuptake inhibitors and the pill ⁶. Combination preparations do not allow a statement about chaste tree alone. A mixture of St John's wort and chaste tree relieved PMS-like complaints in late menopause more than placebo, studied in a small subgroup ³⁶.

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
² Csupor et al. 2019	meta-analysis · 520 participants	Vitex agnus-castus extracts Ze 440 and BNO 1095; vs. Placebo
³ Mollazadeh et al. 2019	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus as tablets, capsules, or oral drops; different doses; first and second menstrual cycles; vs. Placebo or met
⁵ Maleki-Saghooni et al. 2018	systematic review	Iranian herbal medicines including Vitex agnus-castus
⁶ Verkaik et al. 2017	meta-analysis	Vitex agnus castus preparations; at least 2 menstrual cycles; vs. Placebo, dietary supplements, or herbal preparations
⁷ Cerqueira et al. 2017	systematic review	Vitex agnus castus (VAC), three different preparations; vs. Placebo or active comparator
⁸ Rafieian-Kopaei et al. 2017	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus (extract form not specified)
⁹ Izzo et al. 2016	systematic review	Agnus castus (Vitex agnus castus); vs. not reported
¹¹ van et al. 2013	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus extracts as sole agent; vs. Placebo, pyridoxine, magnesium oxide, fluoxetine, bromocriptine

Further studies in this area: ^{14 16 17 24 25 28 30 33 40 42 45 46 47 48 49 50 52 53 55 57 58 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 69 72 73 75}

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) and Breast Tenderness (Mastalgia): Human Studies

In cyclic breast pain (mastalgia), chaste tree extract relieved the pain in a meta-analysis of six placebo-controlled studies with a moderate effect size ¹. In two randomised studies, breast pain decreased more than with placebo, with tablets ¹⁸ and with drops ⁴¹. A meta-analysis also found a decrease in elevated prolactin levels ¹. Premenstrual breast tenderness in PMS also decreased more than with placebo ¹⁷ or with vitamin B6 ⁴². Compared with medications such as dopamine agonists, NSAID-type painkillers, serotonin reuptake inhibitors and hormonal contraception, chaste tree was not inferior in seven studies of a meta-analysis ¹. A systematic review reports from one study a relief comparable to bromocriptine ¹¹. It is open whether the relief persists beyond the first months; after three cycles, the lead over placebo in one study was only borderline ⁴¹.

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
¹ Ooi et al. 2020	meta-analysis · 718 participants	Vitex agnus-castus (VAC); 20-40 mg/day; 3 months; vs. Placebo; also dopamine agonists, NSAIDs, serotonin re
⁸ Rafieian-Kopaei et al. 2017	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus (extract form not specified)
¹¹ van et al. 2013	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus extracts as sole agent; vs. Placebo, pyridoxine, magnesium oxide, fluoxetine, bromocriptine
¹³ Carmichael et al. 2008	systematic review	Vitex agnus castus fruit extract; vs. randomized and non-randomized studies
¹⁴ Dennehy et al. 2006	systematic review	Chasteberry, extract form not specified; vs. Evidence-based evaluation of randomized controlled trial evidence

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
¹⁶ Schellenberg et al. 2001	randomised controlled · 170 participants	Agnus castus dry extract Ze 440 tablets; one tablet daily; three consecutive menstrual cycles; vs. placebo, dout
¹⁷ Schellenberg et al. 2012	randomised controlled · 162 participants	Vitex agnus castus extract Ze 440; 8, 20 or 30 mg daily; three menstrual cycles; vs. placebo
¹⁸ Mirghafourvand et al. 2016	randomised controlled · 159 participants	Vitex agnus tablet (3.2–4.8 mg daily) vs. flaxseed powder vs. placebo; 3.2–4.8 mg Vitex agnus daily; 2 months; v

Further studies in this area: [41](#) [42](#) [45](#) [47](#) [50](#) [53](#) [54](#) [61](#) [64](#) [73](#) [75](#)

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) and Fertility: Human Studies

HYPOTHESIS Systematic reviews see preliminary evidence of a benefit in unfulfilled desire to have children ⁸¹⁴. The combination preparation FertilityBlend of chaste tree, green tea, L-arginine, vitamins and minerals led to more pregnancies in two placebo-controlled studies ⁴³⁴⁴. What share chaste tree has in this is open. The homeopathic complex remedy Phyto-Hypophyson L with chaste tree did not increase the birth rate compared with placebo in a randomised study ²⁶. A study with chaste tree alone that measures pregnancy rate as the target is open.

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
⁸ Rafieian-Kopaei et al. 2017	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus (extract form not specified)
¹⁴ Dennehy et al. 2006	systematic review	Chasteberry, extract form not specified; vs. Evidence-based evaluation of randomized controlled trial evidence
⁴⁸ Antoine et al. 2019	study · 189 participants	tablet with Vitex extract, Maca extract and active folate (patented blend); one tablet daily; 18 months (study period June 2016–Decemb
⁶¹ 2006	review · 352 participants	Chasteberry fruit, tincture and extracts; low and high doses
⁷⁵ Gorkow et al. 2002	review	ACF preparations of Vitex agnus-castus; vs. Placebo in double-blind studies, otherwise open studies

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) and Menopausal Symptoms: Human Studies

In menopausal complaints, a chaste tree extract in a randomised study lowered the total score, anxiety and vasomotor complaints more than placebo ²⁹. Physical complaints, depression and sexual function did not differ ²⁹. A mixture of chaste tree, fennel and carrot seeds improved quality of life and sexual function after menopause more than placebo ²¹. Chaste tree with soy isoflavones, black cohosh and evening primrose oil relieved hot flushes, sleep problems and depressive mood more than placebo ³⁷. In addition to citalopram, black cumin and chaste tree improved vasomotor, physical and psychosocial complaints more than citalopram with placebo ³¹. A capsule of black cohosh, soy, potato, chaste tree and burdock lowered night sweats, but not hot flushes ³⁹. St John's wort with chaste tree, by contrast, was not more effective than placebo; both groups improved ²⁰. Larger studies with chaste tree alone are still pending; how much it contributes to the effects of the mixtures is open.

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
¹⁰ Ghazanfarpour et al. 2016	systematic review	Iranian herbal medicines, including Vitex agnus castus; vs. Placebo or control (not specified)
²⁹ Naseri et al. 2019	randomised controlled · 52 participants	Vitex agnus-castus extract (phytoestrogenic); 8 weeks; vs. Placebo
⁵¹ Chopin et al. 2003	study · 52 participants	Vitex agnus castus essential oil (leaf and fruit derived separately); Summer 2002
⁵⁴ Choudhury et al. 2025	study · 30 participants	Arth Perimenopause Multisymptom Support capsules (vitex, ashwagandha, black cohosh); one capsule daily; 60 c
⁶⁷ Dietz et al. 2016	review	Vitex agnus-castus (chasteberry)

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
⁶⁸ Hajirahimkhan et al. 2013	review	Botanical extracts including chasteberry
⁷⁴ Russell et al. 2002	review	Chaste tree (Vitex agnus-castus) among other herbs

Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus): Further Outcomes in Studies

In women with polycystic ovary syndrome, standardized chaste tree extract lowered oxidative stress, insulin resistance and LDL compared with placebo and increased HDL ²⁸. A placebo-controlled analysis in PCOS also found lower inflammatory markers (TNF-α, IL-6) and a reduced anti-Müllerian hormone ³⁴. In women of childbearing age, chaste tree improved the overall score of sexual function more strongly than placebo after four months, but not individual domains ³⁸. After bone fractures, under chaste tree the vascular growth factor VEGF increased only compared with baseline; callus formation did not differ between the groups ²⁷. In PCOS, the Unani combination preparation Picolin made from cinnamon, licorice, flaxseed and chaste tree lowered insulin and prolactin compared with baseline, whereas metformin did not ²³. The combination preparation PREMEN-CALM made from γ-aminobutyric acid, rhodiola, chaste tree, vitamin B6 and melatonin improved mood and antioxidant status in PMS only compared with baseline, not compared with placebo ³².

STUDY	DESIGN · PARTICIPANTS	PREPARATION · DOSE · DURATION · COMPARISON
⁴ Yeung et al. 2018	systematic review	Single-herb extracts, including chasteberry; vs. conventional anxiolytics/antidepressants
¹¹ van et al. 2013	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus extracts as sole agent; vs. Placebo, pyridoxine, magnesium oxide, fluoxetine, bromocriptine
¹² Posadzki et al. 2013	systematic review	Vitex agnus-castus (chasteberry) among 50 herbal medicines
¹⁵ Daniele et al. 2005	systematic review	Vitex agnus castus monopreparations (fruit extract); vs. no comparator (safety data from trials, spontaneous report
¹⁶ Schellenberg et al. 2001	randomised controlled · 170 participants	Agnus castus dry extract Ze 440 tablets; one tablet daily; three consecutive menstrual cycles; vs. placebo, double
²⁸ Hatami et al. 2026	randomised controlled · 60 participants	standardized Vitex agnus-castus extract; 5.8 mg daily, standardized to 0.42-0.82 mg Aucubin; 12 weeks; vs. placet
³⁰ Milewicz et al. 1993	randomised controlled · 52 participants	Vitex agnus castus extract (Strotan capsules); 1 capsule (20 mg) daily; 3 months; vs. Placebo, randomized double-I
³⁴ Hatami et al. 2026	randomised controlled · 40 participants	Vitex agnus-castus standardized to 0.42-0.82 mg aucubin; 5.8 mg/day; 12 weeks; vs. Placebo

Further studies in this area: ³⁸ ⁴⁰ ⁴² ⁴⁵ ⁴⁷ ⁴⁹ ⁵² ⁵³ ⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶⁶ ⁷⁰ ⁷¹ ⁷³

4. How Is Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) Dosed? Preparation, Dose and Duration in Studies

Mainly standardised dry extracts from the fruits in capsule or tablet form were studied ¹⁶¹⁷²⁴²⁵²⁸³⁰. For cyclic breast pain, a solution with chaste tree extract as drops was also tested ⁴¹. As a tea, chaste tree was tested only in a mixture with fennel and horsemint (Mentha longifolia) ³⁵.

PREPARATION OR FORM	DOSE	DURATION	STUDY
Agnus castus dry extract Ze 440 tablets	one tablet daily	three consecutive menstrual cycles	¹⁶
Vitex agnus castus extract Ze 440	8, 20 or 30 mg daily	three menstrual cycles	¹⁷
Vitex agnus tablet (3.2–4.8 mg daily) vs. flaxseed powder vs. placebo	3.2–4.8 mg Vitex agnus daily	2 months	¹⁸
Nutraceutical with Glycine max, Cimicifuga racemosa, Vitex agnus-castus, Oenothera biennis	—	12 weeks	¹⁹
Combination of Hypericum perforatum and Vitex agnus-castus (tablets)	twice daily	16 weeks	²⁰
Jazar capsules (Vitex, fennel, carrot seeds)	4 capsules of 500 mg daily	8 weeks	²¹
Vitex agnus castus capsules vs. mefenamic acid	three times a day during menstruation	4 months	²²

PREPARATION OR FORM	DOSE	DURATION	STUDY
Capsule Picolin or tablet Picolin-E (polyherbal, containing Vitex agnus castus)	Picolin 500 mg two capsules thrice daily; Picolin-E 250 mg thrice daily	12 weeks	23
Vitex agnus castus extract BNO 1095	—	three cycles	24
Vitex agnus castus extract BNO 1095, one tablet	one tablet once daily	3 cycles	25
Phyto-Hypophyson L, Agnus castus-containing homeopathic preparation	50 drops 3 times daily	3 months or 3 cycles	26
Agnugol tablet (4 mg dried Vitex agnus castus fruit extract)	1 tablet plus 250 mg magnesium oxide daily	8 weeks	27
standardized Vitex agnus-castus extract	5.8 mg daily, standardized to 0.42-0.82 mg Aucubin	12 weeks	28
Vitex agnus-castus extract (phytoestrogenic)	—	8 weeks	29
Vitex agnus castus extract (Strotan capsules)	1 capsule (20 mg) daily	3 months	30

5. Is Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus) Safe? Side Effects in Studies

The studies report mainly mild and temporary adverse events [171113](#). A systematic review most frequently names nausea, headache, gastrointestinal complaints, cycle disorders, acne, itching and skin rash; interactions were not reported [15](#). The review advises avoiding chaste tree during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and considers interactions with dopamine antagonists conceivable [15](#).

STUDY	REPORTED SIDE EFFECTS
1 Ooi et al. 2020	Safe, only mild and reversible adverse events
3 Mollazadeh et al. 2019	Nausea and abdominal pain reported
4 Yeung et al. 2018	fewer adverse effects than conventional medications
5 Maleki-Saghooni et al. 2018	Safety reported, no details
6 Verkaik et al. 2017	Tolerability and acceptability assessed but not reported
7 Cerqueira et al. 2017	VAC overall well tolerated
9 Izzo et al. 2016	Potentially serious adverse events and herb-drug interactions described
11 van et al. 2013	Mild and generally infrequent
12 Posadzki et al. 2013	Minor adverse effects reported for Vitex agnus-castus
13 Carmichael et al. 2008	mild and reversible
15 Daniele et al. 2005	Nausea, headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, menstrual disorders, acne, pruritus, rash; mild and reversible
16 Schellenberg et al. 2001	Seven women reported mild events (four active, three placebo), no discontinuations

6. What Remains Open: Limits of the Evidence

- Many controlled studies are small, and they use different extracts and measurement scales [7](#).
- The optimal dose and the comparability of different extract forms are open.
- Controlled studies on tea or tincture from chaste tree alone are still pending.
- Whether a benefit persists with longer use is not clarified.

7. Bottom Line: What Is Established About Chasteberry (Vitex Agnus-Castus)

Chaste tree is most frequently studied as a standardised dry extract from the fruits in capsule or tablet form. The best documented is the relief of PMS and cyclic breast pain compared with placebo [12](#). In menopausal complaints, corpus luteum weakness and polycystic ovary syndrome, individual placebo-controlled studies showed advantages [282930](#).

Next, larger studies with chaste tree alone are needed, especially on menopause and desire to have children, and longer observation periods.

Frequently Asked Questions

How well has Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus) been studied in humans?

We evaluated 79 human studies on Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus), including 27 randomised controlled trials and 15 meta-analyses or systematic reviews; the controlled studies include 1,884 participants in total. As of 5 October 2026.

Does Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus) help with menstrual cycle disorders? What the studies show

We evaluated 8 meta-analyses or systematic reviews, 9 controlled studies and 24 further studies; the controlled studies include 619 participants in total. Result of the controlled studies: mostly improved. Strength of evidence under our published rules: high. Sources: [2356](#)

Does Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus) help with breast tenderness (mastalgia)? What the studies show

We evaluated 5 meta-analyses or systematic reviews, 5 controlled studies and 9 further studies; the controlled studies include 491 participants in total. Result of the controlled studies: mostly improved. Strength of evidence under our published rules: high. Sources: [181113](#)

Does Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus) help with fertility? What the studies show

We evaluated 2 meta-analyses or systematic reviews and 3 further studies. There are no controlled studies yet, only reviews; the strength of evidence is therefore low at most. Sources: [8144861](#)

Does Chasteberry (Vitex agnus-castus) help with menopausal symptoms? What the studies show

We evaluated one controlled study and 6 further studies; the controlled studies include 52 participants in total. Result of the controlled studies: mostly improved. Strength of evidence under our published rules: low. Sources: [10295154](#)

Which form of chaste tree was studied in the studies?

Mainly a standardised dry extract from the fruits in capsule or tablet form [161724252830](#). For cyclic breast pain, a solution with chaste tree extract as drops was also tested [41](#). Controlled studies on tea or tincture from chaste tree alone are still pending.

What do the studies show for breast tenderness (mastalgia)?

A meta-analysis of placebo-controlled studies [1](#) and two randomized studies [1841](#) found less breast pain than with placebo. A meta-analysis also found a reduction in elevated prolactin levels [1](#).

Is there evidence of a benefit for fertility?

Systematic reviews see preliminary evidence [814](#); a combination preparation with chaste tree led to more pregnancies in two placebo-controlled studies [4344](#). A study with chaste tree alone and pregnancy rate as the target is still pending.

How well tolerated is chaste tree?

The studies report mainly mild and temporary adverse events [171113](#). A systematic review most frequently names nausea, headache, gastrointestinal complaints, cycle disorders, acne, itching and skin rash; interactions were not reported [15](#). The review advises avoiding chaste tree during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and considers interactions with dopamine antagonists conceivable [15](#).

Can combination preparations with chaste tree be assessed?

Combination preparations do not allow a statement about chaste tree alone. A mixture of St John's wort and chaste tree relieved PMS-like complaints in late menopause more than placebo, studied in a small subgroup [36](#). For an attribution, studies would be needed in which the extract is the difference between the groups.

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