

## *H31 Ginseng for Cancer Fatigue*

July 2007

Intro: For thousands of years, practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine have used the herb ginseng to increase energy, endurance, and brain power. Research shows that in many cases, the herb may help. Researchers at Mayo Clinic led a study with ginseng and found it may also help fight fatigue in cancer patients.

### **Video**

**Total running time 1:40**

### **Audio**

“ALL OF THESE FLOWERS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN IN HERE FOR OVER 100 YEARS.”  
BUT NOT LONG AGO NELLE MORIARTY WAS JUST TOO TIRED TO NURTURE THE FAMILY GARDEN. CHEMOTHERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER SIMPLY WIPED HER OUT.

**Nelle Moriarty**

“MY LOSS OF ENERGY WAS JUST PROFOUND.”  
AND NOW, FIVE YEARS AFTER HER CANCER, NELLE STILL BATTLES EXHAUSTION. IT’S LIKELY CAUSED BY MEDICATION SHE TAKES TO PREVENT THE CANCER FROM COMING BACK.

**Nelle Moriarty**

“YOU’RE CONSTANTLY FIGHTING  
THE BATTLE OF BEING TIRED. “

**Standup**

**Vivien Williams**

**Reporting**

MANY CANCER PATIENTS SUFFER  
FROM THIS DEBILITATING FATIGUE.  
IT CAN HAPPEN DURING  
TREATMENT OR SIMPLY AS A  
RESULT OF DIAGNOSIS.

**Debra Barton, Ph.D.**

**Mayo Clinic Cancer Center**

“WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE FROM  
OTHER TYPES OF FATIGUE IS THAT  
IT IS GENERALLY NOT HELPED BY  
SLEEP OR REST AND IT DOESN’T  
RELATE TO OTHER ACTIVITIES.”  
DR. DEBRA BARTON LED A PILOT  
STUDY AT MAYO CLINIC THAT  
EXAMINED WHETHER OR NOT THE  
HERB GINSENG HELPS PATIENTS  
WITH CANCER FATIGUE. NELLE  
PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY. SHE  
TOOK DAILY DOSES OF EITHER  
LOW DOSE WISCONSIN GINSENG,  
HIGH DOSE WISCONSIN GINSENG  
OR A PLACEBO. SHE WASN’T TOLD  
WHICH ONE SHE TOOK, BUT SHE

**Nelle Moriarty**

HAD A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.  
“I PROBABLY KNEW WITH IN THREE  
DAYS. I WASN'T GETTING SO  
TIRED. I COULD THINK CLEARLY. I  
COULD PAY ATTENTION BETTER.”  
NELLE FOUND OUT AFTER THE  
STUDY THAT SHE DID TAKE  
GINSENG.

**Debra Barton, Ph.D.**  
**Mayo Clinic Cancer Center**

“THE PATIENTS WHO WERE ON  
THE HIGHER DOSES OF GINSENG  
HAD A GREATER IMPROVEMENT.”  
NELLE SAYS HER FATIGUE HAS  
IMPROVED A GREAT DEAL. AND  
SHE STILL TAKES GINSENG, THIS  
TIME IN HER TEA. IT GIVES HER  
THE ENERGY SHE NEEDS TO GET  
BACK IN THE GARDEN.  
FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I'M VIVIEN  
WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Even though Nelle says she thinks the ginseng helps, Dr. Barton warns more studies need to be done to confirm the results of this pilot study. Ginseng is considered safe, but it can cause side effects such as sleep trouble.

Ginseng is considered complementary. If you have cancer fatigue it is important to discuss it with your doctor to rule out other possible causes. For more information, visit our Website at....[\[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link](#)

from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]