

## HairSmart on India's Ashwagandha Leaf Ban: What Hair Loss Supplement Users Need to Know Right Now

HairSmart highlights how India's recent Ashwagandha leaf ban is exposing long-overlooked ingredient practices across the wellness industry.



**Cleveland, Ohio May 27, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com))** - India's Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) has banned ashwagandha leaves in all food products, supplements, and nutraceuticals. This move restricts manufacturers from using Ashwagandha leaf, either in crude or extract, in any product due to safety concerns, due to higher concentrations of withaferin A found in aerial parts. For [HairSmart](#), this reinforces something the brand has always believed in: honoring authentic Ayurveda through root-based Ashwagandha and high-quality ingredient sourcing designed for long-term wellness support.

For millions taking [hair loss supplements](#) containing Ashwagandha, this raises urgent questions: What's actually in your supplement? And is it safe?

### The Regulatory Timeline: Years in the Making

This is not the first attempt. India issued a warning against Ashwagandha leaf in 2021. This 2026 follow-up completely banned the practice, prompting escalation to a binding prohibition.

India, being the latest supplier of Ashwagandha globally, based this decision on the latest safety research identifying possible safety concerns for Ashwagandha leaves due to higher concentrations of reactive withanolides, particularly Withaferin A, a compound that has demonstrated cytotoxic properties in research settings.

This regulatory position is not unique to India. Denmark restricted Ashwagandha's leaf extracts in 2023. France, Germany, Poland, and Sweden have issued formal safety warnings, and the European Union has initiated proceedings toward a continent-wide review.

### **The Clinical Evidence: Root Has the Science, Leaf Has None**

Traditional Ayurvedic texts, spanning 5,000 years, exclusively used Ashwagandha root, not leaves, for adaptogenic benefits and stress reduction. India's Ministry of Ayush directive makes this explicit: Root only, with all plant parts identified on labels.

The Ashwagandha root's adaptogenic profile can address hormonal and stress pathways, and clinical evidence supports it —root extract efficacy only, not leaf.

**The stress connection, proven in the root extract:** The most widely cited ashwagandha clinical trial demonstrated that full-spectrum ashwagandha root extract produced a statistically significant reduction in cortisol levels and perceived stress scores versus placebo.

(Chandrasekhar et al., Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 2012 —  
[pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3573577](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3573577/))

**The hair evidence is proven on root only:** A double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial evaluating topical serum demonstrated statistically significant improvements in hair density, hair growth rate, hair thickness, and the percentage of hair in the active growth phase, all using root-only extract.

([sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0975947623001341](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0975947623001341))

**Global health authorities recognise root only:** The WHO monograph for ashwagandha, the US Pharmacopeia, the British Pharmacopoeia, and the European Medicines Agency's ongoing monograph work all document the properties of ashwagandha root exclusively. Leaf extract does not appear in any approved pharmacopoeia as a permitted ingestible.

(WHO Traditional Medicine Monographs, Volume 2)

Ashwagandha leaf is not only a flagged ingredient but also has zero clinical proof of benefit for your hair. Every clinical trial, every pharmacopoeia, and every regulatory body points to the same ingredient — the root.

For hair supplement consumers, choosing root-only ashwagandha is not merely a precautionary measure. It is the only choice backed by science.

### **The Cost-Cutting Secret Behind Your Supplement**

Brands using ashwagandha leaf, instead of root extract, are using it exclusively as an economically attractive shortcut —leaves are available in abundance and are cheaper.

Many leading medical-grade hair supplements use ashwagandha supplements containing both root and leaf extracts—an ingredient now facing global regulatory scrutiny. So the question is: Why would premium-priced supplements use leaf material when traditional medicine and regulatory science point exclusively to the root?

Is it cost-cutting? Lack of knowledge about traditional sourcing?

### **And The Other Issue? The unclear Labels and Adulteration**

The use of Leaf extract in place of Root extract isn't just about quality; it's about consumer deception.

Most Ashwagandha-based supplement and nutraceutical manufacturers never disclose the reality — Root or Leaf?

According to the American Botanical Council's Laboratory Guidance Document published in October 2025, they found undeclared ashwagandha aerial (leaf) parts added to root powders or extracts in many premium supplements, even when certificates of analysis and finished herbal product labels claimed root material only.

So the fact is that this deception, mislabeling, and potential safety risks have now finally prompted global regulatory action.

### **The HairSmart Difference: Root-Only From Day One**

The standard benchmark set by the birthplace of Ayurveda— India, has been a part of HairSmarts legacy from day 1 — sticking to the real principles of Ayurveda, not the fluff.

Every ingredient within their formulas, such as Ashwagandha root, is sourced from verified suppliers and verified to pharmaceutical-grade specifications through rigorous third-party testing.

"As someone of Indian heritage, I understood that thousands of years of traditional use weren't accidental. The root was always the medicine, not the leaf, not a cheaper substitute. When we built HairSmart, that wasn't a formulation decision. It was the only decision." —

Perna Khemka, Founder, [HairSmart](#)

Watch [Dr. Zinaria Williams](#), MD, Medical Director at HairSmart, share her perspective on the recent regulatory move restricting the use of ashwagandha leaves in supplements and why HairSmart has always remained committed to authentic root-only formulations.

This decision protected HairSmart customers from day 1.

### **What Consumers Must Do Now**

If you're taking Ashwagandha-based hair supplements, start checking labels.

- **Know What to Look For:** "Ashwagandha root extract." Root-only formulations should be clearly stated on product labels and marketing materials.
- **Understand Industry Standards:** Simply testing with anolide content doesn't verify plant origin. Current testing standards don't always distinguish between root and leaf sources, which



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