

Understanding Herbal Medicine

What It is and What it Isn't

Nature has provided an abundance of remedies and cures for many different medical conditions and ailments. Before pharmaceuticals, herbal medicine was the standard form of healing, not the alternative form we know today. When modern medicine first began the use of prescription drugs, most of the medicines created were based on therapies from the plant kingdom. Aspirin, which is made from the bark of a willow tree, is one good example. Heart medicines were first made from *digitalis purpurea*, or foxglove, before moving into nitroglycerine and other compound medicines available more recently.

Today, we have a variety of pharmaceutical pills, potions and lotions. Many contain synthetic ingredients. If you listen to the advertising for these medicines, the possible side effects are worse than the ailment they are attempted to treat. For this reason, many people are turning back to herbal and other natural remedies. Many people, who do not understand how herbal medicines work, quickly abandon their use and return to prescription drugs. These people are looking for quick fixes and instant results that, in most cases, are not available in the herbal world. Some herbs have an almost immediate effect, such as chamomile to soothe frayed nerves or valerian root to promote a good night's sleep. The key to using any herbal remedy is time. Other herbs work slowly, such as St. John's Wort, taking a month or more to see any appreciable results.

Herbal preparations usually come in three forms: capsule/pill, tincture or dried herb. The pill or capsule herb can be purchased at most health food stores and many grocery and department stores. It is important to read the labels on these, as many manufacturers do not label their products honestly. For example, you may see a bottle that says valerian on the label, but if you read the ingredients, you may find that the pill is made with the leaves and stems of the plant. The medicinal value is only in the root of the valerian plant.

Tinctures are the most concentrated form of the herb. They also can be purchased at most health food stores. Most tincture manufacturers are reputable, reading the label is still important in understanding exactly what you are buying.

Dried herbs are considered the best way to purchase herbs if you are not going to grow them yourself. Dried herbs are also the most economical to buy. Usually sold loose and in bulk at health food store, you need only purchase the amount you need at the moment. Most dried herbs are used in teas, infusions and homemade tinctures. The difference of each method is described below.

Teas

Teas are made by putting the correct amount of either fresh or dried herb into a tea bag, basket or even loose into a cup and pouring boiling water over the herbs. Allow the herb

to brew in the water until cool enough to drink. Remove the tea bag or strain the tea through fine mesh screen and drink.

Infusions

Infusions are made by pouring an equal amount of hot water over the same amount of dried or fresh herb. Stronger than teas, infusion are used when small amounts of herbs are not enough.

Tinctures

Tinctures are made by soaking the necessary part of the herb in alcoholic spirits (usually vodka) undisturbed for a period of three to six months. After the determined time, the tincture is rebottled by straining the herb out of the mixture. Tinctures are extremely potent and are generally taken by the drop or dropper full.

Before using any herb product, research to find the correct dosage using a good herbal reference book or searching on the web. Many of the most reliable sources are linked to major medical facilities. It is also important to determine the timetable of expected results and what those results may be. By knowing this going into herbal therapy, disappointment by lack of overnight results can be avoided.

Many herbal therapies can be purchased online. As with health food or grocery stores, make sure that you can read a list of ingredients before clicking to buy. Another investment to think about, besides a good herbal remedy book, is taking an online course in herbal medicine.

Several online schools offer such courses, many offering different levels of study. If you are currently taking any type of prescription medicine, be sure to check with your health care provider before beginning any herbal medications. Many herbs react adversely with modern pharmaceuticals, so research heavily before adding herbal remedies to your wellness solutions.

Simple herbal remedies include: Echinacea for the immune system, especially during cold and flu season. Chamomile and St. John's Wort for their calming effects. Black Cohosh and Motherwort for symptoms of PMS and menopause. Feverfew for migraine headaches. Dandelion leaves for the calcium content, helping to strengthen teeth and bones. By studying different herbs and their properties, you may find that you have the cure for what ails you growing in your own backyard. If not, herbal therapies are still a fraction of the cost of many pharmaceuticals and work as well if not better.

Herbalism: Using Mother Nature's Gifts for a Healthy Lifestyle

Herbalism, when practiced with knowledge and understanding of Mother Nature's gifts, is a safe and effective alternative and complement to scientific medicine.

The History-

For centuries herbs have been widely known for their culinary use to enhance and alter the flavors and scents of foods all over the world. But what is little known is that herbs have also been widely used for centuries by men and women of all cultures to prevent, ease and cure ailments ranging from minor cuts and scrapes to life-threatening and contagious diseases.

Herb plants have grown wild all over the world since the beginning of time and it was out of necessity that many cultures experimented and developed their skills in using them. This became a way of life and a very effective means of aiding the sick and injured.

Unnecessary Fear-

Herbs were used by healers until the beginning of the fourteenth century witch hunts in Europe. At that time, anyone found or suspected of using herbs in any medicinal fashion were considered witches and burned at the stake or tortured to death for offering natural healing solutions to others. The result was nearly three hundred years of fear and misunderstanding of these natural wonders.

For nearly one hundred years it was illegal in the United States to grow, gather or create your own medicines. During this time, scientific technology became the number one preference of medicine in the western world.

The Reality-

When herbs are used in unison with traditional medicine, it is always a winning combination. Traditional medicine treats the symptoms and offers a quick fix to most ailments. Herbs, on the other hand, are used to get at the root of the problem and to develop and maintain an overall balance and well-being of mind and body. The use of herbs can be a preventive measure in maintaining your health and often avoiding unnecessary and expensive trips to your doctor's office.

How They Work-

Chemical drugs actively kill bacteria and viruses and offer symptomatic relief once the ailment has already presented itself. On the other hand, herbal medicines restore and build the system and aid in treating the root cause of the illness. Herbs maintain harmony and balance in the body when used properly, so the result generally causes

little or no side effects. They are used as a preventive medicine to strengthen and build the body's natural immune system over time from the cellular level upwards.

Used for Non-Emergency Medical Conditions such as:

Bruises
Swelling
Pain
Cuts
Sprains
Wounds
Colds
Fever
Burns

Used for Secondary Therapy of Life-Threatening Illnesses such as:

AIDS
Cancer
Autoimmune disorders

Herbs are used to complement and enhance the effects of traditional treatments for these types of illnesses. Many physicians, including veterinary doctors, are beginning to educate themselves and apply alternative therapies and techniques in their practices in order to further assist their patients in maintaining a good quality of life.

It is important through study and understanding to distinguish which herbs are best for culinary use and which are beneficial for medicinal use. You should also understand that herbs don't always work quickly when used to cure an already existing ailment. This is because they are meant to work on building and maintaining a healthy system, instead of a quick fix for the uncomfortable side effects of a present cold or other illness. Educate yourself through reading, internet study and conversations with herbalists practicing in your local area.

Practicing herbalism is not only a means to a healthier life, but it is a relaxing and calming process that gives the practitioner a sense of satisfaction in creating and working with the natural world that is all around us.

Reference source: Rosemary Gladstar, Herbal Healing for Women

Think Herbal Products Before Taking that Next Medicine

Could Herbal Products Replace Some Antibiotics?

Many of us have heard the news that that taking antibiotics too frequently is not a good idea. The more often you take antibiotics the more your body builds up immunity to them and then they do not work as they should. This leaves us wondering what we should do. Maybe herbal products are the answer we are seeking for many of our common infections and overall better health.

First, be warned that no antibiotic will help when you have a cold, flu or certain types of cough. Colds and flues are caused by viruses. Antibiotics are used to treat infection not viruses.

What should you take when you have a cold or the flu? Everyone knows a good Vitamin C will work wonders as will Zinc. Products that contain Echinacea are good, too. One product in particular, Esberitox is really good. It contains Echinacea and is safe for even children to take.

Speaking of children, the most common infection that children have is the ear infection. Again, too many antibiotics are not good for us, even for children. When your child first appears to have signs of an ear infection, instead of rushing him or her right into the doctor why not try mullein oil first. Sometimes when you buy this oil it is also mixed with Goldenseal. Warm the oil and place into the ear, it will help the pain and stop the infection. You should also limit the amount of dairy your child ingests. Dairy is known to cause an autoimmune response that can actually cause us to develop infections. Your child can get his or her calcium needs in soy milk, rice milk or popular favorite almond milk instead of the usual dairy.

Women are often plagued with yeast infections. A good herbal product for this is Colloidal Silver. It is an inexpensive, yet very effective way to get rid of the infection. Women have also been told to eat a lot of yogurt when they have a yeast infection. This is not a bad idea as long as the yogurt is plain and contains no sugar.

Another really good herbal product that men and women alike should be taking is the acidophilus. Acidophilus is supposed to help the body get rid of the bad bacteria and help promote the good bacteria. It is especially good to take this if you do have to go on antibiotic. Acidophilus is supposed to be really good for urinary tract infections and kidney infections.

Cranberry pills are another popular herbal product. Most of us know that if you think you have a bladder infection that cranberry juice will help you recover from it. But most juices contain sugar and or corn syrup which are not good for us. The cranberry supplements are made from the pure cranberry. Some believers in cranberries say that they have agents in them that will help fight cancer and work as an overall antioxidant.

Scientists have recognized that the cranberry does seem to help with urinary tract infections. They are now doing studies to see if cranberries can actually help prevent plaque from developing on the teeth.

Can herbal products be the answer to some of your health prayers? Maybe, maybe not. Be warned that the FDA has no control over the selling of any herbal product. And you should tell your physician of any vitamins, minerals or herbal products you are taking.

If you would like to learn more about vitamins, minerals or herbal products, you may want to check out Dr. Shari Lieberman's book **THE REAL VITAMIN & MINERAL BOOK**.

But remember for overall good health, limit your sugar intake, exercise, and eat your fruit and vegetables.

Making Your Own Herbal Remedies

Part 1: Where to Get the Herbs You'll Need

If you've been studying herbalism for any length of time, you've probably come across recommendations to make your own herbal remedies. It's easy to do, saves you money and lets you be sure of the quality of the remedies.

This series of articles assumes that you have an in-depth knowledge of the herbs you want to work with, including which part(s) of the plants to use, possible side effects, contraindications (a symptom or health condition that makes the use of a specific herb inadvisable), possible interactions with drugs and the understanding that some herbs can be safely used on a long-term basis, while others should only be used short-term for a specific condition.

Having said that, let's look at different sources for herbs.

Purchase your herbs: When you buy herbs to make herbal remedies, this usually means buying bulk herbs, which is dried plant material. Places to buy bulk herbs include co-ops and health food stores, herb shops, pharmacies that specialize in holistic healing and online. Some herbalists sell bulk herbs in addition to remedies they make.

Buying herbs is convenient and the only option in the winter if you live in a northern climate (unless you're growing herbs as houseplants, which works for some herbs, but not others). It's also the only way to get herbs from tropical regions or that require very specific growing conditions.

The downside of buying herbs is that you don't know how long the plant material has been sitting around. Examine the herb before you buy it. How is the color? The scent? It helps to know the color of the living plant. For example, mullein has light green leaves. It would be unreasonable to expect a dark green color from dried mullein. But if it's mostly yellow or tan, you might want to pass.

Of course, it's not possible to examine herbs if you buy online. But there are reputable herb sellers online who care about supplying their customers with herbs that are fresh and high in quality. It may take some trial and error to find a web site whose bulk herbs you trust, but if you want to get your herbs this way, it's worth the effort.

One final note -- if you have the option to buy organic herbs, do it, because bulk herbs are often imported from countries where pesticide use is not strictly regulated and pollution is an issue that can affect crops.

Grow your herbs: Growing medicinal herbs is a great way to know that your herbal remedies will contain the freshest plants with good amounts of medicinal compounds. Medicinal herbs can be started from seed or planted as young plants. Both seeds and plants can be found at your local garden center, through catalogs or online. You may also want to check out your local farmer's market in spring when growers are selling bedding plants. They may offer some of the more uncommon medicinal plants.

Just as you need to know the healing properties of an herb before you use it, you also need to understand how it grows and the conditions it needs to thrive. Level of light, type of soil and the amount of moisture the herb prefers are all important to know. Also be aware of its life cycle. Is it an annual that will die after one growing season or a perennial that will come back year after year? Will it reseed itself? Some plants, like comfrey and mint, spread in other ways. And think about the plant's habit. Is it a vine or a compact plant? How tall will it get? Make sure the herbs you select fit with your overall gardening style and plan.

If you select an herb that is particular about where it grows, don't consider it a statement on your gardening skills if it doesn't take. This is especially true of woodland herbs, which are very selective about where they will grow.

If you don't have a yard, you can easily grow herbs in containers on a patio or balcony. Certain herbs, such as lemon balm, hyssop and chamomile, do very well in containers. Do some research to see if the herbs you're interested in will grow in containers, but also be a little skeptical. I once read that borage couldn't be grown this way, but planted some young plants in a pot anyway, and they did just fine.

If you want to grow herbs as houseplants, consider some of the tropical medicinals. You can also experiment with bringing in your container herbs from outside to over-winter them. This can be tricky in the north with limited winter daylight, but it's certainly worth a try.

Harvest your herbs from the wild: For millennia, people have gathered wild plants for their medicinal properties. This practice, called wildcrafting, continues today and is a great way to connect with nature and the herbs you will turn into remedies. The first and foremost rule of wildcrafting is to be 100% certain of your plant identification. There should be no doubt in your mind that the herb before you is what you think it is. The best way to learn to identify herbs is to take classes from knowledgeable people. Some herbalists offer herb walks where you can see different herbs and where they grow, as well as more in-depth classes on identification. Nature centers also sometimes offer plant classes. It's also a good idea to invest in some plant guidebooks.

Another method is to take a notebook and go for a walk in a park. When you see an interesting plant, draw it (even if you're not very good at drawing) and carefully write down its characteristics -- the shapes and colors of leaves, stems and flowers. Where is it growing -- in the woods, an open meadow or the border between the two? Then use your guidebooks to make an identification. Even if it's not a medicinal herb, you've just learned a new plant and you'll soon find yourself seeing it everywhere.

When you feel comfortable enough to harvest herbs, be responsible. Don't overharvest any herb. Look for stands or colonies of the herb, then take no more than a third of what is there. Irresponsible harvesting has landed some herbs, like goldenseal, on the endangered list. Never harvest herbs that are threatened or endangered. Check with

your state department of natural resources or department of conservation for a list of plants that are threatened or endangered in your state.

It's easiest to harvest common wild herbs like red clover, burdock, plantain or chickweed. These and other common herbs are often considered weeds by people who don't understand their healing properties.

Avoid taking herbs that grow along roads because they have absorbed pollution from car exhaust. Some people also avoid harvesting along railroad tracks, since the railroads routinely spray herbicides to keep the tracks clear of plants.

Where can you go to wildcraft? If part of your own yard is in a wild state, that's a good place to start. Vacant lots in your neighborhood are another good spot. Depending on where you live, city and county parks may allow you to take plants, as long as the park is not labeled a conservation park. Some state parks allow specific plant material, like fruits and nuts, to be harvested. Check with authorities about what you are allowed to remove from the parks in your area.

If you happen to spot some interesting herbs on private land, ask the landowner if you can harvest them. If they fall into the "weed" category, the landowner probably won't mind, but always seek permission first.

Part 2: Teas, Infusions and Decoctions: Water-Based Remedies

When most people think of herbal remedies, they naturally think of a soothing cup of herbal tea. Knowing the specifics of making teas, infusions and decoctions, the herbal water-based remedies, will help you get the most healing potential from your herbs. This series of articles assumes that you have an in-depth knowledge of the herbs you want to work with, including which part(s) of the plants to use, possible side effects, contraindications (a symptom or health condition that makes the use of a specific herb inadvisable), possible interactions with drugs and the understanding that some herbs can be safely used on a long-term basis, while others should only be used short-term for a specific condition.

Teas: Herbal teas are the most common way to take herbs. Herbal teas are also referred to as infusions. I'm using the term "tea" here to avoid confusion with long infusions, which are discussed below.

As you would expect, an herbal tea is made by steeping the herb or herbal blend in hot water, then straining and serving. Teas can be made from fresh or dried plant material. To make an herbal tea, steep the herb(s) in one cup of hot water for 10 to 15 minutes. Keep it covered as it steeps (a saucer works well for this step if you're steeping in a cup). To steep the tea, use whatever tea accessory you like, such as a small teapot, or a tea ball or brew basket right in the cup. There are many fun accessories to the tea-making process, such as filters, infusers and strainers. If you don't want to spend a lot, make your tea in a Pyrex measuring cup (or any other cup with a spout), then pour it through

a coffee filter inserted in the cup you will drink from. Let the tea drip through the filter as you slowly remove it.

If you plan to make herbal tea on a regular basis but don't want the hassle of dealing with loose herbs, you can make your own tea bags using press-and-brew tea bags. These bags are available from herbal supply stores and online. One side of the bag is open. Place your herbs into the bag and press it closed with a hot clothes iron. (If you happen to have a vacuum sealer, the kind that lets you vacuum-pack food in plastic bags, you're in luck, because it's probably the best way to seal this type of tea bag. Set it to "seal only" so the vacuum doesn't engage, then fill your bags and seal them up.) Your tea is now portable, and also easier to share with others.

Common dosages call for between one teaspoon and one tablespoon of dried herb to one cup of water, taken three times a day. To convert dosages from dried to fresh plant material, multiple by 3. So if the dosage calls for one teaspoon of dried herb and you have fresh herb, use 3 teaspoons (one tablespoon) of the fresh herb.

Long infusions: Drinking herbal tea is both relaxing and beneficial. But an herbal long infusion, where herbs are steeped up to six hours, will draw out more of the herb's healing compounds, especially minerals.

Long infusions are always made using dried plant material, not fresh. To prepare a long infusion, take a one-quart canning jar and fill it about one-quarter full with your herb (one-eighth full if using roots or bark). Pour boiling water into the jar. Seal the jar and let it sit for four to six hours. Strain the infusion and reheat to serve if you want it hot. If you don't want to drink it all at once, it can be stored in the refrigerator up to 48 hours. Some herbs commonly used to make long infusions include oatstraw, nettles and red clover. The minerals extracted by long infusions are easily absorbed by the body, so this is a method worth knowing. Note that this type of infusion isn't suitable for all herbs. As always, know your herbs well and the best ways to use them.

Decoctions: Finally, we have decoctions, the quicker method used for hard, woody plant material like roots and bark. Place your woody herb into a small pot or saucepan (be sure you don't use an aluminum pot, which is too reactive). Add water and bring to a boil, then simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain to serve.

The extra heat of this method helps draw out compounds from hard plant material, so you know that you are extracting the medicinal principles. Doses are similar to those for tea, usually one teaspoon of dried herb per cup of water, taken three times a day.

When you sit down to your cup of herbal tea, long infusion or decoction, you may want to sweeten it. Natural sweeteners, like honey or stevia, are best. Enjoy your herbal beverage in good health!

Over time, you will learn the locations of many medicinal plants and know exactly where to go to get the herbs you need for your remedies.

Tips:

- Only harvest herbs when the plants are dry, not wet from dew or rain.
- To dry fresh herbs, place them in a brown paper bag, close the bag and place it in a warm, dry place such as the cabinet above your stove. You can also bundle the herbs by their stems and hang them upside down in a warm, dark, well-ventilated area.
- If the air is very humid, a food dehydrator can be used to quickly dry herbs. This is a good option for berries or other fruit. You can also oven dry herbs by putting them on a baking sheet in the oven at the lowest setting and propping the door open to allow moisture to escape.
- Once completely dry, store your herbs in canning jars in a cupboard or other dark place. Label the jars with the type of herb and date it was harvested.

How to Make Flower and Herbal Tinctures

Tinctures can be stored for a long time, making them the perfect way to harness the restorative power of flowers and herbs.

Tinctures are prepared by steeping fresh or dried herbs in pure alcohol. The plants' active constituents are dissolved in the alcohol, which acts as an excellent preservative.

Herbal tinctures are stronger than infusions and decoctions. They are an effective and convenient way to administer herbal remedies over extended periods of time, especially when traveling. It's standard to make a tincture from a single herb and to blend tinctures from your herbal medicine cabinet as required. They have a shelf life of up to two years, so it is well worth the effort of preparing your own home made tinctures.

Flower remedies are a form of homeopathic tincture. They are a subtle treatment that captures the essential qualities of flowers or herbs by infusing them in water. Alcohol is then used as a fixative and preservative. Flower remedies are effective for treating the emotional imbalances that underlie many illnesses, and they also raise your energy.

Ideal herbs and flowers for tinctures and remedies are:

Marigold:

- Helps to lessen negativity
- Calms digestive inflammation
- Increases generosity
- Soothes and heals acne.

St John's Wort:

- Soothes anxiety
- Calms premenstrual tension
- Increases laughter and relaxation.

Red chestnut:

- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Prevents over-protection of family and fiends
- Improves positive thinking and self-esteem.

Willow:

- Rheumatism and arthritis
- Despondency and despair
- Neuralgia and headaches
- Put your troubles into perspective.

Dong quai:

- Builds healthy blood
- Restores energy levels
- Strengthens the uterus
- Stimulates the appetite.

Ginger:

- Promotes digestion
- Eases stomach upsets

Expectorant for coughs and colds.

Ginkgo:

Improves memory
Improves mental function
Helps circulatory problems
Eases hemorrhoids.

Raspberry:

For wounds and inflammations
Ulcers and hum inflammations
Menstrual cramps
Avoid during pregnancy.

Oak:

Has restorative effects
Reinforces strength and endurance.

Pine:

Reduces feelings of self-blame
Reduces guilt
Helps to improve self-awareness.

Preparing your own home-made herbal tinctures is not difficult. You will require only a few ingredients and implements and all you need to do is follow these simple step-by-step instructions.

1. Chop 300g of fresh herbs (or, if you prefer, 200g of dried herbs) and place them in a large, clean, glass jar.
2. Pour one liter of pure alcohol (vodka or rum) over the herbs. Place a screw cap on the jar and shake well to ensure that the herbs are fully submerged.
3. Keep in a cool dark place for 10-14 days. Shake the jar for one minute each day.
4. Sieve the mixture through a muslin or linen cloth. Discard the herbs and pour the liquid into sterilized screw top glass bottles.
5. Label the bottles with a date, the name of the herb and the concentration.

To make an herbal tincture with the healing powers of St John's Wort:

Collect 250g of the flowering heads of St John's Wort. Place the flower heads containing the buds, flowers and leaves in the alcohol as per the recipe.

Take 5ml of the tincture, diluted in water or fruit juice, three times a day to combat anxiety and tension headaches.

Simple steps to make a flower remedy:

Place 50g of freshly picked, whole flower heads in a shallow glass or earthenware basin.

Add approximately 350ml of pure spring water. Ensure that all the flowers are fully submerged and cover with a muslin cloth.

Place the basin in a sunny spot for one day. This can be a sheltered spot in the garden or a sunny windowsill.

In the evening, remove the flower heads and measure the remaining liquid.

Add an equal amount of pure alcohol (vodka or rum) and pour the remedy into sterilized bottles.

To make a remedy that contains the mental and physical healing power of marigold, follow these instructions:

Submerge 5-6 freshly picked marigold flower heads in spring water, as described in the flower remedy recipe.

It's best to grow your own marigolds, but, if you are purchasing them, you should ensure that the flowers are organic.

Apply 4-5 drops of the essence under your tongue 4 times a day to restore a positive frame of mind.

Using Fresh Herbs to Make Herbal Tinctures

Herbal tinctures are very easy to make. All you need is a bottle of 100 proof vodka, mason jars or bottles that have been cleaned and also have a tight lid and finally your herbs.

You start by adding about 3/4 to 1/2 cup of fresh herbs to the bottom of your mason jar. Then add the vodka completely covering the herbs and as close to the top as you want it. Seal the jar tight and place in a windowsill or shelf. You must shake the jar at least once a day for no less than two weeks and up to six weeks.

After two to six weeks you can bottle your tincture. Use a strainer and strain all the fluid into a measuring cup or something that has a spout. Use a funnel and fill up your bottles with the liquid. Make sure you label the bottles with the type of tincture inside and the date you made it. You can use the left over herbs as compost in your garden.

The look of your tincture will vary depending on the type of herb you used. Rosemary makes a beautiful green tincture while St. John's Wort is a dark red color. If you mix herbs you'll usually get a dark brown color.

These tinctures will last at least two years store them in good bottles. I recommend using cobalt blue or amber colored glass dropper bottles. You can purchase these online for about 50 cents up to two dollars each depending on the size of the bottle. This is where I get mine.

If you are not sure what herbs to make into a tincture I have a few suggestions for you.

Myrrh can be used in a mouthwash, to stop toothaches plus it is antibacterial and helps relieve pain.

Sage has antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties. It can be used as a cleanser, skin toner and with deodorant.

Yarrow is a good facial astringent and is very good for your skin.

Comfrey leaf helps to rejuvenate your skin and to moisturize which reduces wrinkles and fine lines.

The dosage for the tinctures will vary depending on the amount of herb you used and which herbs you used. The average dose is two to three drops on your tongue if taken internally or the skin on the affected area two to three times a day. Please remember to look up the exact dosage amount for each herb you plan on using.

How to Make Herbal Teas and Remedies

Tea has been the center of wars, reunions and family homes stretching back over centuries. Not just used as a means of socializing in many homes but as medicinal alternatives as well.

Herbal teas, also known as infusions, are made from a variety of flowers, roots, leaves and petals each having its own special properties that will aid in the healing and curing of just about any ailment. Roots being thicker and harder wearing may need to be ground or boiled for longer than flower heads or petals for example and you would use different quantities of each per liter of water. When preparing your own infusions it's important to understand the properties of each ingredient. Use recipes that give exact amounts and methods and you can't go wrong. Recipes for medicinal remedies are better bought ready mixed as differ depending on age, health and quantity; however there are also many herbal teas for numerous ailments or just as a social accompaniment, that you can mix yourself with just a few basic ingredients. A personal favorite is dragons eye a sweet refreshing tea great to share on a warm afternoon. You can buy this ready mixed, ask any herbalists to mix it for you or do it yourself; you'll appreciate and enjoy it just that little bit more knowing you've done it yourself.

(Mix 5g of jasmine with 75g of green tea and 20g of dried lemon peel per litre of water.) Always remember to store your plants and herbs in a dry sealed container after every use, this way what little you spend will go a long way.

When making infusions at home for medical reasons you must consult an herbalist with regards to dosage per ingredient. For simple infusions applying these basic rules will see you on your way to enjoying great homemade herbal infusions straight away.

Roots, hard leaves or seeds,

20g per litre of water

Seeds of stronger dosage or of intense flavour (such as anis)

10g per litre of water

Flowers of weak dosage or flavour, or little scent

13g per litre of water

Active flowers, flowers of higher dosage or flavour, or with a strong aroma

5g per litre of water

It's not just the adults of the house that can drink tea on a regular basis either sharing a nice cup of tea with your children or family is a great way to keep you socialising together, chatting and enjoying each others company.

It is recommendable for adults to drink between 3-4 cups per day 2-3 for children. Start now you can count them in you're daily water intake as well and you'll be feeling great in no time.

Top Five Herbal Medicines for Weight Loss

Use Herbal Medicines to Lose Weight

Are herbal medicines an effective weight loss method? Controversy continues on the debate, but a middle ground of scientific research that shows herbal medicines may aid weight loss.

The only safe, effective way to lose weight is reducing calorie intake while increasing activity. Herbal medicines are effective aids to weight loss programs, but they will not dramatically impact weight or fat loss when used independently of a weight management plan. Some herbs interact with other medications, so be sure to check with your physician before adding herbal medicines to your daily diet.

Here are five herbal medicines that are helpful for weight loss. When used individually, their effects are minimal, but small changes can add up to a big difference in your weight.

Cayenne Pepper

Cayenne pepper adds a kick to foods while revving up metabolism, digestive health, and decreasing cravings. Capsaicin, the active ingredient in cayenne, is also found in peppers. Research has shown capsaicin helps reduce risk of heart attack and stroke, and lowers blood pressure, cholesterol, and relieves depression. All of these are good reasons to add cayenne pepper to your diet, but relieving depression is most important. When you feel better, willpower and self control are stronger, and it is easier to make wise food choices.

Green Tea

Green tea is packed with antioxidants, and is believed to increase energy and alertness. Research indicates a person consuming five to seven cups of green tea daily would cut about eighty calories from his diet. Brewed tea can be added to many foods, like sauces and casseroles, making it easy to reach the recommended ratio. Green tea leaves can be used as a culinary herb. Do an online search for the term "cooking with tea" for recipe ideas and tips

Spirulina

Spirulina, promoted as a super food, is one of a group referred to as green foods. It is derived from blue-green algae and contains an incredible amount of protein and antioxidants. Protein helps our bodies feel fuller and more satisfied, while almost everyone can benefit from more antioxidants. This makes spirulina an herbal medicine of choice for weight loss.

Dandelion

Dandelion roots and leaves have been used as herbal diuretics for centuries. This herb adds antioxidants, vitamin A, and a mega-dose of beta-carotene for health-conscious

dieters. Use in salads, brew as tea, or make dandelion coffee as healthy enhancements to weight management routines.

Ginseng

Ginseng helps lower blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Increased energy levels help you feel better and encourage exercise. Add this tasty herb to foods and beverages for maximum benefit.

Summary

Herbal medicines can help weight loss.

Be safe and check with your physician.

Effective, long term weight management depends on calorie reduction and exercise.

Herbal medicines are an enhancement to weight loss programs.

My Top List of Herbal Cures

Some of My Self Proven Examples of Herbal Treatments that Cure

A large portion of the world's population benefits from herbal medicine or medicine derived from plants. Many of these plants are easy to obtain in whole, seed, plant, or dried form to use for the treatment of ailments. You can buy them at a store, buy them on-line, or grow the herbs at home yourself. I prefer to get them the cheapest way possible. For some herbs that means growing the plants yourself, but for others like common cooking spices, it's just easier to buy them already processed, dried, or chopped at the grocery store.

Headaches:

For treating headaches, I like to either make a tea from dried and crushed Fever-few or soak a rag in an infusion of mint and lay it on my forehead. To make a tea,, use 1 tablespoon dried and crushed herb per cup of boiling water; let steep for 5 to 10 minutes depending on the strength you want. An infusion works the same way except you make more of it and boil it in a saucepan on the stove.

Upset Stomach:

For an upset stomach, I like to make mint iced tea. Make the tea as described above and then put it into the fridge or pour it over ice.

Bruises:

For bruises, I like to use a salve made from bees wax, vegetable oil, and St. John's Wort. You'll need 2 tablespoons of powdered St. John's Wort (beware because it doesn't smell very good) per cup of vegetable oil. Heat oil, but do not boil it, and add the powdered herb. Let that heat for about 2 hours. It will make the whole kitchen smell so keep the room well ventilated or do this outside on a hot plate. Then turn off the heat and let it stand for one more hour to cool. Once the oil is cool, strain the herb powder out of the oil and put the clean oil back in the pot and on the burner. Heat the oil again but DO NOT boil it. Then slowly add the beeswax. Let it melt into the oil. Stir, cut off the heat, then pour immediately into the container you wish it to be stored in. Let the container and the mixture cool until the wax thickens to the consistency of a paste. Then your salve is ready to rub onto your bruises twice a day until they are gone. This should cut the healing time in half.

Acne, cuts, & scrapes:

For acne, small cuts, and small scrapes, I like to use Witch Hazel. Witch Hazel is an astringent and will dry up oily skin. Apply once or twice a day to the affected area. If used on the face for acne, use witch hazel along with a non-oily moisturizer like Oil of Olay cream moisturizer. Also, Witch Hazel evens out skin tone and is good to use as a makeup remover (not for the eyes). Witch Hazel is sold cheaply in most stores that have a pharmaceutical section and is usually located next to the rubbing alcohol and hydrogen peroxide.

Athlete's foot:

For athlete's foot, the herbs garlic and ginger are the best for killing a fungal infection like that. Garlic was used by Roman soldiers in their sandals to prevent foot rot and fungal infections while they marched. Ginger has similar effects to garlic. To prepare an athlete's foot wash, chop up a tablespoon each of fresh garlic cloves and ginger root. They are both easily found in the produce department of most large grocery stores. Add the chopped herbs to two cups of boiling water in a pot on the stove. Simmer, but do not over boil, the herbs on the stove for about 30 minutes. Let cool on it's own then strain out the herbs using a mesh strainer or cheese cloth. Pour liquid into a bottle; it should keep for at least 6 months if kept in the refrigerator. Apply to affected area 3 times a day.

Urinary tract infections:

To prevent urinary tract infections, try taking a daily dose of cranberry. It's available at most grocery stores in dried, fresh, juice, or pill form. The pills are usually on the supplement or vitamin aisle. It is also very helpful when dealing with kidney stones and active urinary tract infections, but you should still see a doctor for these ailments for you may need antibiotics as well.

Yeast infections:

If you suffer from recurring yeast infections, a daily dose of garlic may be able to cut down on the recovery time for a yeast infection and also help prevent them in the first place. Again, if you have a yeast infection or think you might have one, you should still see or consult your doctor and use clinical treatments. Garlic will help to prevent them and speed up the recovery time. Garlic pills are usually found wherever supplements and vitamins are found. Yogurt with active bacteria is also good as a preventative for yeast infections.

Cold sores:

For cold sores, I've found that lemon balm speeds up the healing process of the sore. Also, L-lysine helps to prevent and heal cold sores. Lemon balm is usually available at plant stores and plant nurseries in their herbal section, and it can be applied by making a wash or mouth rinse. Boil 1 tablespoon of crushed or chopped lemon balm leaves per cup water for 30 minutes; let cool on it's own, strain, and bottle it. Apply 3 times a day with a cotton swab or by swishing around in the mouth. L-lysine is in pill form. It is a supplement that can stop the herpes virus from latching on to certain other proteins that help it cause sores. It can be found where vitamins and supplements are commonly sold. If you do not have a cold sore and are wanting to prevent it, take two pills once a day. If you already have a sore, then take three pills twice a day until the sore(s) subside(s). If symptoms persist despite treatment, you might need to consult your doctor about a stronger medicine.

These are my favorite herbal treatments that I have learned about and had experience with so far. I hope that they are helpful to you as well.

Please remember that herbs can cause allergies to some people. Always test out a small amount of the herb to make sure you aren't allergic to it.

Prunella Vulgaris: A Heal - All Herbal Plant

Herbal Plant Treatment for Health Problems and Herpes

Prunella vulgaris (Self-Heal, Heal All, and All Heal 9) short perennial herbal plant used as an alternative medicine to treat ailments, and may provide a treatment for sexually transmitted infection herpes ("Herbal Herpes Cure" 4). The Self-Heal plant approximately half inch to one inch tall and not - divided into branches. The stem of the herbal plant has white hairs along its four angular ridges. "The opposite leaves are up to 2" long and 3/4" across." Flowers of the *Prunella vulgaris* bloom mid to late summer and lasts about a month. "Each flower produces 4 tiny brown, angular, finely ridged seeds, which are enclosed in the persistent calyx." *Prunella vulgaris* grows comfortable in partial or full sun and moist conditions. Leaves tend to drop and turn greenish yellow when some drought occurs. The plant flourishes preferable in soil with high organic content. One common variety of Self-Heal plant observed in lawns (Eurasian variety). Common habitat of the Self-Heal herbal plant grows in moist meadows, openings in forest, along river and lakes, woodland borders, pastures and abandoned fields. 1 Regionally perennial herbal plant found in Asia, Japan, Europe, and United States. The seeds of the plant are sowed in early spring in flat out doors or "...give a shot cold and moist conditioning treatment before sowing in a warm place." 2 *Purnella Vulgaris* easy to grow, inexpensive and safe. 6

Over the centuries the Self-heal herbal plant offers a variety of benefits. In Witchcraft the *Prunella vulgaris* referred to as a Holy herb: Grown in Witches gardens as a disguise to drive away the devil. One group of Native American tribesmen extracted from the root of the *Prunella vulgaris* made tea to drink, before going hunting, supposedly sharpened the powers of observation. 2 Self-heal herb is an alternative medicine applicable internally and externally as an antibiotic, treatment for hard to heal wounds and diseases. 3 Also, *Prunella vulgaris* used to treat burns, bruises, sprains, cuts, mouthwash for sores and gum problems, liver disorders, and hemorrhoids. Herbalists prescribe Heal All to treat jaundice, hepatitis and liver ailments. "The herb has had some success in treating vertigo, hypertension, gout and conjunctivitis". 9 "Prunella is thought to be effective in treating Grave's disease, and has also been used as an immune system booster." *Pruenella vulgaris* taste like mineral salt and mild bitter. The herb can be used in stews, salads, and soups. 12

Available online *Prunella vulgaris* supplements encapsulated in 100% Gluten - free, vegetable Cellulose, and Certified Kosher capsules (almost the size of a dime). "Each capsule contains approximately 600 mgs." According to Viable Herbal Solutions, recommended dosage: "Take one (1) or two (2) capsules, up to three (3) times each day with water at mealtime." 9

Prunella vugaris is not recommended for those who have stomachache, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting. Also, the herb may interfere adversely when prescription blood thinners are prescribed. 9

Herpes is a sexual transmitted disease, predominantly caused by type 2 (HSV-2) Virus. "Nationwide at least 45 million people ages 12 and older or one out of five adolescents and adults, have had genital HSV infection." Common signs of herpes appear as one or more blisters on or around the genitals or rectum. Genital sores can cause recurrent pain and suppress the immune system. Outbreaks of the signs almost always appear less

frequently over time. Potentially genital herpes can be fatal to infected babies, especially if the transmitted infection is acquired during late pregnancy. Currently no modern medication or drug available to treat herpes, except antiviral medications can shorten and prevent outbreaks. 5

Dr. Song Lee from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada and colleagues, extracted a compound from the *Prunella vulgaris* plant. The compound (lignin-carbohydrate) was added to a cream and tested on mice and guinea pigs infected with two types of herpes virus. Consequentially, death rate among infected mice was substantially reduced and significantly reduced skin lesions in guinea pigs. 4 The Self-heal herbal plant been called the "Herbal Herpes Cure". 6 The Research by Dr. Lee and colleagues presented during the 103rd General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology (2003).¹¹ Dr. Lee said: "Given the high incidence of herpes infection and the emergence of acyclovir-resistant strains of herpes viruses, the *Prunella* lignin-carbohydrate complex may prove to be a useful new-anti-herpes drug." 4 The affective compound in *Prunella Vulgaris* could treat or benefit oral and genital herpes infected people, however no clinical studies using the herbal plant has verified the hypothesis. 7 Also, described on the Web-site Horizon-Herbs, the flowers of the *Prunella Vulgaris* are dried and set aside for making tea. The herbal tea clears herpes sores, lesions, alleviates pain and kills the virus. 10

The Self - Heal plant available for purchase in garden stores, nurseries, and other plant dealers and distributors. The herbal plant can be grown from seed. 13 Available online and in stores without a prescription (Not approved by the Food and Drug Administration) *Prunella Vulgaris* ointment for both herpes simplex virus types one and two. 8 Also, the FDA has not evaluated the efficacy or approved the herbal Self-heal plant for any treatment option. 9

Descriptive and visual video available of *Prunella Vulgaris* growing:
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2746088924614350833&hl=en>. 6

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Jamaica Dogwood Herbal Remedies

Herbal Plant for Good Health

Jamaica dogwood (*Piscidia piscipula* or *Piscidia erythrina*) native herbal plant of Caribbean, Central and South America and United States (Texas 2 & Florida 8), treatment as a sedative, antispasmodic and pain killer ("The bark of the root works similarly to aspirin pain relievers by blocking an enzyme that produces inflammatory and pain causing chemicals called prostaglandins". 5). 1 During the late 1800's, United States physicians frequently administered Jamaica dogwood extract treat nervous conditions and pain. "The plant's characteristic pods bear four projecting longitudinal wings". The bark of the Jamaica dogwood appears yellow or grayish brown on the surface and on the inner surface appears lighter colored or white. 2 Flowers of the Jamaica dogwood cluster from April through May. 9 Herbal plant requires full sunlight. Proportion of fertilizer suggested: Three parts Nitrogen (N), three parts Potassium (K), and two parts Phosphorous (P). 10 Herbal plant can grow as tall as 50 feet high. The bark of the tree is chopped down for commercial use or medicinal properties. 1 Jamaica dogwood recognize for it's pungent taste, distinctive bitterness and burning sensation in the mouth. 6

Study of Jamaica dogwood on animals provide evidence, herb relieve pain, promoted sleep, reduce fever and inflammation, relief from muscle spasms, and cough. Jamaica dogwood recommend by professional herbalists treat health problems including: Nerve pain, toothache, insomnia, anxiety and cough. 2 Also, the herb use to treat migraines, ovarian and uterine pain. 4 Native Americans and captive Africans in Virginia reported (1830), use of Dogwood chewing sticks (previously used as a toothpick) for a few minutes, whitened teeth: Fibers at the end of the twigs split into a fine soft 'brush'. "Also, the Native American tribe the Arikaras, mixed bearberry with the dried bark of the red dogwood to make sacred tobacco which they smoked in a regulation red pipestone pipe". 9

West Indian natives referred to the Jamaica dogwood as "fish poison tree". When fishing, branches of the herb placed inside open container then dumped into a lagoon. After the container was emursed in water, fish that entered, fell asleep in the box and easily caught. 4

Jamaica dogwood herb root bark available for purchase in pieces one to two inches length an 1/8 inch in thickness. Also, herb available for purchase in liquid and tincture forms. 2 *Piscida piscipula* should be discontinued if symptoms develop : Skin hives, rash or itchy swollen skin, chest pain, and breathing problems or tightness in the throat or chest. 7

Recommended usage of Jamaica dogwood: "Tea (decoction): Boil 1/2 - 1 teaspoonful dried bark in water. Strain and drink 3 times daily as needed. Fluid extract: (1:1 in 30% alcohol) 1 - 2 mL, 3 times daily or 2 - 8 mL daily (1:1 in 60% ethonal). Tincture (1:5 in 45% ethanol): 5 - 30 drops (1 - mL), 3 times daily". Currently no scientific evidence proves or disprove the medicinal properties, efficacy and effectiveness of this herb. 2

Advisable not to combine Jamaica dogwood while taking insomnia or anxiety drugs, may intensify the effectiveness of the prescribed medication. *Piscidia erythrina* not recommended for children. Also, herb not recommended to for the elderly and not

advisable for use during pregnancy and breast - feeding. Overdose usage of Jamaica dogwood is toxic and attributed by variety of symptoms: Sweating, tremors, salivation, and numbness. If anyone of these symptoms occur, advisable to seek medical attention. The toxicity of Jamaica dogwood contains rotenone, applied as an insecticide to eliminate lice, fleas, and larvae. However, human and animal exposure to rotenone believed to be less harmful (When Jamaica dogwood used as recommended). 2

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All Natural Herbal Remedies for Welts

Herbal Healing

Welts can be a symptom of hives, mosquito bites, allergies, eczema, poison ivy and flea bites amongst other things. Welts tend to itch and sting the skin until the victim is driven crazy with the need to scratch. Scratching is the worse thing you can do to welts; instead try one of these all natural herbal remedies.

Vicks Vapor Rub - Believe it or not Vicks Vapor Rub is made from essential oils like camphor and eucalyptus. Camphor is one of the main ingredients in Vicks Vapor Rub. It acts like a band aid for the skin and seals it from getting air or spreading any other allergens. You must be aware though that applying Vicks Vapor Rub to welts will burn momentarily and I would not recommend using this on severe cases.

Oatmeal - To help relieve the itching that comes with welts take an oatmeal bath. Not only is this a well known remedy for chicken pox but it also soothes skin that is irritated as a result of hives and allergies. Fill a nylon stocking with a cup of oatmeal, tie a knot to keep the oatmeal inside and rub over skin. You can also add a half of a cup of oatmeal to bathwater for the same results.

Vitamin C - Drinking or eating vitamin c helps to lower the body's natural histamine levels. This will help prevent hives which is one of the main causes of skin welts.

Milk - Use cold milk to make a compress and apply to the welted area for 10 to 15 minutes. Also, there are Apis Mellifica tablets which are milk based to create a paste. Simply dissolve the tablets in a few drops of water and apply to the skin. Apis Mellifica is commonly referred to as the bee sting cure.

Vinegar - Mix 1/4th quart of apple cider vinegar and 2 quarts of water. Use this mixture to bathe the skin several times a day.

Cabbage - Crush cabbage leaves with a rolling pin, place in the refrigerator until the mashed leaves are cool and apply as a compress. This method will help alleviate the burning and cools the skin.

Yogurt - Mix plain yogurt and honey together to create a cream. Apply the cream to the welted area and allow it to sit on the skin for one hour.

Onion - Cook 1 sliced onion in about half of a cup of honey until the onion is soft. Using an electric beater beat the concoction until it is a paste and then apply to the skin. Let the paste sit on the skin for an hour and then rinse with warm water. Apply paste twice a day, once in the morning and once before bed.

Tea Tree Oil - Dab undiluted tea tree oil directly on welts to relieve itching and dry out any poisons that may reside inside the welted area. Tea tree oil is sold in almost all drugstores and can be found at Wal-Mart and Target stores.

Cornstarch - Cornstarch is a wonderful remedy for many different skin ailments including mosquito bites, hives, chicken pox, diaper rash etc. Dump a cup of cornstarch into bathwater and soak for 30 minutes. You can also make a paste with cornstarch and

water and apply directly to the affected area. My daughter was extremely allergic to diaper rash medicines and would often end up with bleeding rashes. Cornstarch is the only thing gave her relief.

Ice - Ice is just about the best thing you can apply to a welt. The coldness will sooth the heat and reduces swelling. In cases of spider bites or severe allergies that affect the breathing seek medical help immediately. Anaphylactic shock is life threatening and should not be treated with herbal natural remedies.

In cases of spider bites or severe allergies that affect the breathing seek medical help immediately. Anaphylactic shock is life threatening and should not be treated with herbal natural remedies.

Herbal Treatment for Minor Burns

Treating Minor Burns

Most people are aware that burns are classified by degrees of severity from first to third. First degree burns are the most common and minor of the three. Third degree burns are

severe and usually leave the skin disfigured. Third degree burns aren't as painful as first and second degree burns because of the depth and damage to the nerves that send pain messages to the brain. When these nerves are damaged, the pain signals don't make it through.

What most people may not know about burns is classifying burns by type. There are seven types of burns; flame burns, scalds, electrical burns, contact burns, radiation burns, ultraviolet burns, and chemical burns.

Flame burns occur when the skin comes in direct contact with fire. Scalds occur when skin comes in contact with steam and hot liquids. Contact with electrical wires result in electrical burns. Contact burns occur when skin comes in contact with hot surfaces. Radiation burns occur when you are in close contact with high levels of heat or fire, but not in direct contact with it. Too much sun exposure will cause ultraviolet burns and chemical burns occur when the skin comes in contact with corrosive or hazardous chemicals.

These herbal treatments will cover first degree burns and possibly second degree burns if they aren't covering large areas of the body. If you have third degree burns you should seek medical attention immediately. These are not the ones you want to play around with.

The most widely used herbal treatment for burns is the aloe vera plant. Aloe vera has been used for thousands of years as a burn ointment and dressing for wounds. Reports suggest that aloe vera was used by Cleopatra as a moisturizer to combat the signs of aging from days in the Egyptian sun.

The majority of people in the United States have an aloe plant growing in their home. People who don't consider themselves to have a green thumb, or grow any other houseplants, will have an aloe vera plant on their windowsill.

Aloe vera contains vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids and a number of compounds that help relieve pain and reduce inflammation. The gel from aloe vera leaves also contain saponins which have antibacterial and antifungal properties to help prevent infection.

These ingredients also make aloe vera a good health tonic when taken internally.

Other herbs that have been used topically are the juice from garlic and plantains. Simply mash these fresh herbs into a pulp or paste and use as a poultice.

St. John's Wort can also be applied as a tincture or salve.

Many herbalists also apply essential oils directly to minor burns. These oils include; lavender, chamomile, camphor, eucalyptus, onion, peppermint, rosemary and sage. If you decide to keep essential oils on hand please remember that these oils are toxic if taken internally. For this reason they should only be applied to the skin. Essential oils can be added to a little vegetable oil to use as a massage agent.

Herbs that can be taken internally are Echinacea and gotu kola. Echinacea has long been known as an immune system booster, so taking Echinacea would help with the prevention of an infection setting in.

Gotu kola taken along with vitamin C may help stimulate the synthesis of collagen, a protein in the skin that helps repair damaged skin.

If you receive a burn, you should put the burned area of skin in cold water as soon as possible and keep it there for at least 5 minutes. This is the fastest and best method used to stop the burning.

If your skin blisters you should not try to pop them, but let the blisters open on their own. After the blisters open, you can clean them with water and apply an antibiotic ointment.

If clothing irritates the burn or blisters, you can wrap them in sterile gauze dressing.

Herbal Depression Treatment

Are you feeling blue? Do you want to feel better, but don't have time to go to the doctor? Why not try an age old remedy- herbs? For years people have used herbs to heal all

types of ailments, often with less side effects than other conventional options. Here are some common herbal treatment options.

Burpleurm root is used for many medicinal uses. It is commonly used in combination with other herbs to strengthen the immune system. It is typically contraindicated if you have a fever, acute infection, or high blood pressure. Dong quai is a root that is not uncommonly used with burpleurum, although it is contraindicated if you have bleeding problems. Together these help to reduce anxiety, irritability, and depression. A typical dosage for depression is 1,000 milligrams (combined) of both two to three times a day for two weeks a month. For us girls, you want to take this the two weeks prior to your time of month.

Ginkgo biloba is well known for its potential effects on memory, but it also can help with depression. This is because it may increase the flow of oxygenated blood to your brain. It does tend to act slow, so it may be three or so months prior to seeing any benefits. A typical dosage is 40-60 milligrams of a supplement that is at least 24% ginkgo heterosides two to three times a day. Once again you may not choose to use this if you have bleeding problems. You should also be cautious if you taking anti-inflammatory drugs.

Kava kava also may reduce the signs of depression if 150 milligrams are taken three times a day. When purchasing this you should try to find one that is 30% or more kavalactones. This may reduce alertness temporarily, so try not to drive or do other things requiring alertness when you take this. Additionally it may be contraindicated if you have Parkinson's Disease, are pregnant, or drink alcohol on a regular basis. It also should not be used if you are already taking prescription drugs for anxiety or depression.

Oat straw is very high in silica. It may reduce craving for cigarettes and has the added benefit of potentially strengthening the central nervous system and reducing the symptoms of depression. A typical dosage is 500 milligrams twice a day.

St John's Wort has received quite a bit of press. I almost am hesitant to even mention it since most of you are probably very familiar with it already, however in some case it may work. A typical dosages starts with taking 300 milligrams of an extract containing 0.3% hypericin a day. After two weeks you can take an additional capsule at a different time of day than the first capsule. Then in another two weeks you can add a third capsule. It can sometimes increase your sensitivity to the sun. You should not take this if you are taking MAO inhibitors and be cautious about taking this if you are taking prescription medicines for depression.

Siberian ginseng is the final herb I am going to discuss. This is not to say it is the last herb available, only the last I tried. It typically improves the balance of serotonin, norepinephrine, epinephrine, and dopamine in your brain. It can cause nervousness and should not be taken continuously for more than a month. It also should not be taken without first taking with your physician to learn about any contraindications. A typical

dosage is 100 milligrams of an extract with at least 05.% eleutheroside E right before breakfast and other right before lunch.

All of these herbs have potential, but may not work for everyone since everyone is different. Additionally, depression is a serious illness. Therefore, always contact your appropriate medical advisor as soon as feasible, even if it is just by phone, if you suspect that you have depression to discuss the illness and treatment with herbs, conventional medicines, and other options.

Acne Herbal Treatment Alternative

New Ways to Handle Acne

Many people are turning to herbal acne treatments as an alternative to over the counter acne medication. Over 40 million people in the USA and more than 17 million people in the UK are affected by some form of acne, making acne the most widespread skin disease in the world. A high proportion of these sufferers treat their condition with chemical treatments such as prescription medication, antibiotics and various brand name acne treatments.

The huge range of acne products and acne treatments available can be very confusing, ranging from a natural acne remedy and herbal acne treatments, right through to laser acne treatment and acne scar treatment. Not to mention the many books and websites out there that offer the newest way for acne prevention.

It is not widely known exactly what causes acne. It is a condition that comes about when skin pores become blocked due to a hormonal imbalance in the skin oil glands, or sebaceous glands. The clogging of the pores results in the emergences of lesions on the face, neck, back, chest, and shoulders, which are commonly referred to as pimples, spots or zits.

There are a growing number of people who are turning to herbal acne treatments over the usual chemical-based medications. In general herbal acne treatment has fewer side effects as some of the chemical alternatives, which can cause burning, inflammation and peeling of the skin.

There are several drawbacks with the use of herbal acne treatments, not least the fact that natural remedies and their effectiveness is not regulated by government agencies. This lack of regulation means there is a huge amount of natural herbal acne remedies on the market, very few of which have been clinically proven to work.

One acne remedy which has been studied and has evidence to show that it works is Tea Tree Oil, which is a natural oil extracted from a native Australian tree. Tea tree oil is now recognized as a legitimate herbal acne treatment and is most effective when a few drops of the oil is applied directly to the skin - there is no need to buy an expensive acne cream with tea tree oil in it. Another herbal acne treatment that has been recently shown to be effective is Green Tea Cream. Green tea has similar anti-bacterial properties to tea tree oil.

It is clear that there are only two natural herbal acne treatments that have evidence to show their effectiveness, tea tree oil and green tea cream. Other herbal acne products may help in moisturizing and reducing oils in the skin.

Acne can be extremely traumatic and upsetting due to the profound physical effects can have in some people. It can be a persistent condition but with the correct advice, perseverance and patience it can be overcome. Acne is an extremely common condition with many best herbal acne treatments easily available.

Herbal Tinnitus Treatments

Tinnitus is any abnormal noise deep within the ear, which typically presents as a high-pitched ringing, buzzing, or swishing sound that only the sufferer can hear. While the

various causes of tinnitus may be rather vast, the herbal treatments which may prove effective are few.

Ginkgo Biloba

Thought to be the oldest living tree on earth, Ginkgo Biloba leaves have been used by the Chinese for thousands of years to treat various upper respiratory issues, such as bronchitis and asthma. Once considered a "magical" medicine, today the effectiveness of Ginkgo Biloba to treat medical symptoms has been thoroughly studied.

While its effectiveness at treating tinnitus has been greatly disputed, some patients "swear by" this herbal treatment as the only form of relief. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, several studies and trials have taken place in an effort to either prove or disprove the effectiveness of Ginkgo Biloba at treating tinnitus, which generally produced mixed results. Luckily for tinnitus sufferers, these supplements are rather inexpensive to purchase.

Black Cohosh

Also known as Black Snake Root, Bugbane, and Bugwort, Black Cohosh has long been used by Native Americans for relief and treatment of several conditions ranging from fatigue, whooping cough, to relieving the pain of both child birth and menstruation.

Though its effectiveness at treating tinnitus has not been greatly studied, it is believed that Black Cohosh contains compounds which allow it to be used for sedation purposes by calming the central nervous system. This calming effect is believed to improve cerebral blood flow, thus relieving tinnitus symptoms.

Mullein

Although the original uses of Mullein were typically related to respiratory illnesses and conditions, physicians have been experimenting with numerous Mullein teas, ointments, and medications for the treatment of most any condition for centuries.

Believed to have a diuretic-like effect on the inner workings of the ear, nose, and throat, a boiled Mullein tea has helped some tinnitus patients to alleviate inflammation and discomforts associated with tinnitus.

Unfortunately, there are no "miracle" herbal supplements or concoctions which will automatically cure tinnitus, though some have proven effective at treating symptoms in certain numbers of tinnitus sufferers.

While herbal remedies prepared at home may seem quite harmless to most, it is important to check with both your physician and pharmacist before using any sort of herbal treatment in conjunction with over-the-counter or prescription medications or when suffering from any health condition, regardless of how minor or major.

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x

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Anxiety: How to Treat with Aromatherapy & Herbalism

Extract from Book Aromatherapy & Herbalism by Rochelle Moore
ANXIETY, STRESS & OVERWORK

ESSENTIAL OILS:

Bergamot, Neroli, Clary Sage, Marjoram, Lemongrass and Cedarwood.

GOLDEN RULE: NO MORE THAN 5 DROPS ALONE OR MIXED

Anxiety - Bergamot Oil

Stress - Cedarwood, Clary Sage and Neroli

Overwork Physical - Clary Sage, Lemongrass, Neroli and Lavender

Overwork Mental - Clary Sage and Neroli.

BERGAMONT:

This is an uplifting oil which must never be used for up to three hours before you go out in to sun. Bergamot is not suitable for children from the age of 0-12 years of age. You can use it in your bath, in a compress or for inhalation.

NEROLI:

This oil is generally used for stress-related problems. Overwork, mental stress and shock. It is not suitable to use for children from the age of 0-12 years of age and must be used restrictively during pregnancy or for those who have sensitive skin. You can use it in your bath, as an inhaler or on a compress.

MARJORAM:

This oil is classed as a muscle relaxant. It is not suitable for children from the age of 0-12 years old. It is an excellent oil for aches, spasms and sprains. It can be used in your bath, as an inhaler or on a compress.

CLARY SAGE:

This oil is classed as euphoric. It is not suitable for children from the age of 0-12 years, use restrictively during pregnancy and also for people with sensitive skin. It can be used in your bath, as a compress on as an inhaler.

LEMONGRASS:

This oil is known for its strengthening purposes. It is not suitable for children from the age of 0-12 years, use restrictively during pregnancy. This is an excellent oil which alleviates nervous exhaustion, muscle aches and pains. It can be used as an insect repellent, a room fragrance, in your bath on as a compress.

CEDARWOOD;

This oil has a very composing effect. It is not suitable for children from the age of 0-12 years and used restrictively during pregnancy. This is a wonderful oil for stress relief, asthma, bronchitis, dandruff and scattered thinking. You can use this oil in your bath, as an inhaler or as a compress.

HERBAL CURES AND PROTECTION AMULETS

HERBS:

Yarrow, Nettle, Mullein, Snapdragon, Lemon Balm, Rue and Acorn.

INFUSION: Lemon Balm leaves

STOP ANXIETY OR FEAR: Carry a mixture of nettle and yarrow. St John's Wort is available in your pharmacy.

COURAGE: Carry Mullein on your person

STOP OTHERS DECEIVING YOU: Wear a Snapdragon

KEEP ILLNESS AWAY: Wear a sprig of Rue

REGAIN LOST MANHOOD: Carry an Acorn

How to Treat a Phobia Using Natural Remedies and Herbalism

A phobia is an irrational fear which the sufferer finds impossible to overcome. Some of the most common fears are claustrophobia (a fear of enclosed space, agoraphobia (a fear of open spaces), and acrophobia (a fear of heights). A phobia, can relate to just about any object, person, or situation, and is probably caused by a subconscious reflex to avoid repeating an unpleasant experience. For a sufferer it may cause little more than mild embarrassment, or it may be totally debilitating and disruptive to everyday life. Probably less than a tenth of the population suffers from phobias, and even less than that are probably severe. It may be possible to simply cure yourself if you feel that you have a phobia of some sort.

You may have a phobia of something if you experience rapid pulse, profuse sweating, high blood pressure, trembling, or nausea when you are in a particular situation. Since there are not any prescription medications available for specific phobias, the best route of treatment is probably a natural one. Many methods of natural treatment are available for you to treat your specific phobia.

An Ayurvedic practitioner may suggest lemon or lime for the dizziness associated with phobias, other individual treatments can be prescribed according to your specific needs. A Chinese herbalist may suggest cooling herbs, and Gui Pi Wan, which addresses emotional problems. Ginseng, Chinese angelica and senega root may also be useful in your treatment program. Practitioners of traditional Herbalism might recommend that you drink valerian root tea to relieve the tension that may be associated with your specific phobia.

One of the most useful treatments for phobias is aromatherapy. Many people believe scent to be the sense that is closely tied to memory, and this is probably a big reason for its effectiveness. The effect of certain smells can help to release tension and induce a feeling of calm. Some of the best oils to try are: bergamot, chamomile, clary sage, geranium, jasmine, juniper, lavender, melissa, and ylang ylang, which are all sedative. They can be used in the bath, in massage with a light carrier oil (such as sweet almond), or in a vaporizer. Carry a bottle of diluted oils with you - perhaps in a small sprayer - and apply them to the temples or pulse points in times of fear.

There are also dozens of homeopathic remedies which can be used to treat phobias, but they will be prescribed constitutionally, that is, the treatment would be tailored to your exact needs. Some to try may be: Phosphorus, for fear of the dark, Gelsemium, for fear of performing in public, when you feel weak at the knees, Aconite, for agoraphobia, when you are terrified of dying or collapsing if you go out, Arnica, for fears that are brought on by an accident, and Sulfur, when you need help and no other remedy seems to be indicated.

The simplest treatment for phobias though, lies in your basic nutrition. Simply increasing the intake of specific vitamins can make a huge difference. Vitamin B-

complex and C are important for nerve functioning. Ensure that you eat regular meals as well, since low blood sugar can exacerbate the problem.

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The Doctrine of Signatures and Herbalism

When I first began working as an herbalist in the rural Southeast, a very old man told me that he was looking for a plant called toothwort because his gums hurt. Having never heard much about that herb, I directed him toward our other, more popular remedies: clove oil, neem and myrrh.

He told me that he didn't believe any of these worked because none of those plants had "teeth". Dismissing this as the crazed ramblings of a senile mountain-man, I made a note to myself to research the plant and find out what he meant.

This was my first introduction to the so-called Doctrine of Signatures, a philosophy of herbalism that states that everything in nature is given a signature appearance that indicates its use to humanity. By the logic provided by the Doctrine of Signatures, wood sorrel, for example, would be good for the heart because its leaves are heart-shaped.

This doctrine was a greatly widespread belief well into the twentieth century, and gave many plants the common names they have today. In fact, the suffix "wort", an old English word meaning "root", was added to the names of many plants to denote both its appearance and its supposed medicinal use.

The plant liverwort, for example, was given its name because of its vague resemblance to a human liver. Although its medicinal uses for the liver are limited at best, it was used for hundreds of years to treat liver ailments based on the assumption made by the Doctrine of Signatures. Likewise, Saint John's wort was erroneously used for skin ailments because its leaves appear slightly porous.

One, much more tragic result of the Doctrine of Signatures was the widespread use of birthwort, given its name because of its resemblance to a birth canal. Birthwort was used on pregnant women from the sixteenth century well into the nineteenth, based on the belief that it enabled a healthy labor or postpartum recovery. However, doctors who used this herb were actually poisoning women with aristolochic acid, a potent kidney toxin.

It was because of this doctrine that my client believed that toothwort--which, as I later found out, was simply an epithet for the herb I call bittercress-- would cure his dental pain. Guided by tradition rather than modern herbalist knowledge, the man had believed that the serrated leaves of the plant indicated its medicinal use for tooth problems.

The Doctrine of Signatures is now dismissed by herbalists as a superstition or mnemonic, and, while it has no doubt led to a few coincidental discoveries, it has also caused centuries of error for doctors and herbalists. With a healthy worldview to reflect the fact that plants were not created exclusively for human consumption, the field of herbalism has now moved away from these forms of assumption.

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A Guide to Chinese Herbalism

A history of herbal knowledge that dates back thousands of years makes Chinese herbalists uniquely qualified in prescribing aid.

Chinese herbalism is thought to have originated as far back as 4000BC, with the Emperors Fu Xi and, later, Shen Nong. China was predominantly Taoist, a philosophy that aimed to live in harmony with all living things. Illness and health were related to the environment, and disease was attributed to imbalances in the flow of energy around the body and external factors. Que Yueren, in the fourth century BC, was the first person to promote the four diagnostic methods still used in Chinese medicine.

Doctors were qualified at four levels. At the first level was the animal doctor, who was not allowed to treat people. Next, was the doctor of general medicine, who used methods such as acupuncture and massage. At the third level was the food doctor, who prescribed diets and herbal medicines, and finally the sage, who could heal the body and the spirit.

The process of diagnosis that is used in Chinese medicine involves four methods of observation. The first, inspection, involves closely noting the patient's appearance and examining signs such as the skin tone and the color and health of the tongue, eyes and ears.

The second, hearing and smelling, includes checking body rhythms such as breathing and listening to the vocal pitch. Special odors that emanate from the patient are also noted.

Thirdly, asking questions allows the doctor or herbalist to determine physical symptoms.

The fourth and final method used, touching or palpitation, included feeling the pulses and checking swellings or other outward signs of imbalance. The diagnosis is then made, based on these very accurate and precise judgments of the significance of the signs noted by the physician. Treatment will be assigned accordingly.

Chinese herbalists are experts in the tastes, directions and actions of particular herbs. Learn how the correct treatment is chosen and the effects that it will have on you.

Chinese herbs are pungent, sour and astringent, sweet, salty, bitter or bland. Each taste is related to one of the five elements. If there is a problem with an area of the body, the taste associated with it should be avoided. Salty foods are proscribed in cases of water retention or edema and you should stay clear of sweet foods in problems relating to the stomach or spleen.

The tastes of each herb have specific actions: pungent is dispersing and mobilizing; sour and astringent is contracting; sweet is toning, alleviating and releases toxins; salty is softening and eliminating; bitter is drying; and bland help to release excess fluid.

In Chinese medicine, herbs counter the direction and action of the problem. For example, constipation, which has an upward action, is treated by herbs with a downwards action, 'sinking' herbs. The parts of the herbs are often related to their action. Flowers and leaves are often used for their upwards, 'lifting and floating' effects whereas seeds and roots are usually used for their 'sinking' properties.

The meridians and channels that flow through the body, rather like blood flows through the veins in the circulatory system. These channels allow vital energy to travel through the body. If any of the meridians in the body are blocked, the energy cannot flow freely to certain areas. As these places become starved of energy they become more susceptible to illnesses and disease.

In Chinese medicine, herbs are administered in order to keep the meridians and the body healthy, while acupuncture is used to unblock the meridians and allow vital energy to flow freely.

Chinese herbs are prescribed to counterbalance the symptoms of a particular illness. A cold condition such as catarrh is treated with heating herbs, while a hot condition such as fever is treated with cooling herbs.

Each property that a herb possesses has an action and a syndrome. Cool or cold properties act to treat heat conditions, dampen down too much of the fire element and remove toxins. Warm and hot properties warm your insides, dispel cold conditions and strengthen yang energy. Neutral properties act on both and are milder in their effects.

Chinese herbs are often more than extracts of plants. Often they are a mixture of herbs and animal products. The processes that are employed for preserving the herbs, such as cooking in wine or vinegar, stir-frying, drying or blending, are thought to have an effect on the specific properties of the herbs to empower healing.

What You Don't Know About Herbalism Will Kill You

A Serious Look at the Use of Common Herbal Treatments

What you don't know will kill you. It's a simple phrase but one that many today discard. Anyone that plays with herbs and doesn't bother to actually study the plants, roots and barks involved can accomplish just that. They can kill you!

Herbs are not just food supplements. They are not harmless. You have to study many years with much vigor and intensity before you begin to take them yourself let alone recommend them to another.

There is a big movement within the world today towards the old ways of herbal remedies and treatments. The bad part is that many people forget that herbs are medicines. They are as strong and potent as what your doctor might prescribe.

If you don't do the research or know the herb you are recommending then you are putting others or yourself in more danger than you may realize.

To demonstrate my point, the FDA has logged more than 2,500 reports of side effects and 70 deaths associated with dietary supplements, 900 of the illnesses and 44 deaths were thought to be a result of taking products containing ephedrine-like stimulants. These numbers may not concern you especially when you spread them out over a year and over only one country. But when you stop to think that many don't even tell their doctors what herbal or other supplements they are taking then one begins to understand that these numbers are just the tip of a very large ice berg.

Here are some things that you might want to consider next time you decide taking an herbal supplement is for you:

Ephedra can be bought under the names of ma huang, ephedra and sida cordifolia. It contains stimulant ephedrine which is currently banned in several states. Federal limitations on this supplement are now pending as it can cause heart palpitations, psychosis, heart attacks and stroke. You should stop using this at least 24 hours before surgery.

Chaparral is sold as both a tea and pills. When used in a tea the herb is nontoxic. However, in pill form it can cause acute toxic hepatitis. (liver disease)

Comfrey one of the worlds favorite little herbs, used to heal wounds topically or to heal ulcers internally contains alkaloid substances associated with occlusion of the veins, is toxic to the liver and may even be carcinogenic. Comfrey is actually banned in Canada and restricted in Germany. Care should be taken as Comfrey tends to be confused with nightshade and foxglove by inexperienced herbalists.

The ever popular dieter's teas contain such herbs as senna, aloe, rhubarb root, buckthorn, cascara, and castor oil, all of which are laxatives. When taken in excessive amounts they can cause disruptions in potassium levels and also disrupt the heart. They

also cause excessive diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, and fainting, as well as death in at least 4 young women documented today.

Pennyroyal is a member of the mint family and can induce a miscarriage; women have died after using Pennyroyal to induce abortions.

Licorice root when eaten with laxatives hastens the loss of potassium which can be fatal.

Flax seed can delay the absorption of other medications.

Kava Kava can increase the effects of alcohol and some drugs for psychiatric disorders. This herb is used to help with insomnia and also to help with stress and anxiety and is used to calm the body. It is in fact a mild sedative and should not be taken a week before surgery and for several days after. This also applies to Valerian another herb used to promote sleep and relaxation.

Garlic and Ginko Biloba both increase the circulation and interfere with the clotting properties of blood and could cause severe bleeding. Needless to say you shouldn't take either of these for at least a week if you are going in for surgery. Garlic also contains sulfur anyone allergic to sulfur can die from garlic.

Echinacea promotes healing and fights infection. This herb boosts your immune system and impairs immune suppressive drugs. It can be deadly when taken before any transplant surgery. This herb also increases resistance to upper respiratory infections; however, continued use actually decreases its effects.

Ginseng taken to improve health and well being and also used to reduce stress interferes with the clotting of blood and should not be used at least a week before surgery.

St. John's Wort is used for anxiety and depression. The herb also alters the rate of metabolism of other drugs and may either increase or decrease the desired effect. The herb should not be used for at least 5 days before surgery. Anyone with an allergy to ragweed should totally avoid St. John's Wort as it could have serious or even fatal side effects. This herb can also cause skin burns in light skinned people because it contains hypersen, a photosensitizing substance that reacts with light.

Feverfew should never be taken with blood thinners or anyone with any kind of bleeding disorder. This is also true of Vitamin K and Ginko Biloba.

Fenugreek contains compounds coumarin and nicotinic acid these will effect heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar and other bodily functions. Fenugreek also when taken in very large doses will cause a breast feeding mothers milk to smell like maple syrup and in turn the baby too will begin to smell like maple syrup this can cause a misdiagnosis of 'maple syrup urine disease', a serious metabolic disorder.

This herb is also related to peanuts which are the food most likely to cause an allergy. The possibility of an allergic reaction in a baby is quite high and many cases of colic,

stomach upset and diarrhea have been reported among babies whose mothers take fenugreek.

Ginkgo Biloba should never be taken with blood thinners or anyone with any kind of bleeding disorder. This herb dilates blood vessels and improves blood flow to your brain and aids in circulation in your legs however, it can cause gastrointestinal problems, headaches and allergic skin reactions.

Lobelia also called Indian Tobacco is used in low doses as a mild stimulant and to help open airways and ease breathing. Too large a dose can cause convulsions, coma and death.

Metatonin is an hormone produced by the body is often used to help promote sleep however it causes seizures in small children.

Some of these may or may not be known to you. If you haven't researched even the most commonly used herb, then you really have no idea what you are telling your friends, family and yourself to take. Research, research and more research, know your herbs and all their drawbacks.

Uses for Rosemary: Treat Menstrual Pain and Make Homemade Rosemary Stills

Rosemary is perhaps one of the most common plants in an herb garden. It has many uses in food, most of which are used on a regular basis by some of the greatest culinary chefs. History on the other hand, claims to hold many different uses for this Mediterranean herb, most of which are forgotten today. Yet, if we look closely at older manuscripts we find some of the most unique and interesting uses for Rosemary; we find it used as a menstrual cramp pain-relieving drug.

"In ancient Greek culture the plant was harvested specifically for the women of a village during their menstrual cycle. The local 'wise-men' would administer the herb to a series of purification processes." [1] Duane Bernard states in his book, *The Science Behind Herbalism*, that with the use of modern science we can pin point that the herb holds chemicals in its essential oil, or the oil derived through distillation, that procures this unique trait. [2]

It is interesting to note that Rosemary has found its place in nearly every ancient society to cure, or at the very least ease the pain of menstrual cramping. [3] But, what about using it today? This question, which is often asked when studying ancient herbal remedies, is relatively quite simple. Rosemary, as stated before from Duane Bernard's book contains a chemical inside its essential oil that provides the comfort during a menstrual cycle. You can actually do this at home with a technique I made myself, which is cheap and easy to do. This is completely my own design that I have invented in my course of trying to distill essential oil, which I will share with you.

First, go to Lowe's or Home Depot and purchase three feet of clear tube. It can be the cheaper kind, so long as it is about a quarter inch thick. The next thing you will need an empty plastic bottle (keep the lid on it the entire time for this process). After that be sure to purchase a large size metal funnel, which can be found at a Lowes or Home Depot as well. Finally, you will need a Crockpot or a regular pot and stove. Make sure that the large part of your funnel is bigger than the pot.

First cut a hole in your plastic bottles that is large enough for your tube to fit in. Then place the tube inside, sealing it shut with super glue. Next, attach the other end of your tube to the funnel; this does not have to be a secure fit. Now, fill your pot with water to the top and place your Rosemary stems inside. Make sure that your Rosemary stems are well saturated in water. Now, crank the heat on a medium temperature and place the funnel over top of the pot. Then just sit back and watch.

You will notice that steam will begin to develop in the tube and travel into the, that means it's working. It will take some time but after an hour or so, your plastic bottle will contain the essential water and oil combined together, which contains the chemical that relieves menstrual cramping. Every forty pounds of Rosemary used will yield approximately one cup of actual oil and several gallons of essential water. To separate the oil even further simply boil the water for a while or freeze the water. Oil burns and

cools at different temperatures than water, effectively allowing you to separate it even further. Make sure that if you do this, you keep a close eye on your project.

Hopefully my time spent in the study of herbs will lend you some great advice. A random last note to make about this project is that you can use pizza dough from the super market instead of super glue to seal the tube and the bottle. I've tried this several times but have found it to be a one-time deal. If you use super glue you will have a device that will last for a long time. Thank you and enjoy!

[1] Dr. Linda Bearenschan, Herbal Remedies and Their Roots. 1982, Page 45

[2] Duane Bernard states in his book, The Science Behind Herbalism, 2002. Page 92

[3] Dr. Linda Bearenschan, Herbal Remedies and Their Roots. 1982, Page 45

Alfalfa in Traditional Herbal Medicine

Medicago Sativa in Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine & Modern Herbalism
This profile of alfalfa presents an historical look at the use of alfalfa in the major traditional healing systems. This profile of alfalfa is not intended as medical advice.

Alfalfa: An Herbal Profile

Originally native to a large area covering most of Europe and Asia, alfalfa is now cultivated around the world, mainly as a food crop for animals. But this member of the pea family also enjoys a long history as a food source for humans, too.

Known botanically as *Medicago sativa*, alfalfa's common name is a Spanish adulteration of the Arabic name, *al-fac-facah*. Though alfalfa is grown mainly as animal food, it is also prized in natural medicine for its rich vitamin content. Alfalfa is a good source of vitamins A, C, D, E, K and many of the B vitamins. Additionally, alfalfa is a rich source of protein and minerals.

In the various healing disciplines, all parts of the plant are used, including the stems, leaves, seeds and seeds. And, of course, the fresh sprouts are also used, though they're usually eaten raw.

Alfalfa in Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, alfalfa is considered a mild tonic good for purifying the blood. Alfalfa is considered to have alterative, diuretic, antipyretic and hemostatic actions.

Alfalfa is also considered a rich source of nutrients like vitamins and minerals. It is often used to treat nutritional deficiencies.

In Ayurveda, alfalfa is usually prepared as an infusion and is considered especially good for Pitta constitutions. Alfalfa is often combined with dandelion, nettles and horsetail.

Alfalfa in Traditional Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese herbology, alfalfa's roots are the part of the plant most often mentioned. Alfalfa roots (and the diuretic action they possess) are considered a remedy for heat--especially damp heat--and are prescribed for conditions like kidney stones and jaundice. Like their Ayurvedic counterparts, Chinese herbalists recognize alfalfa's nutritional potential and recommend alfalfa for conditions like night blindness.

Alfalfa in Traditional European Herbalism

Extensive cultivation of alfalfa didn't reach Europe until around the 1600s and because of this late introduction into an already full catalog of herbal medicines, alfalfa never really enjoyed widespread use as an healing herb. When it was used, alfalfa, or lucerne,

as it was known in English-speaking areas of Europe was believed to stimulate the appetite and promote weight gain. Like healers in other cultures, traditional European herbalists also used alfalfa for its diuretic properties.

Alfalfa in Native American Healing

Alfalfa came to the New World via Europe and was brought here by settlers. But alfalfa didn't see significant planting until around 1850. Consequently, alfalfa was virtually unknown as an healing plant by Native Americans. There is some evidence that the Cherokee people may have relied on alfalfa as a nutritional supplement but alfalfa probably never saw broad use in Native American medicine.

Alfalfa in Modern Herbalism

Today, alfalfa is treated with both respect and caution in modern herbalism. Modern herbalists know that alfalfa, especially its sprouts, are rich in many important nutrients. But they also know that consumption of large amounts of alfalfa seeds and sprouts is linked to very serious medical conditions like pancytopenia and systemic lupus erythematosus.

In modern herbalism, alfalfa is recommended for conditions like anemia, to stimulate weight gain and to increase appetite. Alfalfa is also sometimes used to stimulate production of breast milk and as a remedy for premenstrual problems. Additionally, alfalfa is growing in popularity as a natural cholesterol and blood sugar control.

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The Magic of Healing Herbs

Herbalism is Man's Oldest Form of Medical Care; When Someone was Sick, Practitioners Gave Them an Herb

Herbalism is man's oldest form of medical care; when someone was sick, practitioners gave them an herb. When someone was injured, they gave them balms made from fresh herbs. There is no end to the uses of fresh herbs, and in some cases, spices. Some herbs are especially good at preventing illness, and many contain vitamins and minerals essential to good health and well being. There are even herbs to help reduce mental fatigue disorder. Although I am not a doctor, I have included a list of herbs which are known to be healthy, safe, useful, and easily obtainable.

DISCLAIMER: The statements here are not approved or endorsed by the F.D.A., nor am I a doctor or medical professional. This list is not intended to diagnose or treat any medical condition or illness.

Now, with that out of the way; these herbs have been used for thousands of years, and some research does show herbs effectiveness in helping to prevent and alleviate certain symptoms of illness. It is a wonderful time we live in, where science is just beginning to open up to the natural world. Although, when all is told, probably 95% of the drugs made by pharmaceutical companies were originally derived from plants. Use the herbs below with caution, making sure that they don't react with any medication you may be taking, and that you have no allergies to them.

Basil is a wonderful antispasmodic, an appetizer, and is good for the stomach and related organs. It can be used for vomiting, stomach cramps, whooping cough, and headaches. An infusion of basil consists of 1tsp. of fresh basil to 1/2 cup of water, made like tea. Drink 1 to 1 1/2 cups of this tea a day to regulate digestion. You can also add 1/2 tsp. of fresh basil to one meal daily for the same effect.

Blackberry is an excellent astringent, good for diarrhea, chronic appendicitis and has expectorant properties. Some have been known to chew the leaves for bleeding gums. An infusion of blackberry can be made with 2tsp. of the dried leaves steeped in a 1/2 cup of water. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day to alleviate symptoms.

Chamomile is one of the most useful herbs there is. It can be used as an antispasmodic, a stomach stimulant, fever and restless children, or even a wash for open wounds. It has also been know to be used for nervous conditions, insomnia, and is very relaxing when added to bath water. A common infusion is made by adding 2tsp. dried fresh flowers to 1/2 cup of water. Take a mouthful at a time. Chamomile is also widely available in tea form.

Caraway is another wonderful herb that you can find in your local grocery store. Used as an expectorant, appetizer, and aids in digestion. It can also be used to alleviate

menstrual cramps and to calm the stomach. You can take an infusion of 3tsp. of crushed seeds in 1/2 cup of water, drinking 1/2 to a full cup a day or seeds can be added to food.

Catnip, although usually used for cats, can be found in the pet section of your local store, and can be used for human ailments. Usually used as an antispasmodic, upset stomach, colic, spasms, flatulency, and as an antacid; catnip can also be used for enema, chronic bronchitis and diarrhea. Take 1tsp. of the herb infused into 1 cup of water as a tea. The recommended dosage is 1 to 2 cups a day.

Clove is a very useful herb for toothache pain, an antiseptic, and even vomiting and nausea, when a few drops of the oil are added to water. Some also believe it to be an aphrodisiac. Use the oil, which may be found in the toothpaste section, and apply just a few drops to the affected area.

Dandelion is an old folk remedy that has been used for as long as man can remember. It has many uses as a tonic, to promote the formation of bile, to accelerate all forms of secretion and excretion, and to remove toxins from the body. Dandelion is also great for gout, stiff joints, kidney and liver problems, constipation, insomnia, gallstones and jaundice. Generally used as an infusion or tea, take 2tsp. of the dried and ground root in 1 cup of water, once a day. The leaves can also be used as a salad green, and can be found in most spring mixes.

Dill is another excellent common herb used for all types of ailments. It has been used as an antispasmodic, a calmativ, an appetite stimulant, and insomnia. Dill is also said to help promote milk flow in nursing mothers. It can be taken as an infusion of 2tsp. of seeds in 1 cup of water, or it can be added to food in 1tsp doses in one meal a day.

Echinacea is a mover and shaker in the modern herbal movement, becoming more popular every day. Used as an antiseptic, a blood purifier, eczema, and as a wash for acne and boils. Its' real strength, however, is in its' use to help fight off colds and infections. It can be found in pill form or, if you can find it, make an infusion of 1tsp. of fresh root stock to 1 cup of water. Take 1tsp. of this infusion 3 to six times a day for no more than 6 weeks at a time. Echinacea is a great way to fight off the cold and flu season because of it's' ability to boost your immune system.

Eucalyptus is another old time remedy that has been used for centuries. Used in almost all cough drops on the market, it is an excellent expectorant. Also used as a deodorant, and antiseptic wash, a stimulant, and all kinds of cold symptoms and the flu. It has also been used for bronchitis, sore throats, lung disease, and can be used as a wash on burns, wounds, and ulcers to prevent infections. The oil is usually used, and can be obtained by boiling the leaves in water and condensing it till only the oil is left. You can also breathe the vapors while steaming or apply the oil to the affected areas, such as the chest for cold symptoms.

Garlic is another herb that has exploded on to the scene in the last 30 years or so. Used for a plethora of ailments, garlic is easy to find, cheap to buy, and excellent in all kinds of food. It can be used as an antispasmodic, to help digestion, as a diuretic, helps all of

the digestive organs and helps fight intestinal worms. It has also been used for chronic bronchitis, and to fight intestinal infections. The most popular uses in the past decade or so are to help with cardiac health. Garlic is excellent for lowering blood pressure, increasing blood flow, counter acting arteriosclerosis, as a blood enema, and also helps reduce cholesterol and the risk of heart attack. For these reasons I would say that garlic is a must have in every home. One can take a half tsp. of the juice thinned with water 2 to 3 times a day, however garlic can now also be found in pill form or the crushed cloves can be added to food.

Ginger has been used by Asians for countless centuries for all kinds of stomach ailments. It is used as an appetizer, to aid in the digestion of proteins, as a stimulant and helps to cleanse the system through perspiration. Ginger is also used to ease sore throats, and help ease upset and sour stomach. Given their use of medicinal herbs, such as ginger and garlic, in their food, it is no wonder that Asians tend to be healthier than Americans. Take ginger either in an infusion of 1/2 tsp. powdered dried root stock with 1 tsp honey in 1 cup of water, or add 1 tsp. fresh ginger root to your food once daily. Ginger can also be found in a dried crystallized form that can be eaten before meals.

Licorice is another age old remedy that was later used to flavor candies. Used as an expectorant, a laxative, stomach problems, and peptic ulcers, licorice was one of the most popular medicinal herbs of colonial America. It is also an excellent remedy for bronchial problems, coughs, hoarseness, mucus congestion, bladder and kidney problems, and helps to reduce fever. Licorice can be taken as an infusion of 1tsp. rootstock to 1 cup of water once a day, or can be found in candies or lozenge form.

Marjoram can be useful as an antispasmodic, an expectorant, to aid upset stomach, indigestion, and headaches. Other uses include colic, nervous disorders, common coughs and whooping cough, as well as, respiratory complaints and as a calmative. Take an infusion of 2 to 3 tsp. of herb in 1 cup of water 1 to 2 times a day, or add 1 to 2 tsp. of the herb to your food once daily.

Mint is one of the best known and widely used herbal remedies. Used as an antispasmodic, nervousness, insomnia, coughs, migraine, nausea, hearth burn, vomiting and abdominal pains. It is also believed that mint is an aphrodisiac. It can be taken as an infusion of 2 to 3 tsp. in 1 cup of water 1 to 2 times a day, or it can found in all kinds of candies and in lozenge form.

Onion is another common kitchen item that can be used to promote health. Used as a diuretic, expectorant, and to help strengthen the heart. It is also believed to restore sexual potency, and reduce blood pressure. As with garlic, the juice can be taken in increments of 1 tsp. 3 to 4 times a day, or you can add 1/4 to 1/2 an onion to 1 meal daily.

Raspberry is another old American favorite, used as an astringent wash, a laxative, and for vomiting and nausea. This herb can also be used to help prevent miscarriage and to help reduce labor pains. Take an infusion of 1 oz. leaves to 2 cups of water once a day.

Sage was widely used by Native Americans for all sorts of ailments such as reducing perspiration, including night sweats, to help stop the flow of milk in nursing mothers, to aid in nervous conditions, trembling, vertigo, and depression. Sage can also be used as a gargle for sore throats, tonsillitis, and laryngitis. A wash can also be made from it to use on insect bites. Make an infusion of 1 tsp. leaves in a 1/2 cup of water for a total of 1 cup a day, 1tsp. at a time. Sage can also be added to food at 1/2 to 3/4 tsp. in one meal a day. Sage has also been burned and used to help cleanse and center the mind and soul.

Finally, I would suggest using honey to sweeten and flavor the infusions you may make to help with the flavor because it is natural and has some healthful properties of its' own. All of the herbs listed above are known to be safe foods to anyone not suffering from food allergies. If you experience any reaction or discomfort from any of these remedies please discontinue use and contact your physician immediately. I wish you a happy and healthy life.