

What is herbal medicine?

Herbal medicine, also called botanical medicine or phytomedicine, refers to the use of any plant's seeds, berries, roots, leaves, bark, or flowers for medicinal purposes. Long practiced outside of conventional medicine, herbalism is becoming more mainstream as up-to-date analysis and research show their value in the treatment and prevention of disease.

What is the history of herbal medicine?

The medicinal use of herbs is said to be as old as mankind itself. In early civilizations, food and medicine were linked and many plants were eaten for their health-giving properties. In ancient Egypt, the slave workers were given a daily ration of garlic to help fight off many diseases as fevers and infections which were common at that time.

The first written records of herbs and their beneficial properties were compiled by the ancient Egyptians. Records dating back to 1500BC listed medicinal herbs, including caraway and cinnamon.

In Roman times herbs such rosemary and lavender were introduced. Other cultures with a history of herbal medicine are those of the Chinese and Indians.

Hippocrates (460-377BC) - who formulated the oath taken by many graduating physicians (the Hippocratic Oath) - known as the "Father of Modern Medicine" was fond of saying "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food".

In the early 19th century, when methods of chemical analysis first became available, scientists began extracting and modifying the active ingredients from plants. Later, chemists began making their own version of plant compounds, beginning the transition from raw herbs to synthetic pharmaceuticals. Over time, the use of herbal medicines declined in favor of pharmaceuticals.

Recently, the World Health Organization estimated that 80% of people worldwide rely on herbal medicines for some aspect of their primary healthcare. In Germany, roughly 600 to 700 plant-based medicines are available and are prescribed by approximately 70% of German physicians.

What is herbal medicine good for?

Herbalists treat many conditions such as asthma, eczema, premenstrual syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, menopausal

symptoms, chronic fatigue, and irritable bowel syndrome, among others. Herbal preparations are best taken under the guidance of a trained professional. Be sure to consult with your doctor or an herbalist before self-treating.

The herbs available in most stores come in several different forms: teas, syrups, oils, liquid extracts, tinctures, and dry extracts (pills or capsules).

Teas are simply dried herbs left to soak for a few minutes in boiling water.

Syrups, made from concentrated extracts and added to sweet-tasting preparations, are frequently used for sore throats and coughs.

Oils are extracted from plants and often used as rubs for massage, either alone or as part of an ointment or cream.

Tinctures and liquid extracts are solvents (usually water, alcohol, or glycerol) that contain the active ingredients of the herbs. Tinctures are typically a 1:5 or 1:10 concentration, meaning that one part of the herbal material is prepared with five to ten parts (by weight) of the liquid. Liquid extracts are more concentrated than tinctures and are typically a 1:1 concentration.

A dry extract form is the most concentrated form of an herbal product (typically 2:1 to 8:1) and is sold as a tablet, capsule, or lozenge.

There are thousands of plants that can be used to treat many ailments, as well as trees from all over the world which provide medicine and food.

Flowers can be made into essences which can help you balance your emotions. Some plants are used for decoration only, yet help cleanse our air.

Some common herbs and their uses are discussed below:



CALENDULA

Calendula flowers are natural antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral treatment for mouth and skin infections, inflammation and ulcers (both internal and external).

As a cholagogue, Calendula/Marigold increases the flow of bile into the intestines and is thus thought to help the gallbladder and the liver, making it useful in the treatment of hepatitis. This action further helps to promote good digestion.

Europeans use Marigold in numerous medicinal compounds and cosmetics. It is said to enhance the production of collagen in the skin and fill in facial wrinkles, tone tender skin, treat sunburn and insect bites, and protect babies' sensitive skin (particularly when used for diaper rash).



Tea for the skin and good digestion

1 teaspoon Calendula

1 teaspoon Stinging Nettle

1 teaspoon Horsetail

500ml water

Pour the boiling water over the mixed tea and cover. Leave to infuse for 15-20 minutes. Strain and drink warm.



DANDELION

The leaf of the Dandelion is used for salads, soups and stir fry's, as well as in herbal teas. Is considered a high nutrient food and is primarily used to stimulate the digestion. Dandelion leaves are recommended for people with poor liver function, gallbladder or kidney stones.

The root is used for medicinal purposes as a diuretic and detoxifying purpose, and Dandelion coffee is a well known substitute for caffeine-rich coffee.

The fresh sap from the Dandelion is used as topical treatment for verrucae.

Dandelion acts as a tonic to the whole system and destroys acids in the blood. It is recognised as a great blood builder and Purifier.

Containing organic sodium it is very good for Anemia caused by a nutritive salts deficiency. It is also effective as a Liver Cleanser.



Dandelion Tea

1 teaspoon dandelion root

1 teaspoon dandelion leaves

250 ml water.

Pour the boiling water over the dandelion root and leaves and cover. Leave to infuse for 15-20 minutes. Strain and drink warm.



Dandelion Flowers – Healthy drink

2 cups fresh Dandelion flowers, rinsed in cold water, and run through the juicer with 1 to 2 carrots.

(Dandelion flowers are rich in lecithin, and lecithin helps in the metabolism in fats, so they do not accumulate within the liver of heart).

Best if drink immediately.

ST. JOHN'S WORTH



St. John's Wort has been used in herbal medicine for more than 2000 years, and mostly as a treatment for wounds. Now the herb is more popular than ever, it is one of the top selling herbal medicines, because few decades ago, scientist discovered that St John's worth is a potent antidepressant.

It is a wonderful remedy for the nervous system, relaxing tension and anxiety, and lifting the spirits -it is considered specific for emotional problems during the menopause. Its tranquilizing effect has been attributed to hypericin, which reduces blood pressure.. St.John's wort has been used to good effect for bed-wetting in children. St.John's wart is also useful for gout and arthritis.

St.John's wort has an antibacterial and antiviral action, active against TB and influenza, and is being researched for its beneficial effect in the treatment of AIDS and HIV (People who take protease inhibitors should not use this herb because the herb interferes with the action of these drugs). Its astringent and antimicrobial action is effective in the digestive tract where it can treat gastroenteritis, diarrhea and dysentery. St.John's wort is also said to heal peptic ulcers and gastritis. Used both internally and externally for rheumatic pain. The herbal oil soothes and heals burns, cuts, wounds, sores, ulcers and calms inflammation.



Calming Tea

1 teaspoon St John's wort

1 teaspoon Lemon balm

1 teaspoon Chamomile

Mix the herb well, use 1 teaspoon of herb mixture per cup of boiling water. Cover and leave to infuse for 10 – 15 minute. Strain and drink warm. Enjoy.



ALOE

Aloe is a member of the Lily family, yet it is very cactus-like in appearance. Even though there are over 240 species of Aloe there is only four recognized as having nutritional value.

The aloe leaf contains over 75 nutrients and 200 active compounds, including 20 minerals, 18 amino acids, and 12 vitamins. You only use the nutritious inner gel - not the outer rind of the leaf. Adding Aloe Vera to a smoothie or vegetable juice is one of the most nutritious drinks you can have.

Aloe has a nauseating bitter taste, rendering it unusable in cooking, but this very property protects it in the wild as animals will move on to tastier treats. It is an easy plant to grow and requires little care other than protecting it from frost.

Aloe vera plants are antibacterial and self-healing. If you cut one, it will seal itself in a matter of hours and kill all bacteria that try to invade the leaf. These antibacterial properties are also passed along to mans who consume the aloe vera gel. Aloe vera is antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal.

Aloe has played a role in healing since the dawn of history. Aloe is one of the few non narcotic plants to cause a war. When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C., he heard of a plant with amazing wound-healing powers on an island off Somalia. Intent on healing his soldiers' wounds, Alexander sent an army to seize the island and the plant, which turned out to be aloe.



Strawberry Aloe Vera Smoothie– Refreshing Drink

250 gr Strawberry

1 big leaf Aloe Vera (At first you can try taking the gel from the aloe vera leaf)

Juice of half a Lemon

1 cup Ginger or Peppermint tea

1 tablespoon Honey

1 pinch sea Salt and Cayenne pepper (optional)

Blend all ingredients in a mixer

Drink it or you can refrigerate in sealed container for later.



LEMON

The lemon has many purposes. The lemon with its citric acid quickly changes an acid condition into an alkaline one.

With its heavy fruit calcium it supplies bones, teeth, and nervous system with basic nourishment.

It contains phosphorus and one of its greatest properties is its ability to "digest" proteins when put on meat, poultry, fish, beans and eggs.

Within concepts of natural health is the principal that just as we wash the outsides of our bodies, we also need internal cleansing. Many colon, liver, and candida cleanse use lemons. They are a mild, natural way to purify the body. Even if you don't intend to do a full cleanse, lemons will help remove whatever toxins are ready to be flushed out, in a gentle, supportive way.

A great Cleansing recipe

4 whole lemons (peeled and blended)

Peel from 1 whole lemon

Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)

Blend lemons with 2 liter of water and drink it slowly throughout the day.



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Equinox Energy Balance Just Health Natural Solutions