

FOOD CRISIS

Herbal Medicine – Best practices



Nature cure at your service

Good health is everybody's concern and experience has taught us that doctors can't always help us. Although we've all heard of Herbal Medicine, not all of us really know how to properly use it and how beneficial it really is.

Nature cure is a constructive method of treatment which aims at removing the basic cause of disease through the rational use of the elements freely available in nature. It is not only a system of healing, but also a way of life, in tune with the internal vital forces or natural elements comprising the human body.

In 19th-century North America, a form of **herbalism** currently known as physiomedicalism (intended to refer to the study of healing through the use of organic substances) became the basis for therapeutic herbalism, as we know it in the United States today. This had strong elements of traditional Native American plant knowledge and rural settlers' folklore remedies.

In Europe, herbalism struggled to become reestablished on scientific grounds and remained more closely linked to plants. This form of herbalism is more correctly called "phytotherapy." In France today

all phytotherapists are qualified physicians, although herbal therapists elsewhere in Europe may have no such qualifications.

The Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Native (North and South) American cultures all have traditional systems of herbal medicine. In China and Japan the use of herbal remedies is officially promoted by a government ministry and included in national health systems. In India, herbalism is part of the ancient but still widely used system of Ayurvedic medicine. Native Americans use herbs in a spiritual sense, placing emphasis on their purifying and cleansing properties, both physically and mentally.

Among the varied approaches to medical herbalism, there is one important governing principle - that of "synergism," which maintains that the strength of the sum of the parts is greater than the strength of individual parts. Therefore, herbalists prefer to use plant parts in their entirety in their remedies, rather than trying to isolate the plant's chemically active constituents (as conventional medicine does).

They believe that the combination of each and every element of a plant forms its healing properties, and that each element has specific roles within the body outside the active ingredient itself. The combination of elements also works to prevent harmful side effects.

Harvesting plants

Most herbs are at their maximum potency just prior to the plants coming into bloom. It is best to harvest herbs in the morning just after the dew has dried off of the plants, but before the morning sun has gotten hot enough to begin evaporating any of the volatile substances out of the tender parts of the plant. You may be able to extend your period of time that you can harvest, if the plants that you are harvesting are in the shade.

The plants that you harvest must be prepared properly so that they will keep for long periods of time. It is recommended that you clean all roots, rhizomes, barks, etc. from any soil or animal debris that may have contaminated them. This may be done with water and a light bristled brush. An old tooth brush works well.

It is generally unnecessary to clean the areal parts of the majority of the plants that we harvest. Once our plants are cleaned it usually works best to chop the heavier parts of the plants apart prior to drying to that they may dry as quickly as possible. This is especially true with heavy roots, nuts, or barks. Areal parts of the plants generally may be dried intact and then chopped or ground into a powder later.

Drying in direct sun light is not recommended. The best method is to dry your plants in an area that is out of the direct sun but has free flowing air and at a higher temperature. Many people dry their plants in the attic of their garage or in a dark room that is warm. Make sure that you lay them out either on a flat tray so that they are not touching one another.

Also put them on the tray thin enough so that they have good air flow through them so that they do not mold.

The mold or mildew that might accumulate if they are too wet and clumped together will be toxic. You may also dry in an oven on the lowest setting with the door propped part way open. Some folk find that it works very well to dry in a food drier. All of these methods will work.

Storing plants

The best way to store your herbs is once they have been completely dried so that you are certain that they will not mildew or mold, in glass containers that are air tight. Herbs that are stored in dry air tight containers and are stored in a dark cool room will keep will keep for several years.

If herbs are not stored in an air tight container or are stored in direct sunlight, they will lose their potency after a short period of a few months. It is not necessary to go to the expense of buying dark amber glass. If you have some, it will be fine to use it, but it is expensive and you may simply store your herbs in jars such as canning jars or similar type glass jar that you can close tightly. All the amber is for is to keep out the light.

You can place your herbs in clear jars and put them in cupboards that have closing doors so that they are stored in the dark. It is essential that they be stored in a room that is fairly cool. It is not recommended to store your herbs in paper or plastic. The paper will allow the volatile substances to evaporate. The plastic, even though it may not allow substances to evaporate from the herbs, there is a potential for the plastic resins to contaminate the herbs that are stored in them.

If you have been storing herbs in the proper way and you are afraid that perhaps they may have lost some of their potency, maybe it has been around 3-4 years that you have been storing these things, you have the choice of either throwing them away or determining how much of their potency they may have lost and just taking a larger quantity of the herb to make up for the loss in potency.

How to prepare and use herbs

Effective herbal remedies can be prepared at home, but the dangers of self-diagnosis cannot be stressed too highly. Any unusual medical problem should be diagnosed and treated by a qualified medical herbalist, or a conventional medical doctor.

That is why it is important to prepare them correctly. Some methods are listed below.



Decoction

This is herbal tea referred to using the solid parts of plants such as the nuts, roots, rhizomes, barks, seeds and heavy stems. It takes physical action to extract the beneficial properties from these parts of the plant, hence it will take a different action than when making an infusion. To make a decoction we place the plant particles in a pan using 1 teaspoon per cup of water. Bring this to a low simmer for 10-30 minutes. Smaller particles and powders require the least

amount of time, larger particles such as shredded barks and roots require the maximum time not to exceed 30 minutes.

Infusion

Infusion is the terminology used to define an herbal tea. But it specifically refers to the parts of the plants that are used and describes a precise method of preparing those parts that will maintain their effectiveness. In making infusions we will be using the aerial or the lighter and upper parts of the plant. These parts contain volatile oils that if not prepared carefully will be damaged or destroyed.

These parts may be used in a fresh or dried form. If using a fresh form you will need to use twice as much. Place your herbs, usually 1 teaspoon per cup of water, in a cup, pour boiling water over them, cover the cup and let it steep until cool enough to drink (15-20 minutes). Sometimes we find it necessary to make infused oil. To do this, place your herbs in a high quality vegetable oil such as olive or corn oil. Place in a glass jar, cover and leave it in the sun for 10-14 days, shaking daily. The sun will cause an extraction process, and will infuse the herb into the oil.

At the end of the days you can strain and store the oil preferably in the refrigerator so it does not get rancid. You may accelerate the process by taking your glass jar containing your prospective infused oil, set it in a pan of water with the lid loose on the jar. Bring it to a low simmer maintaining this heat for approximately 2 hours.

Remove the jar, strain the infusion after it is cool and you will have accelerated greatly the process of making infused oil.

Infusional-Decoction

Sometimes you will find that it is necessary to combine the effects of the aerial part of one plant with perhaps the bark of another. In doing this you will be making an herbal preparation called an infusional-decoction.

You have two choices. You can make the infusion of the aerial parts of the first plant in one pan and in a separate pan make a decoction of the other. Then mix the two together when they are finished.

Occasionally when using this method we find that the volume of tea is too great to be consumed comfortably, so a second method is better.

The method that I use is to begin with the standard directions for a decoction. Once the decoction has been made and while it is still at the simmering temperature, remove it from the heat, place the aerial parts of the other plant into the already prepared decoction, place a cover over the container and let cool.

Salve

Take your infused oil and melt in some cocoa butter and a small portion of bees wax or paraffin. Allow it to cool and the result will be a salve. You will have to experiment with the proportions as they vary with the particular climate that you live in and your own personal preferences. You may extend the life of this product with a natural preservative known as vitamin E oil. Squeeze several vitamin E oil capsules into the salve and mix it well. This will help prevent it from becoming rancid.

Tinctures

Tinctures are made using vegetable glycerine, alcohol, and sometimes vinegar as extractors and preserving



solvents.

You will place an herb or blend of herbs into one of these three solutions. Allow it to stand for 10 days, shaking it daily. During that time an extraction has taken place and the beneficial properties of the plant have been leached into the solution and are suspended. Now strain or purify it and you have a preserved product that may be taken by drops.

The reason for using a tincture is to provide an element of ease for traveling. Proper dosages are more readily available and more convenient than when using infusions and decoctions. You can just put a few drops into your mouth and the application is finished.

They travel well in your pocket, purse or suitcase. You may also evaporate the alcohol off if this has been used, by putting your drops into a cup and pouring boiling water over it and letting it sit for about 10 minutes.

The most effective of these solvents is grain alcohol. If you are going to be using it internally make sure that it is not made with rubbing alcohol. It is typically made by home users with Vodka obtained from the liquor store. You may use vegetable glycerine, however; it does not extract as well even though it does store well.

The least desirable and effective on the list is vinegar. My preference has been to use grain alcohol for making tinctures. Tinctures may be made in a variety of strengths and manners. I will give you a suggested rule of thumb for making a tincture and you may adapt it to your own liking as you find it necessary.

For your first experiment with making a tincture take a one pint jar and put your powdered or cut and sifted plants in it. Pour grain alcohol over the top, stir it until it is thoroughly saturated, making certain that there is excess alcohol covering the herbs so that there is about one inch of clear free alcohol above the plant particles. Place a cover on it and let it stand, shaking it daily for 10 days.

You will notice that the plant particles will absorb some of the alcohol and will swell so that your one inch of free space will eventually be diminished by perhaps a half inch.

At the end of the 10 days you may strain the entire contents through a muslin cloth. You may find that you may need to wind it tightly and even do some squeezing to extract it all out and not lose any of it. It is recommended that tinctures be stored in amber dropper bottles or jars.

How do they work?

Herbs, spices, condiments, fruits and vegetables are naturally occurring gifts of nature. They have been endowed with the unique capacity to absorb inorganic substances from the earth, water, fire, air, ether, and convert them into life-giving, life-supporting vital ingredients. The human body too is a living entity, and each individual body has its own life force which sustains it. When we look for herbal remedies in natural substances, we want something which is easily assimilate.

The medicament present in these remedies is in the form of alkaloids, essential oils, enzymes, trace elements and minerals. Once absorbed they are assimilated only in the quantity needed by the body. The active ingredient is in the natural form needed to bind to a receptor site where the vital action has to take place, in order to balance the disturbed agent, host and environment equation.

There are no synthetic constituents added, as in commercial preparations, which work on the principle that a vehicle (synthetic constituent) is needed to ensure the absorption of an arbitrarily decided, fixed amount of a drug.

Modern medicine laboratory or clinical drug trials, blind and double-blind studies, determine that a certain level of the drug has

to be maintained in the body to rid it of nocuous symptoms. This by itself may initially have a beneficial effect, but sustaining pre-determined, 'scientifically' approved levels in the long run also gives rise to excess intake, drug-induced/drug dependent diseases.

So the right natural herbal remedy, taken at the first physical symptoms, manifestations or signs of disorder, helps the body's own healing mechanism. Since these are alternative natural medicine and a part of one's daily diet, excess of any kind is excreted.

Herbs should always be gathered fresh, early in the morning when their natural oils are at the maximum-herbal natural oils are highly volatile, and the steadily increasing heat of the ascending sun depletes them.

Safety Precautions with herbal medicine

Herbs may be natural, but they are powerful healing tools and can be toxic in excess. In order to gain maximum benefit from herbs, follow these tips:

- Check with your health care practitioner before using any herbal product, especially if you're taking a prescription drug. Tell your practitioner about all drugs you're taking, including nonprescription medications and vitamins. Many herbal

remedies can interact with other drugs. Make sure your health care practitioner is aware of your medical history, including allergies.

- When taking an herb, follow the instructions exactly. If you take too much of an herb or take it inappropriately, you may get no benefit from taking it-or put yourself at risk for potentially dangerous side effects.
- Never ignore symptoms you're experiencing. Contact your health care practitioner if you experience side effects of an herbal agent or if you have other health concerns that would normally require medical attention.
- Be sure to call your health care practitioner if you experience abdominal cramping, abnormal bleeding or bruising, changes in your pulse or heart rhythm; vision changes, dizziness or fainting; hair loss; hallucinations, inability to concentrate or other mental changes, hives, itching, rash, or other allergic symptoms, appetite loss, or dramatic weight loss.
- Don't use herbal agents to delay seeking more appropriate therapy. Keep in mind that herbs aren't necessarily a substitute for proven medical therapy.
- If you're a parent or other caregiver, consider each of the preceding precautions before giving herbal medicines to a child or an elderly or debilitated person. Discontinue herbs at

least 2 weeks before surgery. They can interfere with anesthesia and cause heart and blood vessel problems.

When herbal medicine is not for you

Herbal medicine is great, but there are times when you'd better stay away from it, to protect your health. Here is when:

- Avoid herbal preparations if you're pregnant or breast-feeding. Most herbs effects on the fetus are unknown. If you're a woman of childbearing age, use birth control when taking herbs.
- Don't use herbs for serious or potentially serious medical conditions, such as heart disease or bleeding disorders.
- Never let other people take your herbs or other medicine. Store herbal agents out of reach of children and pets.
- If you have questions about the herb you're taking, seek advice from a qualified health care provider. If your practitioner isn't knowledgeable about herbs, ask for a referral to someone who is.

Secret tips to heal some common diseases

Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be a very disturbing disease, but one incredible drink can get rid of it in an instance.

Buttermilk is one of the most useful home remedies in the treatment of diarrhea. Buttermilk is the residual milk left after the fat has been removed from curd by shaking. It helps overcome destructive intestinal flora. The acid in the buttermilk also struggle germs and bacteria.



Buttermilk may be taken with a bit of salt three or four times in a day for controlling this disease.

Mint juice is also helpful in the treatment of diarrhea. One teaspoon of fresh mint juice, mixed with a teaspoon each of lime juice and honey, can be given thrice daily with brilliant results in the treatment of this disease.

Turmeric has proved to be one more valuable home remedy for diarrhea. It is a very valuable intestinal antiseptic. It is also a gastric

stimulant and boost. One teaspoon of fresh turmeric rhizome juice or one teaspoon of dry rhizome powder may be taken in one cup of buttermilk or simple water.

Underweight

Musk melon is one of the most effective home remedies for thinness. If the melon cure is properly carried out, a rapid gain in weight can usually



be achieved. In this mode of treatment, only musk melons are taken three times during the day for forty days or more.

In the beginning, only three kilograms of melons are taken daily for three days. Then the quantity is increased by one kilogram daily till it is sufficient to appease the hunger. Only the sweet and fresh fruits of the best variety are used in the treatment. It would be advisable to discuss this method of treatment with your doctor.

Additionally, you can follow this method for just a week or so, before including other fruits and vegetables in your diet for variety. You

should also add plenty of avocados to your fruit platters, as this fruit contain several healthy fats.

One of the simplest ways to gain weight fast is to add a handful of crushed nuts to your meals and this method can be used by both men and women. Nuts are rich in several fats and vitamins and will help you to increase your weight in a healthy manner. You can also include crushed flax seeds in your meals as they are rich in omega fatty acids.

The mango-milk cure is also an ideal treatment for thinness. For this mode of treatment, ripe and sweet mangoes should always be selected. They should be taken thrice a day-morning, afternoon, and evening. Two medium sized mangoes should be taken first and then followed by a glass of milk.

Mango is rich in sugar but deficient in protein. On the other hand, milk is rich in protein but deficient in sugar. The deficiency of one is made up by the other. Mango thus combines very well with milk and an exclusive mango-milk diet taken for at least one month, will lead to improvement in health and vigor and gain in weight.

An exclusive milk diet for rapid gain of weight has been advocated by some nature cure practitioners. At the beginning of this mode of

treatment, the patient should fast for three days on warm water and lime juice so as to cleanse the system.

Thereafter, he should have a glass of milk every two hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the first day, a glass every hour and half the next day, and a glass every hour the third day. Then the quantity of milk should be gradually increased so as to take a glass every half an hour from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., if such a quantity can be tolerated fairly comfortably.

Figs are an excellent remedy for increasing weight in case of thinness. The high percentage of the rapidly assimilable sugar in this fruit makes it a strengthening and fattening food. Three dried figs soaked in water should be taken twice daily.

Detoxification

Many studies show that the vitamins, minerals, amino acids, chlorophyll and other substances in **chlorella**, a single-celled fresh water green algae, helps to detoxify the body. But it has been proven that it is the tough fibrous material in the outer shell that actually binds with toxins and carries them out of the body.

It is often included as part of a detox program to help remove heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium and lead, and pesticides, such as

PCB's, and dioxins that accumulate in our bodies causing many health problems.

Most manufacturers break down the thick cell wall mechanically or chemically to make it more digestible and absorbable. New technology that uses sound waves to crack the hard wall claims to be best method as it preserves the vital nutrients inside.

A few people find they get some intestinal discomfort when taking chlorella and they probably lack the enzyme cellulase that would help digest the fibrous cell wall. Cellulase can be taken as a supplement which could help if you have this problem.

Chlorella Growth Factor

There are a number of different types of chlorella but Chlorella Pyrenoidosa is considered the best for toxin absorption although it is harder to digest. Chlorella Vulgaris is higher in



Chlorella Growth Factor (CGF) but has less metal absorbing

capacity. CGF is a phytonutrient that stimulates tissue repair and healing.

Some researchers believe that aging is due to the increased breakdown of RNA and DNA, the genetic blueprint of the body. CGF contains RNA and DNA which can provide the building blocks for repair of our own genetic material.

Healing powers of Chlorophyll

Chlorella contains over 12% chlorophyll, the largest amount in any plant gram for gram. Chlorophyll is the substance that makes plants green and photosynthesis possible – the process by which plants use the energy from the sun to convert carbon dioxide and water to glucose. The chemical structure of chlorophyll is very similar to the “heme” of hemoglobin in human blood. The only difference in the two is that chlorophyll has the mineral magnesium at its center and heme has iron in its center.

From studies in Japan where the interest in chlorella has focused mainly on its detoxifying abilities it seems that the detoxification effects are due to both the chlorophyll content and the substances in the cell walls. Chlorophyll carries oxygen which rapidly improves blood oxygenation and helps cleanse the body. Its ability

to bind to and remove toxic heavy metals such as mercury makes it an extremely useful health.

Chlorella can be used as a **colon detox**. The cell wall material stimulates peristalsis, the wave like contractions of the colon, and it promotes the growth of the good intestinal bacteria.

How Much Chlorella Should I Take For Detoxification?

If you take 5 – 7 grams a day you should notice significant changes in your energy and overall health. It's best to start off with a much smaller dose and build up gradually as you could initially get mild diarrhea or bowel discomfort such as gas or bloating. Your body should adapt and you can gradually build up the dose.

Take it divided into 3 or 4 doses before meals and at bedtime. The chlorophyll will make your stools go green so if they don't you are not taking enough!

3 – 5 grams a day is a maintenance dose. You may not notice significant changes but your body should benefit from the nutrients and a slow gradual detox.

To fight disease 10 – 15 grams a day is a better amount. People fighting cancer have been known to take 20 grams a day.

Side effects from the detox of metals can be reduced by increasing the dose. The detox reactions come from the release of more toxins than the chlorella can bind so more is better not worse.

Chlorella comes in various forms from tiny tablets, capsules, powder to liquid forms often combined with other detoxifying substances. Taking the above amounts may mean taking a handful of tiny tablets.

Which chlorella should I take?

Many inferior brands of chlorella sold on the internet have been found to be contaminated with toxic metals and pesticides that seep into the water it is grown in. Be sure to find one that is guaranteed free of these pollutants.

It should be free of fillers, binders, coatings and preservatives. After all it is a natural food.

To get the best from using chlorella you should take it for 6 – 12 months and follow a good healthy diet high in fresh green vegetables, some fresh fruit, whole grains, nuts, seeds and free range grass fed meat if you are not a vegetarian.

Boost your immune system

The immune system needs to be boosted from time to time to protect us from harmful illnesses and even the common cold. You can feed your immune system and keep it strong in various natural ways. But there is one secret that beats it all.

Garlic. This flavorful member of the onion family is a powerful immune booster that stimulates the multiplication of infection-fighting white cells, boosts natural killer cell activity, and increases the efficiency of antibody production.



The immune-boosting properties of garlic seem to be due to its sulfur-containing compounds, such as allicin and sulfides. Garlic can also act as an antioxidant that reduces the build-up of free radicals in the bloodstream. Garlic may protect against cancer, though the evidence is controversial. Cultures with a garlic-rich diet have a lower incidence of intestinal cancer. Garlic may also play a part in getting rid of potential carcinogens and other toxic substances. It is also a heart-friendly food since it keeps platelets from sticking together and clogging tiny blood vessels.

Anemia

Anemia is a medical condition in which the blood has a deficiency of red blood cells or of the hemoglobin these cells need to carry oxygen. Hemoglobin in the blood is measured to determine the presence of anemia.

The symptoms of anemia include weakness, fatigue, dizziness, headaches and heart palpitations. These symptoms result from the body not getting enough oxygen through the bloodstream. In many cases, however, the symptoms are mild or unnoticed. It can become a life-threatening condition if left untreated for a long time.

The most common form of anemia is caused by iron deficiency. This can occur either through prolonged blood loss, as through heavy menstrual periods or slow bleeding ulcers or hemorrhoids. About ten percent of women in their childbearing years are anemic. Overuse of aspirin or ibuprofen can also cause internal bleeding which leads to anemia.

Other people who are at risk for anemia include smokers, alcoholics, vegetarians and people over 50. Anemia is often associated with serious illnesses, like cancer, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis. Women need to be checked for anemia throughout pregnancy as well.

An herb that proved to be successful in curing anemia is **stinging nettle**. Take 10 ml of juice every day or an infusion made with fresh herb for one week and you'll be as good as new.

The homeland of nettle is Brazil and other South American countries. It is also abundant in Northern Europe and Asia. Nettle has a well-known reputation for giving a sting when the skin touches the hairs and bristles on the leaves and stems. It grows 2 to 4 meters. It has white, green and yellow leaves.

The body's natural immunity can also be increased with **Echinacea**.

Echinacea is one of the most commonly used herbal products, but studies are mixed as to whether it can help prevent or treat colds. A meta-analysis of 14 clinical studies examining the effect of Echinacea on the incidence and duration of the common cold found that Echinacea supplements decreased the odds of getting a cold by 58%. It also shortened the duration of a cold by 1.4 days.

Herbal remedies tend to heal without suppressing symptoms, and used in the correct dosage are perfectly safe and have no side effects. Herbs are easy to find and can be used in cooking or in salads. Some, which you can grow in your garden, can be ground up and used as inhalants or to perfume a bath. Others - which are more

likely to be in your kitchen cupboard - can be added to cooking or made up into poultices and muscle rubs.

As the methods of testing the compounds contained in many natural remedies become more sophisticated, many skeptics are beginning to sit up and take notice. And as more and more of our so-called 'wonder drugs' prove only to suppress symptoms rather than get to the root cause, it is little wonder that more and more people are now looking for a healthier option for everyday complaints.

The best thing about home remedies is that they are accessible and easy to prepare. However, remember: wellness is not limited to disease treatment and prevention, but also involves maintaining a healthy diet, getting adequate sleep and exercise.