



HERBAL REMEDIES

Notes on how to use and some cautions to consider

Herbs are very versatile; we can use them as part of our everyday cooking to add flavour and aroma to meals as well as taking them as a herbal tea. They can also be used medicinally due to their wide-ranging therapeutic properties to support the body through illness and disease.

It is necessary to ensure the appropriate herb, along with the correct dose is given in order to receive its full benefits. Because this can vary from person to person we recommend being guided by a qualified herbalist. There is a standard dose stated on the labels of herbal remedies that can be purchased over the counter. Always consider starting with a lower dose and seeing how you react, then work your way up slowly.

This guide will help you along and provide suggestions on how to take herbs and precautions to consider if you are an adult, if you are on prescribed medication, for children, elderly, if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

SPEAK TO A QUALIFIED HERBALIST

If you are in any doubt or need one to one advice you can book a consultation at our clinic or for quick queries please email us on hello@clinicnaturae.com

You can also find a qualified herbal practitioner at the Association of Master Herbalists AMH here www.associationofmasterherbalists.co.uk

WHICH FORM TO USE?

You can use herbs in the form of an infusion (tea), decoction, tincture, powder (usually in capsules), creams, balms, oils or ointments. The frequency will depend upon whether you are taking it for general maintenance or for its therapeutic benefits to help ease symptoms or fight disease. Herbs can change physiology therefore need to be treated with care and respect. A herbalist will guide you but generally a dose can be from 1 to 5 times a day. For those who are sensitive, children and elderly the dose needs to be lower.

HERBAL INFUSIONS

Infusions are made up like a tea using either the flowers, leaves, berries or seeds of the plant. Place 1 teaspoon of the dried herb or 2 teaspoons of fresh herb into a teapot per cup, add boiled water, cover and steep for 5-10 minutes. Covering it allows the infusion to retain its volatile oils. Strain, then add lemon and honey to taste (optional).

HERBAL DECOCTIONS

Making up a herbal decoction is a stronger way to extract the therapeutic properties from the hardier parts of the plant such as its root, bark, berries or seeds. Take 1 teaspoon of the dried herb per cup of water and simmer in a covered pan for approximately 10-15 minutes. Leave to cool, strain then drink. You can increase the quantity as required, i.e. make 3 cups up at a time, use 3 teaspoons to 3 cups of water. This can be stored in a bottle and taken during the day. Use it within 24 hours.

HERBAL TINCTURES

A herbal tincture is a concentrated extract of a herb based in water and alcohol. Tinctures are a convenient way to take a stronger form of the herb in smaller quantities by adding just a few mls to water rather than drinking a cupful. A standard dose can vary from 1ml to 5ml, 1 to 3 times a day.

5ml = 1 teaspoon

CARE WHEN USING HERBS

Herbs can be used generally within food and as a tea but when using therapeutically to assist with any health symptom or condition then care needs to be taken. It is advised to always consult a qualified herbal practitioner in such cases and particularly during the following circumstances:



CHILDREN

Herbal remedies can be used for children and may be very effective for many ailments, often preferred over other medicines. It is, however, important to get the dosage right as some herbs may be too strong for some children and this requires professional advice. A qualified herbalist will be able to guide you to which herb is most suitable and the required dose to be used.

PREGNANCY

If you are planning on getting pregnant or are pregnant do not use herbal remedies medicinally without guidance. A number of herbs need to be checked for safety and dose before using during this time and therefore it is best to work alongside a qualified herbal practitioner.

BREAST FEEDING

If you are planning breastfeeding do not use herbal remedies medicinally without guidance. A number of herbs need to be checked for safety and dose before using during this time and therefore it is best to work alongside a qualified herbal practitioner.

ELDERLY

Our bodies change as we get older and many elderly find they can be sensitive to some herbs or the standard dose may be too strong. If any prescribed medication is being taken, then this needs further consideration of any drug-herb interactions (see taking prescribed medication below). It is therefore recommended that expert guidance by a qualified herbal practitioner is sought.

WITH PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

Many herbs can benefit and support health. However, care needs to be taken when mixing herbal remedies with prescribed medication due to drug-herb interactions. A qualified herbalist will be able to guide and assist you in making appropriate recommendations if you are on medication.

LONG TERM USE

It is not recommended to use therapeutic doses of herbal remedies for long periods of time unless prescribed and monitored by a practitioner. This is because the body may have adapted to the herb and may no longer be suitable for long-term use. Also there are some herbs that are best used for shorter durations.

HERBAL LAXATIVES (BULKING)

The following are bulking herbal laxatives. These need to be taken with plenty of fluids as they can swell and block the throat leading to choking. Avoid if you have any problems with swallowing, a throat condition or abdominal pain. May affect absorption of medications therefore take away from medication by at least 1 hour.

Linseeds/Flaxseeds *Linum usitatissimum* (seed)
Psyllium *Plantago psyllium* (husk)

HERBAL LAXATIVES (STIMULANTS)

The following laxatives stimulate the muscle walls of the intestines to work. These need to be used for short periods of time of no more than 2 weeks. They must not be used as a replacement to a balanced diet.

Avoid if diagnosed with the following bowel conditions: Crohn's, appendicitis, intestinal obstruction, abdominal pain of unknown origin, children under 12 years of age, during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Occasionally some griping pain may be experienced in the abdomen 8-12 hours after taking.

Cascara sagrada (*Rhamnus purshiana*) bark
Rhubarb root (*Rheum palmatum*) root
Senna (*Cassia angustifolia*) pods and leaf
Yellow dock (*Rumex crispus*) root