What is Herbal Medicine?

Quite simply, herbal medicine, also known as botanical medicine, is the use of plants to stimulate healing within the body. The part of the plant used for medicine depends on the specific plant you are using. For some, we can only use the root because the rest of the plant may cause toxic side effects while for others we can use almost the entire plant. Also, the way you make the medicine, in water, alcohol or oil, varies depending on if the active ingredients (constituent) are water or fat-soluble. Some plants have a specific action on one part of the body, like the digestive system, whereas some act on many different parts of the body all at the same time like Ashwagandha. The best advice I ever received was from my first botanical medicine teacher, Dr. Debra Brammer. She said it was better to learn a smaller number of plants, to know when to use them and on which part of the body they worked, rather than learn hundreds of plants.

When I say “learn about a plant”, I mean much more than just learning what part of the body it acts on. I also mean to really get to know the plant – how it grows, the best season, time of day and moon phase to harvest it, how long it takes to make medicine from it, how much to take, the best form to use it in, how to store it and which herbs to use in combination to get a synergistic effect. If you are growing your own, you want to know what kind of soil it prefers, how much light, how wet or dry the soil should be and what it grows best around. I always encourage people to start their own medicinal garden because of the energetic component of medicine! Your plants are living organisms and research has shown that things like music and interaction with plants can produce a more productive and potent plant. If growing your own medicinal plants is not a possibility, try to find someone local who is growing plants you are interested in using.

How Do Herbs Work?

As with any medication or therapy there are always two things in particular we have to keep in mind. First is how the substance works in the body. The second is how the body affects or responds to the substance. But what does this actually mean and why is it important for those of you learning to use herbs as medicine? Basically, it means that we want to always use herbs that stimulate healing without becoming toxic or damaging to the body. Let me give you an example – Senna. While there are many different kinds of Senna, there is one that is a popular ingredient (listed as Senna or Cassia) in herbal laxative formulas. The effect of the herb on the body is to stimulate your bowels to move. However, when used long-term, this herb can cause dependence. So it is never used for more than 7 days. Instead, an herbalist would use herbs that stimulate the bowels while restoring action over time, such as Burdock, Angelica or Golden Seal.

Herbs vs. conventional drugs: While many pharmaceuticals are derived from herbs, the conventional doctor will prescribe a single substance whereas the phytotherapist will prescribe a complexed formula containing many different substances. Synergy is the idea that 2 or more components together will work in a manner greater than the sum of its parts. Discussion point

There are many, many actions that herbs exhibit in the body. In fact, there is a long list, if you are interested, of all the things herbs can do. The second list has the different preparations of herbs and the third is some general vocabulary. These lists can be handy to use as you read any herb book. These terms are listed on the left and the definition on the right. I will use more comment language as I discuss each of our 25 herbs. I have also included some handy information like measurements at the end of the list.

As you can see, herbs have many different actions on the body from healing skin or any tissue they touch, decreasing pain and inflammation, stimulating (or slowing down) the digestive processes, healing the nervous system, restoring function to systems and even acting as anti-bacterials, fungals and microbials. So, how do we know what to use when? I always recommend that people with serious illness with a trained professional. But for many common ailments and concern, there is so much you can do for yourself with the wonderful and powerful knowledge of herbal medicine!

Medicinal Forms of Herbs

- Tincture / Extract / Syrup
- Compress / Poultice / Fomentation
- Capsules
- Tea / Decoction / Infusion
- Steam
- Ointment / Salve
- Oil infusion
- Liniment / Lotion
- Cream

Tincture / Extract / Syrup

- Herbal extraction usually using alcohol and water as solvents, the herb is macerated (soaked) in specific ratio (EtOH to H20) for specific time (at least two weeks), then herbs are separated out.
- This term is interchangeable with "Extract" in commerce.
- Can be 1:2 - 1:5 (w/v)
- Fluid extract is similar but is a 1:1 ratio (w/v)
- Syrup is H_2O solution in sweetener

Compress / Fomentation, Poultice

Compress / Fomentation

- Muslin, gauze or linen soaked in infusion or decoction (menstruum) and applied to skin; also called fomentation.

Poultice

- Infused, decocted, powdered, or bruised plant material which is applied directly to the skin and covered with gauze, linen, or muslin.

Capsules

- Hard or soft gelatin shells filled with finely powdered herb or specifically processed to hold liquid preparations of botanical remedies.
- Usually used for long-term internal use of an herb or when something has a strong or unpalatable taste.
- Capsules come in many different sizes and one can buy a capsule maker. https://www.herbaffair.com/capsule-filling-supplies/

Tea / Infusion / Decoction

Tea

- Water extracts
- Use time in hot or cold water to obtain active ingredients from soft, non-woody plant parts.
- 1-3 tablespoons of herb per 16 oz. of water.
- Steeped 3-10 minutes.

Infusion

- Water extracts
- Use of time in hot or cold to obtain active ingredients from soft, non-woody plant parts.
- Roughly twice as much herb as used in a tea.
- Allowed to process from 30 minutes to 10 hours.

Decoction

- Water extracts
- Use of time and HEAT to obtain mineral salts and bitter constituents tenaciously held in bark and roots.
- Is usually simmered entire time it is “decocting” and until water is reduced by half.

Steam / Inhalation

- Steam distillation to create vapors which are breathed in to relieve sinus, nasal, oral congestion, inflammation or infections.

Ointment / Salve

- Oil-Based emulsion that is immiscible with skin secretions.

Oil infusion

- Base used to extract herbal ingredients is oil as opposed to water or alcohol; aka fixed oil.

Liniment / Lotion

Liniment

- Liquid or semi-fluid **oil** preparation for application to skin usually with anodyne, sedative or stimulating effects; generally applied with friction by rubbing, compounded and prepared like tinctures.

Lotion

- Similar to liniment, except is **water** based and not applied with friction.

Cream

- Emulsion of water in oil or oil in water that is miscible with skin secretions.

Where to get the best herbs?

- Mountain Rose Herbs https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/#AID=115342&BID=674
- Monterey Bay Spice Co. http://www.herbco.com/
- Living Earth Herbs http://www.livingearthherbs.com/product-category/bulk-herbs/
- Longshadows Ranch: full disclosure that this is our place but we grow many different kinds of medicinal herbs. If we know someone is interested in some, we grow extra. longshadowsranch.net

Basic herbs everyone should have at home for cold and flu season

Unless pneumonia develops, the following herbs are usually enough for the cold and flu season. Especially when treatment is started early in the illness, proper care shortens most colds and flus.

Astragalus membranaceus (Yellow Vetch, Huang Chi)

Astragalus is an herb used in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years and has action in nearly all body systems. In the immune system, it affects several pathways of immune function. It is considered an **immunomodulator** due to its ability to enhance and strengthen immune function. It enhances NK cells and T-cell function. It even works to support normal immune function in patients during chemotherapy. In patients with repeated colds, it was shown to increase IgA and IgG and prevent recurrence. It enhances interferon activity and this is probably why it has anti-viral activity and seems to normalize immune function and reduce damage from autoimmune conditions. One of the reasons why this is such a great herb to use this time of the year is because it helps with stress, and a cold or flu stresses the body. In humans, it is used to enhance recovery, prevent infection, reduce or clear autoimmune disease symptoms, and protect against oxidative damage.

Another interesting action of Astragalus is on the cardiovascular system where it is considered a cardiac tonic. It can protect the liver, increase sperm motility, and balance flora in aging intestines. Last, but not least, it has been used in patients with chronic viral hepatitis and reduced levels of inflammation and symptoms when taken for 4 – 12 weeks.

I use it for colds, flu, aching from weather change, and feeling run down.

Use the root as a tincture, decoction or extract.

Decoction: 1 Tbsp/cup water TID
Tincture (1:5): 5 ml TID
Fluid Extract (1:2): 2 – 4 ml BID

Sambucus nigra; *Sambucus canadensis* (Black Elderberry, American Elderberry)

While elderberry is a plant you can grow, especially in Oklahoma, it can take a couple of years before the plant will yield a significant crop of flowers and berries, the most commonly used parts in medicine making. So, rather than wait to use your own, plan to purchase the berries and maybe the flowers in bulk. We are growing our own, they are in their second year and we harvested about a cup of berries!

The flowers can be made as a hot infusion to treat colds and flus. The flowers can help break up congestion so they are useful for sinusitis, allergic rhinitis, croup, conjunctivitis, tonsillitis, and other inflammatory conditions of the upper respiratory tract. They can also help reduce the pain and inflammation in joints. It will also stop a dry, irritated cough, spasmodic cough but keep in mind that stopping a cough isn't always what the body needs. The flowers should be used with caution long term.

The berries when taken at the beginning of a cold or flu as extracts and teas can shorten and lessen the illness. The famous Sambucol or Elderberry Syrup preparations are all made from the berries. They also stabilize mast cells which reduces the release of histamines and other inflammatory substances, strengthens collagen, and acts as anti-oxidants. The berries MUST be dried first, this is really important as they are toxic otherwise. The ones you buy in bulk have already been dried.

In our house and in my practice, I do not really use the flowers as homeopathic remedies work really well most of the time. But I use the berries all the time as an extract and decoction. I pair Elder with Astragalus for a synergistic effect. The rest of this plant is toxic including the bark, leaves and roots. Do not consume it. And again, the fresh berries should not be used before they are dried. Always check store-bought elderberries for mold, a sign they were not properly dried before packaging.

I use it for colds, flu, aching from weather changes, and feeling run down.

Use the flowers (short-term) or dried berries.

- Flowers: congestion of the upper respiratory tract
    - 2 – 4 Tbsp/cup TID hot
    - Cold tea/infusion – 2 – 4 Tbsp/cup TID
- Berries: everything else
    - Syrup - 1 tsp TID to 6 X day
    - Cordial – 1 tsp TID to 6 X day
    - Tincture (1:5): 1 tsp TID to QID
    - Decoction – 1 – 2 tsp/cup TID
    - Juice: Cover fresh berries with water and boil for three minutes, and then express the juice. Add one part honey to ten parts juice and boil to preserve. Drink 1 glass with water TID

Lavendula officinalis (Lavender)

While this may not be a common herb in the cold and flu medicine chest, it should be. This plant is very easy to grow, is a prolific flower producer (the part we used), and LOVES the sun. We use the flowers of this plant for medicine in many ways including as a poultice, tea and in our food! We can use it in a steam, bath or as an essential oil applied directly to the skin. Every medicine chest should have Lavender stocked in it! Because I am asked this all the time, I do not use essential oil of lavender internally. I do not use any essential oils internally except those that occur naturally within a plant.

Lavendar flowers are a pain reducer and can create and enhance a sense of well-being. It can help with insomnia, muscular pain (common in the flu and with a fever) especially when applied topically or used in a bath. It works on its own, or even better when combined with other herbs. Other actions of lavender include anti-microbial and anti-fungal in treatment of athlete's foot and tinea versicolor. To enhance the anti-fungal action, expose the treated area to sunlight for 15 – 20 minutes after applying. Lavender can also be used as a natural insecticide, in bedding, clothing, furniture and the garden.

I use lavender in colds and flus when the person is uncomfortable, aching, stressed out, in pain, on edge and just miserable.

Use the flowers.

- Infusion: 1 tsp/cup H2O X 10-15 min BID to QID
- Tincture (1:5): 1-3 ml TID
- Infused Oil: Apply topically or use in baths
- Volatile Oil: Combine with other oils for topical use, apply to cotton to inhale, or use in bath

Mentha piperita/Mentha spicata/Mentha viridis (Peppermint, Spearmint)

Mints may be one of the most prolific plant families I have ever known – a small sprig in the corner of the garden and in a year or two it really will have taken over if you don't trim it back continually. You can also keep a pot of it inside and touch the leaves to release the aroma into the air! We use the leaves of this plant in many ways and for many different things. It can be drunk as a tea, made into an extract, used as an essential oil, infused oil, in a bath, in a steam, as a compress, and a poultice. It is excellent to add to salves, liniments, creams and lotions. I have several plants for the fresh leaves, infused oil, essential oil and extract of peppermint on hand at all times.

Peppermint stimulates and relaxes. It reduces gas, cramping and bloating and is a great herb to use to treat gastroenteritis, nausea and vomiting. Some people feel that their GERD is worse from peppermint and so spearmint might be a better choice. It can even be used to help reduce the size of gallstones!

It can reduce anxiety and enhances circulation to all the extremities, including the brain. It is often applied topically as an oil to the temples and can reduce tension and the pain of a headache. It can be swished and swallowed as a tea or tincture for cold sores and cuts in the mouth and for the pain of pharyngitis. I frequently make a poultice for my patients and family for sore and aching muscles!

Bottom line, peppermint, or spearmint, should be in your herbal medicine chest.

I use this at the first sign of a cold or flu, a nice hot cup of peppermint, ginger and lemon tea.

Use the fresh or dried leaves.

- Infusion: 1 tsp/cup water, steep 10 minutes to maximize presence of essential oils, TID or more
- Tincture (1:5): 3 – 5 ml TID
- Fluid Extract (1:1): 1 – 4 ml TID
- Inhalation: 1 Tbsp/bowl of hot water or 5 drops essential oil, make a tent and inhale vapor to open and soothe nasal passages and sinuses.
- Topical: Poultice, or infused oil (3 Tbsp crushed fresh herb added to 8 oz. olive or safflower oil, cover and keep for 2 – 3 days, strain and store oil for use away from heat and light).

Allium sativum (Garlic)

Garlic is most well-known for its use in cooking and does impart medicinal value in this way. But it can be made into much more potent medicine! It protects and helps the human body deal with microbes, viruses, bacteria, fungus, and parasites. It has been used to treat dysentery due to amoebas and bacilli and the residual IBS that can result. It reduces the production of gas in the small and large intestines.

I use it in all meals, as an oxymel, as a powder additive, infused into oils, and as an extract (Kyolic). I encourage you to grow your own; just buy a few bulbs and plant them! Fresh garlic is best, never chop it up to use later or buy the chopped-up jars of garlic. The active components can oxidize quickly dramatically reducing the medicinal properties. One exception to this is in making infused oils for ear drops which we will talk about later in the series or infused into a cooking oil.

I use garlic therapeutically as an oxymel or extract if I suspect a flu. I do not typically use it with a cold, although it wouldn't hurt if you did.

The entire plant is edible but the bulb is what we use for medicine.

- Standardized: 4000 mg fresh = 10 mg alliin = 4000 mcg allicin potential
- Tincture (1:5): 60 drops TID – QID
- Fluid Extract (1:1): 20 drops TID
- Fresh Juice: 1 Tbsp BID
- Oxymel:
    - 1 bulb garlic
    - 4 cups water
    - ¼ cup raw honey
    - ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
    - Peel and finely chop or mince garlic cloves. Do not use the pre-peeled and minced garlic sold in stores as this has already begun oxidizing. Add to the water in a large pot with a cover, heat to boiling and boil until garlic is very soft, about 20 minutes. Remove from

heat and allow to cool at least 1 hour. Add the honey and vinegar, mix well. Store in the refrigerator up to 5 days. Gently reheat on the stove before drinking. ½ - 1 cup per day.

- Optional: can add 1 tablespoon finely minced fresh ginger root and the juice of ½ lemon.
- Do not use in respiratory illnesses where heat predominates.

Zingiber officinalis (Ginger)

Definitely grow your own ginger, it could not be easier! Here is a great source to guide you through it: http://www.tropicalpermaculture.com/growing-ginger.html. Why? Because the fresh root has more activity than dried and because the gingerols (active ingredients) convert to less active shogaols or zingerone during storage.

One of the ways we use ginger as herbal medicine is as a tonic digestive stimulant. It increases the secretion of saliva that triggers the release of HCl and other digestive enzymes. It also increases gastric motility and reduces intestinal spasms. It will decrease gas and nervous diarrhea. It has well-documented action in reducing nausea, especially the nausea of flu, pregnancy, motion sickness and secondary to medication or post-operatively. It is known to reduce ulcer formation. A lesser known effect of ginger is as a pain reducer! It can reduce the pain of PMS, headache, muscles and joints, and inflammation of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and sprain/strain injuries. It is excellent for the immune system and can act as an anti-microbial against bacteria like Salmonella typhi, Vibrio cholerae, Tricophyton violaceum and Trichomonas vaginalis.

Many native cultures around the world serve ginger after every meal, use ginger tea as a beverage and create syrups which contain ginger for colds and flus. Until you have your own to harvest, pick some ginger root up at your local organic market and store it in the freezer. Grate it fresh when you are ready to use it – which could be in almost every meal you make!

I use ginger every day as an herb in cooking, in tea, in an oxymel, and as a dried concentrate. And, it is always on the bed tray when someone is under the weather.

Use the root of this plant.

- Infusion: 3 - 5 g fresh grated herb per cup water
- Decoction: 1-3 g dried herb per cup water; 3-5 g fresh root per cup water
- Dried Herb: 1-10 g in divided dose (begin lower dose and gradually increase)
- Zingiber beer, wine, vinegar recipes available in King's American Dispensatory

Withania somnifera (Ashwagandha)

This very restorative and adaptogenic herb is often used for people who are debilitated from either acute or chronic illness. It can reduce inflammation of all kinds, calm anxiety and helps restore normal sleep patterns. It will directly increase white blood cell (neutrophil) counts. It is also antibacterial, anti-tumor and can protect the liver from toxic substance damage. While it is at times used for acute illness,

it usually takes 4 – 6 weeks to see an effect and is frequently prescribed long-term for immune system regeneration. For debilitated people, it is often combined with stimulating herbs like Ginger or Cayenne.

I typically use this at the tail end of a cold or flu for a couple of weeks. If someone is really depleted, I would use it for a couple of months. I prefer to use this herb as a tincture or extract.

We use the root.

- Decoction: 3-6 g per day/2 –3 cups water
- Tincture (1:5): 15-25 ml per day
- Fluid Extract (1:2): 6-12 ml per day

Guidelines for using herbs with children and when pregnant

Children

There are many, many herbs that can be used quite safely with children. In fact, most (not all) herbs that are safe for adults can also be considered safe for children as long as the proper dose is used. One very important thing to consider is if they have never used the herb, be sure they are not going to react in an allergic way. There are a few ways to test for this including giving them a tiny bit of the herb and waiting for 24 hours to see if there is a reaction. The other is to make a weak tea or solution of the herb and rub it on their inner arm and watch for a reaction. This does not work so well for an herb that might be an irritant but is still a method used quite frequently.

There is a great article from the Herbal Academy on the use of herbs with children: https://theherbalacademy.com/choosing-safe-herbs-for-your-kids.

Here is the general list of kid-safe herbs:

Nettle (Urtica dioica), dry/cook before using
Oat straw (Avena sativa)
Raspberry (Rubus idaeus)
Alfalfa (Medicago sativa)
Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)
Seaweeds
Marshmallow (Althaea officinalis)
Rose hips (Rosa species)
Violet (Viola odorata)
Chamomile (Matricaria chamomilla)
Lemon balm (Melissa officinalis)
Spearmint (Mentha spicata)
Rose petals (Rosa species)
Lavender (Lavandula species)
Catnip (Nepeta cataria)
Elder flower & berry (Sambucus nigra)
Violet & pansy (Viola species)
Anise seeds (Pimpinella anisum)
Cinnamon (Cinnamomum cassia)
Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)
Garlic (Allium sativum)
Marshmallow (Althaea officinalis)
Slippery Elm (Ulmus rubra)

Pregnant

There are many herbs that cannot be used by expecting women. Some cannot be used throughout pregnancy, some not during the first trimester and some not during the last trimester. Some herbs can cause spontaneous abortion, some birth defects and others early labor. There may be some herbs that have not been reported to cause a problem but because of the known action of their constituents are considered potentially unsafe.

Most mainstream OB docs will not know which herbs can and cannot be used. It is best to consult with an herbalist, Naturopathic Doctor or midwife (trained in herbalism) before using any substance, natural or not, when pregnant.

This is a list of herbs that are known to be contraindicated in pregnancy. However, just because an herb is not listed here does not automatically make it safe! We have new discoveries all the time in medicine. So, please work with someone qualified to guide your choices.

The following lists are offered with appreciation to Bastyr University in Kenmore WA:

Medicinal Herbs Contraindicated in the 1st Trimester of Pregnancy

Angelica spp
Arctium lappa
Arctostaph uva ursi
Artemesia vulgaris
Barosma betulina
Calendula officinale
Cimicifuga racemosa
Commiphora molmol
Dioscorea spp (wild yam)
Ephedra vugaris
Humulus lupulus (hops)
Hyssopinus officinalis
Levisticum officinalis
Marrubium vugare
Matricaria chamomilla
Medicago sativa (alfalfa)
Mentha piperita
Mitchella repens
Passiflora incarnata Plantago spp (plantain)
Prunus serotinat
Prunus virginianat
Silybum marianum (milk thistle)
Thymus vulgaris (thyme)
Verbena officinalis

Herbs Contraindicated Throughout Pregnancy

Achillea millefolium
Acorus calumun
Agave americanca (agave)
Aletris farinose
Aloe barbadensis (aloe)
Anemone pulsatilla
Areca catechut
Aristolochi clematis
Arnica montanap
Artemesia absinthium
Asclepius tuberosa
Berberis vulgaris (barberry)
Cofffea arabicat (coffee)
Cannabis sativa (marijuana)
Capsella bursa
Cassia angustilfolia, senna
Caulophyllum thalictroides
Cephalis ipecachuana
Chelidonium jmajus
Cinchona ledgerianst
Cinnamomum camphor (camphor)
Cimicifuga racemosa
Citrullus colocinthus
Claviceps purpurs
Colchicum autumnalet
Conium maculatump (poison hemlock)
Croton tiglium
Dryopteris felix-mas
Equisetum arvense (horsetail)
Erythoxylon cocat (cocaine)
Ferula asafetida
Gelsemium sempervirens
Glycyrrhiza glabra (Licorice)
Gossypium berbaceum
Heracleum lavatum
Hibiscus rosa-sinensis
Helleborus niger
Hydrastis canadensis
Hydrocotyle asiatica
Hypericum perfoliatum
Jateeorhiza palmate
Juniperus communis
Lavendula officinalis
Ledum palustre
Leonorus cardiaca
Lomatium dissectum
Melissa officinalis
Menispermum canadensis
Mentha pulegium
Nicotiana tabacumt
Panax ginseng
Papaver somniferum
Petroselinum sativa (parsley seed)
Peyote
Phytolacca americana
Pilocarpus jaborandit
Pinus palustrus
Podophyllum peltatumt
Polygala senega
Polyganum aviculares
Pulsatilla pratensis
Ranunculus acris

Rauwolfia serpentinat
Rhamnus purshianus (buckthorn, cascara)
Rheum palmatum
Rhus glabra (sumac, berry)
Ricinis communist (castor bean oil)
Ruta graveolens (rue)
Salvia officinalis (sage)
Sanguinaria canadensis
Santalum album (sandalwood)
Sarothamnus scoparius
Sassafras albicum
Senecio vugarist
Symphlocarpus foetida
Tanacetum parthenium
Tanacetum vulgare (tansy)
Thuja occidentalis
Trillium pendulum
Turnera sp. (damiana)
Tussilago farfara
Veratrumt sp. (hellebore)
Veronicastrum virgicum
Vinca rosat (periwinkle)

Also, here is a list of herbs considered generally safe in pregnancy, after the first trimester. But again, please work with someone trained to advise you on this.

Herbs That Can Be Used In Moderation in Pregnancy

This list refers to plants that may be used in moderation in pregnancy. Essential oils should be avoided.

Althea officinalis (marshmallow root)
Balotta nigra (black horehound)
Dioscorea villosa (wild yam root)
Echinacea species
Gallium aparine (cleavers)
Matricaria chamomilla (german chamomile)
Mentha piperita (peppermint)
Pimpinella aniusm (anise)
Urtica diocia (nettle)
Viburnum opulus (cramp bark)
Viburnum prunifolium (black haw)
Zea mays (corn silk)

Herbs to Be Used with Caution in Pregnancy

This list refers to plants that may be used occasionally as mildly flavored beverages, teas, seasonings, or as food. Extracts (i.e. tinctures) of all of these plants, even in small doses should be avoided.

Allium sativa (garlic)
Allium cepa (onion)
Apium graveolens (celery)
Armoracia lapathifolia (horseradish)
Artemesia dracunuclus (tarragon)
Beta vulgaris (beet)
Brassica spp. (broccoli, cabbage)
Capsicum fructescens (cayenne)
Caryophyllus aromaticus (clove)
Carica papaya (papaya)
Cichorum intybus (chicory)
Cinnamomum zeylanicam (cinnamon)
Crocus sativa (saffron)
Daucus carota (carrot)
Equisetum arvense (horsetail)
Ferula asafetida (asafetida)
Foenicumlum vulgare (fennel)
Mentha spicata (spearmint)
Myristica fragrans (nutmeg)
Nasturtium officinalis (watercress)
Ocymum basilicum (basil)
Oreganum vulgaris (oregano)
Oreganum magorana (marjoram)
Petroselinum sativa (parsley)
Piper nigra (black pepper)
Prunus persica (peach seed)
Rosemarium officinalis (rosemary)
Satureua hortensis (savory)
Silybum (marianum (milk thistle)
Thymus vulgaris (thyme)
Trigonellum foenumgraecum (fenugreek)
Ulmus fulva (slippery elm)
Zingiber officinale (ginger)
Mitchella repens (sqaw vine) – 3rd trimester only
Rubus idaeus (red raspberry)
Trifolium pratense (red clover)
Zingiber offinale (ginger)

Dosing guidelines

One of the most important things to remember about using herbal medicine is that they are most effective when the levels of the herb are present in the body. And how often one doses is dependent on if you are using the herb for something acute or for long-term effects. For example – many folks come to me saying they have tried Echinacea when sick but it did not seem to do anything. When I ask them how they were dosing, they say a couple of times a day. Of course, that doesn't work! They should have been dosing every 3 hours or so. That is for an acute. For general health, 1-2 times a day will work.

The amount of herbal medicine needed also differs depending on the herb, the person, the condition and the age. There are some herbs that have a very narrow dosing range, meaning the amount you use is very important and more is not necessarily better as too much could be toxic. Some herbs, like Elderberry, are very difficult to overdose on, but why use more than is needed?

The best guidance I can give you on how much and how frequently to dose is to ask you to do your research. There are a number of websites where you can look up an herb and see the label instructions. If you are looking to use the herb long-term for general health, you can likely follow the label dosing exactly. If it is more for an acute situation and you find no warnings about limiting the dose, then doubling or tripling the dose may be what is needed. The books I have listed as resources can guide you to some degree as well.

For dosing children, read this article https://theherbalacademy.com/choosing-safe-herbs-for- your-kids/ and adjust dosages accordingly. The following is taken from that article:

Clark's Rule: based on the weight of the child and assumes that the adult dosage is for a 150-pound adult. Take the weight of your child and divide it by 150. For example, if your child weighs 38 pounds you would divide 38 by 150 (38/150 = .253 or ¼) so your child would take ¼ of the adult dosage.

Young's rule: based on the child's age. To use, add 12 to the child's age and divide the child's age by this number. Here is an example for a 6-year-old child: 6+12 = 18, then 6/18 = .3 which is 1/3 of the adult dosage.

I always encourage people with little ones to be sure you have a qualified practitioner as part of your healthcare team.

Building your home herbal medicine chest

Well – this is what this course was all about! See week 1: "7 basic herbs everyone should have at home" to start out your herbal medicine chest. These include the following herbs: Aloe, Calendula, Elderberry, Lavender, Peppermint, Garlic and Ginger. Then slowly build on it until you have all the herbs I have discussed in this series. Below in resources, you will find links to purchase herbs while you wait to harvest the herbs you have planted!

Supplies and things to keep on hand for medicine-making

In addition to the following list of items, I would suggest a notebook to write down your own recipes and notes on the herbal preparations you make. Of course, your favorite books on herbal medicine and a safe spot in the kitchen to keep your medicines while they are brewing.

Herbs ☺	Beeswax	Amber dropper bottles
Pot w/lid	Vitamin E drops	Amber jars
Glass measuring cup – 2 cup	Variety of essential oils	Strainer
Vodka	Funnel	Mortar and pestle
Cheesecloth	Labels	Timer
Candy thermometer	Mason jars, of various sizes	Stirring spoons

Final thoughts

Herbal medicine is one of the many treasures of Mother Earth. I truly believe that all we need is available right at our fingertips. There is a rhythm to life, to health and once we become part of that flow of energy we open ourselves to the abundance of knowledge offered by our teachers and mentors, of today and from all time. Have fun making medicine!

Resources

Herbal Medicine Making Supplies

- Living Awareness: http://livingawareness.com/medicine-making-resources/
  (Note: She also sells herbs and essential oils, but I prefer Mountain Rose Herbs)
- Mountain Rose Herbs https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/#AID=115342&BID=674
- Best Deal Nutrition http://www.bestdealnutrition.com/herbal%20medicine%20accesories.htm
- Capsule Maker https://www.herbaffair.com/capsule-filling-supplies/

Herbs

- Monterey Bay Spice Co. http://www.herbco.com/
- Mountain Rose Herbs https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/#AID=115342&BID=674
- Living Earth Herbs http://www.livingearthherbs.com/product-category/bulk-herbs/

Seeds

- Strictly Medicinal Seeds https://www.strictlymedicinalseeds.com/

Books

- Green, James. 2000. *The herbal medicine-makers' handbook: a home manual*. Freedom, Calif: The Crossing Press.
- Jacobs, Betty E. M., and Betty E. M. Jacobs. 1981. *Growing & using herbs successfully*. Charlotte, Vt: Garden Way Pub.
- Royal, Penny C. 1982. *Herbally yours*. Payson, Utah: Sound Nutrition.
- Williams, Jude. 1992. *Jude's herbal home remedies: natural health, beauty & home-care secrets*. St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.: Llewellyn Publications.
- Murray, Michael T. 1995. *The healing power of herbs: the enlightened person's guide to the wonders of medicinal plants*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Pub.
- Ody, Penelope. 1993. *The complete medicinal herbal*. London: Dorling Kindersley.
- Reader's Digest Association. 1986. *Magic and medicine of plants*. Pleasantville, N.Y.: Reader's Digest Association.
- Mills, Simon, and Kerry Bone. 2000. *Principles and practice of phytotherapy: modern herbal medicine*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.
- Van Wyk: Medicinal Plants of the World
- Simon Mills: Out of the earth : the essential book of herbal medicine
- David Hoffman: The complete illustrated holistic herbal : a safe and practical guide to making and using herbal remedies
- Rosemary Gladstar's Family Herbal: A Guide to Living Life with Energy, Health, and Vitality

Organic Herb Gardening http://www.herbgardeningtips.com/

Edible Flower Guide: http://whatscookingamerica.net/EdibleFlowers/EdibleFlowersMain.htm