

HERBAL MEDICINE A BOON OF NATURE

📌 In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, there's been a lot of interest in ways to strengthen one's immune system



📌 Dr. Reenu Yadav

What is herbal medicine?

Herbal medicine involves the use of natural and biologically based practices, interventions, and products to treat a variety of physical or emotional conditions. The World Health Organization estimates that 80% of the world's population, or about 4 billion people, currently use herbal medicine for some of their health care. In the past 10 years, the use of high dose vitamins has grown over 130% and the use of herbal supplements has grown over 380%.

Herbal remedies have been used for huge number of years like conventional medicine. In fact, herbal medicine is the establishment of modern medicine. This medicine also has very less herbal side effects. Tragically, herbal medicine usually takes a backseat when compared with conventional drug therapy, which is a shame since herbal remedies offer lots of health benefits. In today's world, Herbal medicine most part used to treating intense and constant sicknesses. Herbal medicines have been in use for many centuries. Here are a few merits and demerits of herbal medicines. Today, people around the globe are giving preference to alternative medicines such as Ayurveda, naturopathy, homeopathy and herbal medicine. It is worth mentioning that these natural and alternative medicines were used thousands of years ago. For almost 5000 years, herbal medicine was used for treating various ailments. Today, it has been developed as a separate industry as many

Dr. Reenu Yadav, Dean & Professor, Researcher, international speaker, Social worker or a beauty queen, What defines her best? She is blessed with the right blend of beauty, glamour, style, talent & intellect, coming to inspire people around her. She believes being optimist and humble is the mantra of her success & life. According to her – “Being a crown winner or a beauty queen brings about a role of service & a sense of responsibility in her” and inspiration. She is a role model as of today is women. Dr. Yadav with her attractive qualities & magnifying persona impresses others & serving as a role model above all she proves “Women are the largest pool of talent in this World.”

people favour herbal medicine over synthetic medicine. However, many of the herbal medicines and remedies do not have negative side effects. If any, they are softer than allopathic medicine. Herbal medicine can be effectively used for body's natural detoxification process. The herbs such as rhubarb juice powder, aloe vera, alfalfa juice, chlorella, carrot concentrate and garlic can be used to cleanse the colon, improve digestion and food absorption and boost your immune system. Some digestive disorders such as colitis, indigestion, peptic ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome can be cured using the herbs. Herbal medicine which includes herbs such as ginger, capsicum, garlic and motherwort help to control the ailments related to blood circulation such as high blood pressure, varicose ulcers and so on.

What are the benefits?

- More affordable than conventional medicine
- Easier to obtain than prescription medicine
- Stabilizes hormones and metabolism
- Natural healing
- Strength in immune system
- Fewer side effects
- cost effective

What are the risks?

Many herbal preparations may have benefits. Others may have no obvious or proven benefit, and some, in fact, can be harmful. For most of the over-the-counter herbs you can buy, there is probably little risk of having a bad reaction if you follow the directions. For example, you might drink a cup of peppermint tea to settle your stomach. At worst, it can help your upset stomach; at best, it can taste nice, warm you up, and not have any negative side effects! Anything that can improve health or do the body good also has the potential to do harm. Just because something is 'natural' doesn't mean it's better for you. It doesn't mean that it's always safe. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates and insures the safety of prescription medicines, does not test herbs. It does not study

their safety, benefits, or the effects of their short- and long-term use. In addition, there are no regulations or standards for preparing or packaging of herbal medicines, so their dosages and strengths may not be consistent. Just because one brand of St. John's Wort seems to have an effect for you does not mean the next bottle will have the same effect.

You are especially likely to have a bad reaction or a dangerous complication if you combine herbal supplements with these prescription medications, so be careful.

Natural Medicine Vs. Allopathic Medicine

Allopathic Medicine: often referred to as modern medicine. This type of medicine is highly specialized (you can go to a GP or to an ophthalmologist, gastroenterologist, oncologist, etc...) and works with the use of medications to tackle symptoms. Research is essential.

Natural Medicine: is the occidental pendant of Chinese Medicine, using natural ways to improve one's person daily life. Natural medicine also has its specialized practitioners: naturopaths are the equivalent of GPs, and then you have herbologists, acupuncturists, sofrologists, etc.

Allopathic medicine is amazing: it is backed up with



a lot of serious scientific research and a lot of tools to diagnose diseases. As a matter of fact, life expectancy hasn't stopped growing since modern medicine is practiced. However, it seems like allopathic practitioners focus their efforts on the management and deletion of symptoms instead of finding the core cause of the illness or discomfort. Moreover, they tend to consider one system at a time, not considering that the body works as a whole and that a cause can affect any part of the body. For example, NSAIDs reduce pain but they also inhibit prostaglandins' secretions, which decrease levels of mucous in our body linings (mucous is essential for removing unwanted particles in the air we inhale and to protect the gastro-intestinal tract from digestive juice erosion). Another example is chemotherapy which kills not only the bad, but also the good cells.

Natural medicine is amazing as well. It considers the body as a whole (holistic approach) and takes into account not only the symptoms, but also one's environment and behaviour to make a diagnosis. Yet, naturopathic base their diagnosis and prescriptions on actual medical facts. Giving one person's condition, they will prescribe all sorts of natural remedies (herbal medicine, diet, lifestyle, acupuncture, hygiene, relaxation, etc.), the aim being to cure not only the symptoms, but the real cause of a condition. Therefore naturopathy is amazing to prevent aging and diseases and improve people's daily life. That's why we call them "health educators" and not doctors. However, when facing an emergency situation, naturopathy can't do much. For example, if someone falls into coma, it is absolutely necessary to call for an ambulance so that the patient can go to a hospital.

Herbals used during COVID-19

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, there's been a lot of interest in ways to strengthen one's immune system, and thus build a first line of defence against the deadly virus. There are however, many natural ingredients know to help boost your immunity. Since ancient times, herbs and spices were well known for their medicinal properties, with over 80 spices grown in different parts of the world,



particularly in Asia. India is home to several spices that are used extensively in traditional medicine. Here's a list of herbs and spices that can help improve immunity:

Holy Basil. The leaves of this easily available plant are rich in phytonutrients (such as antioxidants, flavanol) chlorophyll, vitamins, and minerals, as well as Eugenol, a bioactive compound that has anti-microbial, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties and reduces stress and plasma glucose levels.

Ginger is well known for its anti-inflammatory, antifungal, and anti-cancer properties. In traditional medicine, ginger has been extensively used for curing colds and coughs, nausea, asthma, travel sickness, morning sickness, arthritis, gastrointestinal complaints and even depression.

Fenugreek is a well-known herb in the Ayurvedic system of medicine which acts a natural anti-oxidant and strengthens immune system. It is not only used as an herb (dried or fresh leaves), spice(seeds), vegetable (fresh leaves) but also as a condiment in artificial flavoring of maple syrup or in the production of steroids.

Garlic has potent anti-oxidant properties, and helps in reducing stress and high blood pressure. It also helps to enhance thiamine (vitamin B1) absorption in the body and prevents beriberi.

Turmeric contains a bioactive compound known as curcumin, which acts as an anti-inflammatory agent. Commonly used in India for curries and other

dishes., it can also be consumed as a decoction (kadha) made from grated ginger, tulsi and turmeric once daily to improve immunity as recommended by AYUSH.

Efficacy and Safety of Herbal Medicines

Herbal Medicine Is Drug, Not Food. Herbal medicine originated from nature and belongs to green therapy and has no toxin or adverse effect and people can take it in the long term and so forth. These sayings are slogans of the advocates which have misled people with less medical knowledge. On one hand, it will lead to many severe adverse events by misusing herbal medicine; on the other hand, it will cause people's panic and anxiety due to some adverse events reports. We should clearly recognize that herbal medicinal products are widely considered to be of lower risk compared with synthetic drugs; they are not completely free from the possibility of toxicity or adverse effects. *The Relative Property of Herbal Medicine Safety.* As the Chinese saying goes, "all medicines have their own side effects"; that is, medicine is a double-blade sword: it can cure disease or maintain health, while it may also cause damage to human body. All effective drugs may produce adverse drug reactions; herbal medicines are no exception.

Herb-Drug Interaction. All herbal medicines are

complex mixtures of more than one active ingredient. Multitude of active ingredients will increase the possibilities of interactions between herbal medicines and conventional drugs. Moreover, users of medicinal herbs are usually suffering from chronic conditions for which they are likely to take prescribed drugs concomitantly. This, in turn, further increases the potential of herb-drug interaction.

A regulatory framework for herbal medicines can provide greater assurance to consumers. However, the regulation and specification of herbal medicines vary significantly different countries. Herbal medicines were managed as food supplement, functional food, health products, or drugs, which caused differential standards and chaotic market. In order to ensure the quality and safety of herbal medicines, the World Health Organization should propose global unified planning, which includes global management standards and quality standards, radical source of herbs, seed and seedling breeding, planting, harvesting and storage, rational proceeding, manufacture, and quality standards. Moreover, safety guarantee system comprised rational clinical practice and risk monitoring should be established to improve the safety of herbal medicine and to play more important role in maintaining human health.

