

Herbal Options

by Caroline Smith

Cold season is here and it is important to know there are other options to heal yourself than the traditional over the counter medicines. Processed medicines do not leave the system as quick and leave a residue that the body must cleanse. Herbs on the other hand are from the land, the trees and plants, fruits and vegetables and can be utilized and disposed of efficiently by the body.

In the book *Herbally Yours*, by Penny C. Royal she lays out all the different herbal remedies for the various ailments that you might be experiencing. It is easy to follow and well organized. The herbs can be picked up loose as roots and steeped in teas. This is referred to as a decoction. You use 1 tbsp of the cut herb or root and boil gently in 1 cup of water for 30 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes and then drink.

If it is in liquid form it is usually the extraction of herbs in vinegar or alcohol. This is referred to as a tincture and is usually in a bottle with a dropper top. Apple cider vinegar is all right for most herbal tinctures. If the herb is oily or sticky, Everclear Brand 190 Proof alcohol can be used successfully.

A fomentation is a cloth wrung out of hot infusion or decoction and applied to the affected area. This is usually not as effective as a poultice. A poultice is a moist, herb pack applied locally. If you are using the fresh herb, you will need to crush and bruise it. Mix the herb in mineral water to form a thick paste. Spread onto a clean cloth and cover the affected area. Leave on for several hours. Always use fresh poultice, never re-heat or reuse.

One other method you might use the herbs is in an infusion. This is a tea made from the leaves and blossoms. Use 1 tsp of the powdered herb. Bring one cup of water to boil and remove from the heat. Add the herb, cover and steep for 10 minutes.

Herbs can be very powerful and quick in the healing process. They are usually available in health food stores in bulk and you pay for them by the weight. Usually you do not need a tremendous amount. Whole Foods would probably be a good place to start locally. If you are not sure ask the staff person who works in the herb section or read the bottles of various cold or stress remedies and see what combination they have put together. There are premade capsules put out by various companies, one being ZAND which are very effective and save you the trouble of setting the herb yourself. You pay for the packaging and label though. An option is to buy empty gel caps and fill them with your own blend of herb powders.

Some common extracts are:

- ◆ Black Walnut extract - applied topically for Ring worm, Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and other skin problems. Taken internally for Parasites.

- ◆ Ginseng extract - rapidly assimilated and easy to take. Especially good for senility, longevity, energy, and memory.
- ◆ Licorice extract - used for a quick pick me up for those individuals who have Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).
- ◆ Lobelia extract - the most relaxing herb. Used in water for small children and applied to the body to help relax.
- ◆ Combination "C" extract - Chickweed, Black Cohosh, Golden Seal, Lobelia Skullcap, Brigham Tea, Licorice - helps to fight infection in the body. Can be taken internally for sore throat.
- ◆ Combination "DQ" - Don Quai, Royal Jelly - Don Quai is the "Queen of the Female Herbs" Royal Jelly is taken from the "Queen Bee". Very beneficial for skin problems related to hormone imbalance in females.

Common herbs and possible uses: Recognize that these are main uses and that there are a wide variety of other possibilities. I have also selected ones which might relate to some of the problems I have heard as common complaints from athletes.

- Alfalfa: allergies, arthritis, blood purifier, morning sickness, pituitary gland.
- Aloe Vera: burns, constipation, wounds
- Bayberry: hay fever, mucous membrane, sinus congestion, wounds
- Bee Pollen: allergies, asthma, energy, hay fever
- Black Cohosh: circulation, hormones (female), hot flashes, menopause, menstruation
- Blessed Thistle: female problems, hormones (female), lactation, menstrual cramps
- Blue Cohosh: childbirth, cramps, menstruation
- Brigham Tea: blood purifier, sinus congestion
- Chamomile: appetite, parasites, nervous disorders
- Cayenne: bleeding, energy, heart stimulant, sore throat, ulcers
- Chaparral: acne, arthritis, blood purifier, cancer, tumors
- Cramp Bark: cramps, menstruation
- Dandelion: anemia, blood purifier, blood pressure (low), gall bladder, hypoglycemia, skin problems, water retention
- Don Quai: hormones (female), hot flashes
- Echinacea: fever, infection, lymph glands
- Eyebright: allergies, eye ailments
- Ginseng: asthma, endurance, hormones (balance), longevity, sex stimulant, vitality
- Golden Seal: circulation, diabetes, hemorrhage, infection, nosebleed, pancreas, sinus congestion sore throat
- Hawthorn: arteriosclerosis, energy, heart, hypoglycemia
- Horseradish: appetite, asthma, digestive disorders, hypoglycemia, sinus congestion
- Licorice: cough, endurance, hoarseness, hypoglycemia, sore throat, vitality
- Pleurisy Root: bronchitis, lungs, pleurisy, pneumonia
- Psyllium: colitis, colon, constipation
- Rose Hips: infection, colds