



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHERE DOES DISEASE COME FROM?

Herbal practitioners believe that a primary cause of disease is the presence of unhealthy elements in your lifestyle. A poor diet, too much stress, lack of exercise, and uneducated behavior such as smoking put your body in what herbalists call a state of toxemia. The important thing to remember is that you are in control – these are all habits that you yourself have the power to change.

Modern medicine is not so far off in its current explanation of where disease comes from. Scientific studies found linking diets high in fat to heart disease and cancer, high levels of stress and anger to increased risk of heart attacks and smoking to lung cancer. But a major difference is that modern medicine, in contrast to herbalism and other alternative approaches, continues to focus on alleviating symptoms rather than preventing disease.

WHY DO PEOPLE TRY HERBAL THERAPY?

One reason, says Robert McCaleb, president of the Herb Research Foundation, a research and education organization in Boulder, Colorado, is that they are searching for self-care and disease prevention techniques in a time of soaring health care costs. "To people who are in good health, herbal remedies offer opportunities for staying well," McCaleb says.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM HERBAL REMEDIES?

The price we pay for the affluence and plenty of contemporary life is a constant barrage of potentially dangerous chemicals both in the food we eat and the air we breath. Additives, preservatives, insecticides, toxic waste, many types of pollutants, and nuclear debris are all new to this century. Our modern pace of life, with tremendous stress and pressure; inadequate exercise, recreation and rest; overly processed and hastily consumed food; and a lack of time for peaceful reflection leaves us all in a less than optimal state of health. Many herbalists would see none of us as especially healthy. They would say we all could benefit from herbal treatment.

WHY IS A HERBAL PROGRAM A GOOD IDEA?

Many herbal formulae will promote elimination. Why? Removal or excretion of waste materials is central to herbal practice. We are awash in the sea of toxins, both internal waste material, and in the external environment, food additives, pollutants, radiation, and so on. Modern medicine can attest to the disease-producing potential of these chemicals.

DO ALL HERBS PERFORM THE SAME FUNCTION?

Various herbs have their own strengths. Some are believed to cleanse the blood, while others cleanse the lymphatic system. Still others are believed to be general cleansers that will eliminate toxins by whatever appears to be the most efficient route.

WHY USE HERBAL FORMULATIONS/COMBINATIONS?

A herbal formulation/combination will affect a variety of physiological processes to maximize the body's natural healing powers. Typically, the herbal formulation will help to increase digestion and absorption of nutrients, aid in the elimination of toxic materials, and provoke a gentle heating or cooling as required by the illness being treated. The strategy formed as the basis for most herbal medicine is simply to help the body help itself.

WILL HERBS ALWAYS BE EFFECTIVE?

Like most remedies, herbs may not always be effective, and you may decide to call the doctor after an unsuccessful trial of herbal therapy for mild, non-threatening symptoms. Never feel embarrassed to do so, and always tell your doctor exactly what herbs you have been taking and their effects.

It is important to have your physician aware that you are using herbs. Make every attempt to find a doctor with a favorable attitude toward herbal therapies. At a minimum you must expect open-mindedness.

SHOULD I TAKE HERBS ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS?

While the notion of taking herbs when you are feeling well is not widely accepted in scientific medicine, it has a strong theoretical basis in more ancient medical settings. Often the scientific physician views health simply as the absence of disease. Herbalists view health as a continuum.

While the impotent, dull couch potato and the vigorous, engaging bon vivant may both be described as healthy, that is free from disease, there is certainly great disparity in their degree of wellness. The herbalist feels that with the proper prescription of invigorating plants, you can move toward your point of maximal wellness.