



OPTIONS CENTER HEALTH TOPIC



DO HERBS REALLY WORK?

The term *herb* refers to a plant used for medicinal purposes. The medicinal benefits of herbs have been known for centuries. Man has always been dependent on herbs. The healing properties of herbs have not changed through the centuries - what was a healing herb a few hundred years ago is still a healing herb today. Many of the benefits of herbs are not so much based on scientific study but rather on the consistent observations made by practitioners through the centuries.

In China, herbal therapy is the most important traditional treatment method today. We are now seeing an increased acceptance and popularity of herbal use in Western countries. The recognition of their worth is widely increasing as many people seek greater understanding of their body and mind and thereby assume more responsibility for their own health and well being. Herbal medicines have soared in popularity. People are looking for safe, effective and time-proven medicine.

While herbs are usually milder than synthetic drugs and have fewer side effects, they are neither completely safe nor poisonous. Some are even dangerous if taken improperly or for extended periods of time. Most problems stem from overuse and misuse. Herbs, when properly used, are safe, gentle and effective. Herbs should be treated like other medicines in that it is important to follow the recommended dosages.

Choosing the Right Herb

Herbs include leaves, bark, berries, roots, gums, seeds, stems and flowers. They can also be found in the form of tablets, capsules, liquid beverages, bark pieces, powders, tinctures, fluid extracts, creams, lotions, salves, and oils.

Your basic safeguard is to look for the word "**standardized**" on the label. Labels on a standardized product state the content of active constituents versus drug concentration ratio, assuring a consistent dose. Standardized products in any form are your best bet.

The next thing to look for is how fresh the herb is. The fresher the herb, the better. Light, moisture and air rob herbs of their effectiveness. Tinctures are another good choice, which does a good job in preserving the plant. Capsules made from freeze-dried herbs are superior to air-dried herbs. Skip the loose herbs sold in bulk; they are likely to have lost all their medicinal properties.

Helen Cox has over twenty years experience using herbs in her practice at Options Center. If you have questions about any herbs, please feel free to email or call Helen at the address or phone number below.

Information from MediHerb and Standard Process literature.

OPTIONS ALSO OFFERS YOU

- ✓ Herbal supplements for prevention and wellness
- ✓ Hair Analysis and Functional Tests to help determine what herbs are best for you