

FAQ's

Contributed by Administrator
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Q. How do herbal medicines differ from normal medicines?

A: Herbal medicines are medicines whose active ingredients are taken from plants. All or any constituent of the plant may be used depending on its 'medicinal activity'. Sometimes the plant itself is included in the medicine, e.g. Senna leaf, or it may just be an extract e.g. steeping the leaf in water and using the resultant liquor. The active ingredients of 'normal' medicines tend to be chemicals produced in a chemical plant.

Q. Are herbal medicines real medicines?

A: The answer is 'yes' - they can prevent or cure medical conditions (illnesses) or relieve the symptoms which is the definition of a medicine. Both British and European law support herbal medicines as an effective and viable contribution to healthcare. There are many herbal remedies on the market but not all have a product licence - they may or may not be effective. Always consult a trained Herbalist. Herbalists have now been accepted by the government for Statutory Regulation.

Q. Are herbal medicines available on prescription, if so which ones?

A. Yes. Your GP can prescribe a herbal medicine in exactly the same way as a pharmaceutical drug, and your pharmacist will supply the product in the normal manner. More and more GP's are prescribing herbal medicines now; they know that while these treatments are effective they are often gentler on the patient, particularly where the medicine may be taken over a long period of time.

Q. Does it work?

Herbal medicine is the oldest form of medicine and records go back over thousands of years. Many modern medicines used by orthodox medicine have their origins from plants.

Herbal medicines are generally safer with fewer side effects. Herbal medicine practiced by herbalists today, draws on this historical knowledge and combines modern research being carried out on herbs to make our treatment strategies even safer and more effective.

Q. What are the Medicines?

Herbal medicines can be dispensed in a number of different ways. Herbalists make their medicines uniquely for each patient so every patient will take away a different medicine.

Typical medicines will consist of a tincture, that is, a liquid herbal extract that the herbalist will blend from a number of herbs chosen for that person. As well as tinctures, your herbal medicine may consist of teas, creams, pills or a host of other types of preparations. The most important thing here is that, a qualified herbalist does not rely on ready-made over-the-counter mixtures, but makes the medicine for each individual's own needs.

Q. Is it safe?

Natural is not necessarily the same as safe. Foxglove used to be used as a medicinal plant, but used incorrectly it can be fatal. Herbalists do not use foxglove but instead other herbs do the same job safely. In fact, today, the use of foxglove is illegal.

Qualified herbalists are trained to consider the safety of herbs when prescribing. When preparing your prescription, herbalists consider your own unique health circumstances, any drugs you are currently being prescribed plus all the latest safety data on the herbs in your prescription. The level of training and consideration given to our patients means that medical herbalists have an excellent safety record.

NB. If in doubt about any herbal medicine, always consult a qualified Medical Herbalist.

Q. What about herbal quality?

Herbal medicine quality and safety are linked. My herbs are sourced from highly ethical and rigorously tested sources in accordance with good medicinal practice. Herbal quality is really important to me and I source my herbs from fully licensed Herbal Suppliers that have been supplying herbs since before I qualified. I qualified 21 years ago.

Q. Can I self prescribe?

Yes you can but there are special considerations to make with self-medication. The variety of ready-made and branded herbal medicines can be confusing and quality can be extremely variable. Beware of brands that seem to deliver ever-cheaper products, it is cheap for a reason. Herbalists source their medicines for quality, cheap is not good.

Self-prescribing can also be difficult if your health situation is complicated or orthodox treatments are being used at the same time. Herbalists are trained to take this into account and prescribe safely.

If in doubt about any herbal medicine, always consult a qualified Medical Herbalist.

Q. Is Herbal Medicine the same as Homeopathy?

No. Both therapies use herbs in their remedies but the approach to healing is very different. Homeopathy uses highly diluted solutions of the remedy to retain their energy and they use that retained energy to effect change. Herbal Medicine uses all of the extract of the herb which contains active plant constituents which effect the body. The broad range of chemicals in the herbal remedy work together to do this effecting the body, balancing, reducing or stimulating functions to effect change and hence help the body to heal or return to normal function. The herbalist's skill is in selecting the appropriate herb for each individual.

Q: Are they safe?

A: In the hands of a qualified practitioner who is trained in correct prescribing, the herbs are safe, and are always well within maximum dosages as set by the training body. If there are any contra-indications, these are taken into account during the consultation.

Q: What conditions can herbal medicine treat?

A: Health Concerns that Herbs can Treat:

- Heart and circulatory problems: angina, high blood pressure, varicose veins etc.
- Respiratory disorders: chest infections and breathing difficulties, tonsillitis and influenza, childhood infections.
- Digestive disorders: peptic ulcers, colitis, I.B.S. and indigestion, bloating etc.
- Gynaecological disorders: premenstrual syndrome, period problems, menopause, fibroids, endometriosis, P.C.O.S, conception difficulties.
- Musculoskeletal Problems: Arthritis, Rheumatism, Fibromyalgia and muscular problems etc.
- Nervous System problems : Stress, anxiety, depression, migraines and insomnia etc
- Allergic responses : Hives and hay fever.
- Skin problems: acne, psoriasis, eczema urticaria etc, Plus a whole host of others.

Q: What about the quality of the herbs?

A: The herbs are all from reputable U.K suppliers that have been in business for over twenty years. The herbs are organically grown where possible, or wild crafted carefully, and pesticides are not used. Threatened plant species are not on the list, or they are grown in a sustainable way. Organic herbs carry the U.K Soil Association seal of approval. Creams do not contain chemical parabens as preservatives.

Q: Can I take herbal medicine when I am medication from my doctor?

A: Any possible interaction between drugs and herbs will be taken into account by the fully trained herbalist and it may be that some herbs would be avoided in certain cases. It is recommended to take pharmaceutical medication and herbal medication at least 25-30 minutes apart, to avoid conflict of the constituents in the stomach. Liquid herbal preparations

are quickly absorbed, so better taken before any other medication and usually in a little water.