

HERBAL TRANSITIONS



A Herbal Newsletter From Wise Acres Farm

Herbal Transitions E-Zine: Reprint for www.herbaltransitions.com email list

Varicose Veins & Hemorrhoids

by Sharol Tilgner, N.D.

DEFINITION OF VARICOSITIES

Varicosities are enlarged, twisted, swollen veins which may be located anywhere in the body. Most commonly they are found on the legs (varicose veins) or on the anus (hemorrhoids). They may lack symptoms or may cause aching, a feeling of heaviness or pain. Edema may be associated with them as well as coloration over the area and ulceration. Women are affected 4 times more than men. When varicose veins are near the surface they are cosmetically unappealing but are usually not dangerous. Deeper varicose veins of the leg are serious and can lead to thrombophlebitis, pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction and stroke.

ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY OF VEINS

The blood is pumped around the body in vessels called arteries and veins. The arteries carry oxygenated blood away from the heart to the body's tissues while the veins carry deoxygenated blood from the tissues back to the heart. The blood is under more pressure as it flows away from the heart than it is when it returns to the heart. It is quite easy for the arterial blood to move towards the legs since it is assisted by both the pumping action of the

heart and the pull of gravity. The blood returning from the legs by way of the venous system has less force behind its flow and is additionally faced with the feat of overcoming gravity. Because of this, the venous system has valves in it to assist the blood in its movement towards the heart. The valves are like unidirectional swinging doors attached on opposite sides of the vein that open solely in the direction of the heart. This allows the blood to progress forward while creating a tight seal blocking the reverse blood flow. Nature has also provided the venous system with the assistance of powerful leg muscles and the contractions of these strong muscles actually massage the blood back towards the heart.

Individuals who stand or sit for a long period of time in one position are not using this muscular pump to aid the flow of blood, causing an increase of venous blood to remain in the veins of the legs. If this excess venous pressure is maintained for prolonged periods of time, the veins can become over-stretched which prevents the valves from reaching each other to make a tight seal. When this happens, there is nothing to keep the blood from flowing backwards through the open valve. Incompetent valves will allow more blood to build up in the veins of the legs, causing the veins to

stretch even further with eventual valve destruction. Incompetent or destroyed valves lead to bulbous protrusions of the veins, especially in the lower leg. These protrusions are known as *varicose veins*. If the individual with varicose veins stands for more than a few minutes, the venous and capillary pressure inside these bulging veins becomes very high and fluid leaks from the capillary blood into the tissues, causing edema (fluid retention in the tissues). The edema prevents adequate diffusion of nutritional materials from the blood to the muscle and skin which causes pain and weakness in the muscles. The skin may become gangrenous and ulcerated. Luckily, most people do not reach this stage of ulceration. Indeed, no one ever should if they take preventative measures.

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Genetic predisposition, chronic constipation, tight clothing, sedentariness or lack of exercise, pregnancy, obesity and aging all contribute.

Sedentariness: Standing in one place for extended periods or sitting for long periods of time can cause venous pooling in the lower legs since the flow of blood is not being assisted by the muscular pump. In addition, the weight of your legs pressing your veins against the chair can impede the flow of blood and crossing your legs while sitting will add to the problem.

Tight clothing: Constrictive clothing can block the flow of blood in the venous system adding to the venous distention.

Chronic constipation: This can lead to hemorrhoids although it can also be a factor in varicose veins of the legs and groin area. While most veins have valves to prevent back flow of blood, the veins

extending from the anus to the liver lack them. Gravity imposes a constant burden and any abdominal pressure makes it worse. Straining during the lifting of a heavy object, coughing or straining at stool can cause pressure build up in the rectal area. Since chronic constipation causes straining at stool, it can lead to hemorrhoids.

Liver dysfunction: The rectal veins lead to the portal vein of the liver via the mesenteric vein; liver dysfunction can cause a blockage in the flow of blood from the rectal veins to the portal vein which, in turn, can cause a back flow with possible venous distention. Since hemorrhoids often accompany sluggish livers, it is common in oriental medicine and naturopathic medicine to treat the liver while treating an individual with varicosities.

Pregnancy: Pregnant women are often plagued by varicose veins, edema and hemorrhoids since the woman's legs are bearing greater weight than ever before. At later stages of pregnancy, there also can be compression of veins, depending on the position of the fetus. Her blood volume will increase by 30-40% placing an added stress on her veins and there is an increase in the hormone, progesterone, which will slow down her gastrointestinal tract, thereby leading to constipation. Decreased exercise will also add to the problem.

PREVENTION OF VARICOSITIES & TREATMENT

To assist the body's circulation, **exercise** is vital. Aerobic exercise such as walking, running, bike riding, or cross country skiing would be best, but a brisk 20 minute walk daily is a simple and easy exercise.

Diet is also important. Eat simple nourishing meals. Keep your bowels regulated by the food you eat. A diet with 65-70% complex carbohydrates, 15-20% protein and 15% oil is necessary for optimal health. Include a daily minimum of one serving of green leafy vegetables and two uncooked fruits or vegetables.

Vitamins and minerals: The following nutrients are known to be beneficial to the structure and integrity of the blood vessels. It is best to get nutrients from food and use supplements as a last resort.

Herbal Transitions
Published by Wise Acres™ Farm
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Pleasant Hill, Oregon 97455
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www.wiseacresfarm.com
www.herbaltransitions.com
541-736-0164

Foods high in that particular nutrient are listed below.

Vitamin A (10,000 IU)

Liver, Carrots, dandelion greens, spinach, parsley, plantain, nettles, your basic green foods and yellow-orange vegetables, liver.

Vitamin B complex (10-100 mg)

Yeast, grains, organ meats, nuts, legumes.

Vitamin C (500-3,000 mg) to bowel tolerance is best.

Currants, broccoli, rose hips, berries, fruit in general, parsley, brussel sprouts, green veggies.

Vitamin E (200-600 IU)

Extra virgin olive oil, leafy greens and watercress, nuts in general, egg yolks, wheat germ.

Zinc (15-30 mg)

Oysters, whole grains, brewer's yeast, spinach, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds.

Bromelain (500-750 mg TID at 1,500 MCU)

Best to use a supplement.

Flavonoids (100-1000 mg mixed flavonoids)

Fruits high in flavonoids are cherries, blueberries, hawthorne berries (and other berries which are blue-red), Saint John's wort, Calendula, lemons, oranges and rosehips. The flavonoids in these foods reduce capillary fragility and increase the integrity of the venous walls. Rutin, hesperidin and quercetin are examples of flavonoids.

Other foods which aid the circulatory system are okra, oats, beets, artichokes, wheat germ, green leafy vegetables, raw garlic, onions and foods high in lecithin, such as soybeans. These last three are good to eat daily as they help regain and retain elasticity in the blood vessels.

CONSTIPATION

Fiber, Fiber, and more Fiber

Remember that little saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away?" It applies in the case of hemorrhoids.

Psyllium seeds

1 teaspoon seeds in 1/2 cup water, let sit 15 minutes, ~~drink and follow with~~ one cup water.

Use a few times per day or as often as necessary.

Can also use Pectin, Guar gum, Slippery elm, etc.

Warm lemon water

Drink a cup in the morning before breakfast.

Ginger tea

Drink one cup warm water with 1 teaspoon ginger before bed.

Laxatives (should always be a last resort)

For herbs to really get the bowels going: Yellow dock (milder), Oregon grape, Rhubarb, Cascara, Buckthorn, Senna, Aloe. Most bitter herbs will stimulate the bowels to move.

Hot baths, hot water bottles and abdominal massage can also relieve constipation.

FIRST AID FOR HEMORRHOIDS AND VARICOSE VEINS

Baking soda

Can be applied externally, wet or dry, to take the itch away. It may burn or feel hot for a short time.

Grated raw potatoes or apples

Can be applied to ease swelling and pain.

Witch hazel, Oak bark or other astringent herbs

Can be applied to reduce swelling, pain, and curb bleeding.

Red rose petals

Can be made into a poultice and applied to reduce swelling and bleeding. It is astringent & Vulnerary.

An herbal sitz bath

Use one of each of the following:

1. An astringent herb such as witch hazel, yarrow, oak bark, or geranium.
2. A vulnerary herb such as calendula, rose petals, or plantain.

Apple cider vinegar

Can also be used as a wash to ease the pain of varicosities.

Poultices, fomentations, suppositories

Use astringent and vulnerary herbs.

MORE TIDBITS OF ADVICE

Varicose Veins of the Leg

Support Stockings

Go all the way up to the hips, raise legs high for 10 minutes prior to putting them on.

Leg Massage

A 5-10 minute daily massage, working with the flow of blood, will improve circulation.

Inverted yoga postures

The head stand, plow or shoulder stand.

Cold morning bath (For all varicosities.)

Vigorously rub your entire body with a cold wet towel, then a dry one, to improve circulation.

Sitz baths for hemorrhoids

Hot and cold alternating sitz baths. Sit in a pan of hot water for 3 minutes, then a cold pan for 30 seconds. The water needs to cover your entire pelvic area. Do this for 10-20 minutes, 3 times per day. Always end with the cold treatment.

TO BE AVOIDED

Obesity, tight clothing, crossing legs, sitting or standing for long periods, high heeled shoes (they do not allow full natural contraction of leg muscles), knee high stockings, constipating food, lifting heavy objects incorrectly and straining at the toilet.

HERBS FOR VARICOSITIES**External applications**

The following herbs can be used as poultices, sitz baths, oils, suppositories or fomentations.

Witch hazel, Geranium, Oak bark, Yarrow

These plants are largely effective because of their astringent action which causes tissue constriction, including the veins. See astringent herbs below.

Saint John's wort, Calendula, Ruta, Arnica

These herbs support normal venous tissue integrity and are anti-inflammatory.

Comfrey, Slippery elm, Plantain

These plants are mucilaginous and have a demulcent effect thereby soothing and healing irritated tissues. All three of these plants are well known for their ability to speed the healing process when applied to irritated tissue.

Butcher's broom

Ruscogenins in this plant have been shown to inhibit inflammation and induce venous constriction.

Internal applications (detailed descriptions of

these herbs follow this list)

Stone root, Butcher's broom, Cinnamon, Gotu kola, Witch hazel, Geranium, Oak bark, Yarrow, Saint John's wort, Calendula, Horse chestnut, Liver herbs (see below), Cayenne, Garlic, Onion, Ginger.

Internal Herbs For Varicosities

Butcher's broom - Ruscus aculeatus in the Liliaceae or Lily family

Part used: root

Taste/smell: soapy taste

Dosage: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 5-30 drops 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-3 times per day in a little water.

Use: Anti-inflammatory, vasoconstrictor, anti-hemorrhagic. Butcher's broom acts upon the venous system and is used for varicosities, especially hemorrhoids. It causes the swelling of hemorrhoidal varices to go down and has a tonic effect on the rectal blood vessels.

Constituents: Contains ruscogenin and neoruscogenin which have been shown to have anti-inflammatory and vasoconstrictive activities.

Contraindications: Information not available.

Gotu kola - Centella asiatica in the Umbelliferae or Parsley family

Part used: whole plant

Taste/Smell: spicy, fragrant

Dosage: 1 tablespoon per cup water (infused) or 20-60 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Anti-inflammatory, diuretic, laxative, vulnerary, antiseptic, circulatory stimulant, increases endurance and energy. Ingestion helps prevent scarring. Gotu kola is used externally and internally to accelerate the healing time in wounds and ulcers. It is also used for sluggish digestion, to improve memory, high blood pressure, abscesses, rheumatism, fever, ulcers, leprosy, general skin eruptions, varicose veins, nervous disorders and jaundice. It has a calming and supportive effect on the nervous system. Centella normalizes the metabolism of connective tissue and enhances connective tissue by stimulating glycosaminoglycan synthesis without promoting excessive collagen synthesis.

Horse chestnut - Aesculus hippocastanum in the Hippocastanaceae family

Part used: ripe chestnut and bark

Taste/Smell: bitter, slightly pungent

Dosage: 1-5 drops of 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-3 times per day in a little water.

Use: It is astringent, improves vascular resistance and reduces pathologically induced capillary wall permeability.

Constituents: It contains aescin which is anti-exudative, anti-edematous, anti-inflammatory and decreases capillary permeability (apparently due to inhibition of lysosomal enzymes).

Contraindications: **This herb should only be used under the supervision of a qualified health care practitioner.** An overdose of this herb may cause the following symptoms or side effects: nausea, vomiting, inflamed membranes, diarrhea, weakness, dizziness, uncoordination, paralysis, increased temperature, strabismus, vertigo, amblyopia, torticollis, mental stupor, coma. Also depression, nervous twitching, hemolysis, mydriasis, fever, possibly elation, death due to respiratory paralysis. The ingestion of a few nuts can cause severe problems and, in children, may cause death. Not to be used during pregnancy.

Stone root - Collinsonia canadensis in the Lamiaceae or Mint family

Part used: root

Taste/smell: astringent

Dosage: 1-2 teaspoons herb per cup water (decocted) or 20-60 drops of 1:4 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Alterative, diuretic, astringent, stimulates and tones the alimentary mucous membranes, suitable for atonic conditions. Vaso-contracting to the portal system so is indicated for pelvic/rectal congestion secondary to portal back-pressure and venous stasis. Used for gastro-enteritis with diarrhea, hemorrhoids and laryngeal inflammation. Stone root causes emesis if the aerial parts are used, but the root has long been used for hemorrhoids, specifically in patients with hard dry stools.

Cayenne, Garlic and Ginger are used for their fibrinolytic quality. (Fibrin and fat are deposited in

tissue near varicose veins which cause the skin to become hard and lumpy.) These herbs also decrease the risk of thrombus formation in thrombophlebitis.

Astringent Herbs

Astringent herbs are used externally and internally to constrict dilated varicose veins. Other data on these herbs is listed below.

Agrimony - Agrimonia spp. in the Rosaceae or Rose family

Part used: aerial parts

Taste/smell: slightly bitter, astringent

Dosage: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup water (infused) or 10-40 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 3 times per day in a little water.

Use: Diuretic, astringent, stimulating gastrointestinal tonic. It is also used for hepatic atony, enuresis or urinary incontinence due to atony.

Bayberry - Myrica cerifera in the Myricaceae or Wax Myrtle Family

Part used: bark

Taste/smell: astringent

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 1-30 drops of 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-3 times per day in a little water.

Use: Astringent, styptic, tonifying for atonic tissues with discharges due to over-relaxation. Used for passive hemorrhages, ulceration of the mucous membranes and digestive tract, venous atony and congestion.

Contraindications: The wax on young branches can be irritating and there are constituents in the wax which are reported to be carcinogenic. Contraindicated in pregnancy.

Cinnamon - Cinnamomum spp. in the Lauraceae family

Part used: inner bark

Taste/Smell: pungent, aromatic, sweet

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (infused 25 minutes) or 10-60 drops of 1:4 dry liquid extract or 1-5 drops essential oil—the larger doses are used for hemostatic effects. Do not use these larger doses repetitively.

Use: Astringent, aromatic stimulant, carminative,

hemostatic, antiseptic, flavoring, antibacterial, antifungal, gastrointestinal tonic and warming herb. Also used for passive pulmonary, gastric, intestinal and renal bleeding. It stimulates and then depresses the nervous system, corrects nausea and vomiting, and is used in small amounts for digestive irritation.
Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy and for those allergic to cinnamon.

Geranium - Geranium maculatum in the Geranium or Geraniaceae family

Part used: root

Taste/Smell: astringent

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 10-60 drops 1:3.5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Use: Used as a styptic and for atonic tissues with discharges due to over-relaxation, passive hemorrhages, ulceration of the mucous membranes and digestive tract, venous atony and congestion. This herb's astringency makes it useful in any instance where there are abundant and debilitating discharges.

Constituents: Contains gallic acid, tannic acid, gum, pectin, starch, resin. Tannin is highest in spring roots collected prior to flowering.

White oak (other oaks can be used) - Quercus alba in the Fagaceae or Oak family

Part used: bark

Taste/smell: astringent

Dosage: 1-2 teaspoons per cup water (decocted) or 10-60 drops of 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Used as an astringent, styptic, for mucous membrane irritation, passive hemorrhages and for venous laxity and congestion, such as bleeding hemorrhoids and other varicosities.

Contraindications: Contraindicated for external use with extensive skin surface damage. Strong, full baths contraindicated in cardiac insufficiency stages III and IV (NYHA), febrile infectious disorders and weeping eczema over a large area.

Witch Hazel - Hamamelis virginiana in the Hamamelidaceae family

Part used: bark

Taste/smell: astringent

Dosage: 1-2 teaspoons per cup water (decocted) or 10-60 drops of 1:4 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Used as an astringent, styptic, for passive hemorrhages, wounds and local inflammations. Used for venous laxity and congestion, such as hemorrhoids and other varicosities.

Contraindications: In sensitive individuals, irritation of the stomach may occur. In rare cases, witch hazel's tannins may cause liver damage.

Yarrow - Achillea millefolium in the Asteraceae or Aster family

Part used: flowers, leaves

Taste/smell: Bitter, aromatic, pungent

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (infused) or 10-30 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Yarrow is a bitter tonic, antiseptic, styptic, stimulating diaphoretic, anti-inflammatory and anodyne. It is used for atonic and relaxed tissues where there is free discharge or massive bleeding of bright red blood, and for diarrhea. Also used for bleeding hemorrhoids, excessive menstrual flow and vaginitis.

Constituents: Contains achilletin and achilleine (hemostatic), beta iso-thujone, coumarin, chamazulene, apigenin and steroidal B-sitosterol.

Contraindications: Beta iso-thujone can cause vomiting, stomach and intestinal cramps, retention of urine and in serious cases, renal damage, vertigo, tremors and convulsions. Beta iso-thujone is alcohol soluble so aqueous extracts contain less of it. Allergic contact dermatitis can occur with external use of yarrow on sensitive individuals. Discontinue external use if a rash occurs. Contraindicated in pregnancy.

Laxatives

Hemorrhoids and various other types of varicosities are often related to constipation. The type of laxative needed depends on the type of constipation. Constipation that is associated with hemorrhoids is usually due to lack of fiber in the diet. Using mucilaginous herbs will supply water soluble fiber to the persons diet. If this does not work, adding a mild irritant laxative, or if necessary a stronger

irritant laxative may be necessary. In some cases constipation can have other causes, but we will not go into that here. The following herbs act as bulk laxatives or irritant laxatives.

Bulking Laxatives

Slippery elm - *Ulmus spp. (rubra, fulva)* in the Ulmaceae or Elm family

Part used: inner bark

Taste/smell: a little like maple syrup without the sweetness, astringent, mucilaginous

Dosage: 1 tablespoon powdered herb per cup water mixed into a slurry.

Use: A mucilaginous demulcent, diuretic, and anti-inflammatory. Used for soothing mucous membrane irritation in the gastrointestinal tract, respiratory tract and urinary tract. Used internally for inflamed respiratory tract disorders, inflammation of the mouth, throat, stomach, intestines, bladder, urethra. Used externally for wounds, burns, ulcers, and all skin disorders with inflammation.

Psyllium - *Plantago arenaria /ovata/asiatica* in the Plantaginaceae or Plantain family

Part used: seed

Taste/smell: mucilaginous, bland, no noticeable smell

Dosage: 1-2 teaspoons are soaked in a cup of water. Drink and follow by a second cup of water. If constipated, drink 2 glasses of water after taking the herb.

Use: Used to soothe gastrointestinal mucosa, as a demulcent, bulking agent, used for both constipation and diarrhea.

Contraindications: Contraindicated in bowel obstruction. It is important to take adequate liquid with these seeds.

Flax seed - *Linum usitatissimum* in the Linaceae family

Part used: seed

Taste/smell: mucilaginous, oily

Dosage: 1 tablespoon crushed seeds per cup cold water, let sit until partially dissolved, then drink. Follow with a second cup of water. Externally, used as a poultice by powdering the herb and adding

enough water to make a paste.

Use: Mucilaginous, bulking and lubricating agent used in chronic constipation and also used in the treatment of many chronic diseases, such as arthritis and psoriasis. Because it is high in omega-3 fatty acids, it can be used in the prevention of arteriosclerosis.

Contraindications: Take with plenty of liquid. Contraindicated in bowel obstruction.

Stimulating or Irritant Laxatives

Aloe - *Aloe barbadensis* listed as being in the Aloaceae or Asphodelaceae family—formerly in the Liliaceae family (there seems to be some confusion about its current placement)—various species of Aloe can be used

Part used: See information below

Taste/smell: whole leaf is bitter, mucilage alone is pleasant tasting

Dosage: Whole aloe - small doses (1-2 drops liquid extract or a smidgen of powder) have a stimulating action on the digestive tract to enhance digestion, large doses cause a laxative effect.

Use: The bitter yellow sap beneath the skin contains the anthraquinone, barbaloin, and is used in chronic constipation with bowel atony. It is used as a laxative, an emmenagogue, cholagogue, choleric and stomachic. Remember, you want the whole plant or at least the area with the bitter yellow latex for these actions. Chronic use can cause loss of electrolytes, especially potassium. The inner mucilaginous part of the plant is anti-inflammatory and acts as a vulnerary. It is used to heal burns, cuts, abrasions, gastric ulcers, etc., and has been used successfully in the treatment of diabetes and high cholesterol. A substance found in Aloe, Aloctin A, has immune stimulating properties and antitumour activity. The constituents in this herb that cause a laxative effect are activated by intestinal flora.

Contraindications: Do not use for extended periods of time. Chronic use will deplete electrolytes, especially potassium, bringing about muscle weakness and increased constipation. Potassium loss can disturb cardiac rhythm and potentiate cardiac glycoside toxicity, such as found with digitalis use. Individuals who consume formulas with anthraquinones while taking cardiac

glycosides should have their medication monitored by their physician to make sure they do not receive a toxic dosage of cardiac glycosides. Potassium depletion can lead to paralysis of intestinal musculature which makes the laxative less effective and necessitates taking more of the laxative for the same effect. Anthraquinones may cause vomiting, intestinal spasms and bloody diarrhea. No anthraquinone containing herbs should be consumed by pregnant women or nursing mothers since some of it passes through the milk to the baby. They should also not be taken by individuals with damaged kidneys or kidney inflammation. Large doses can cause nephritis. This herb, as with all laxatives, should not be used in cases of intestinal obstruction when there is danger of an intestinal rupture.

Cascara Sagrada - **Rhamnus purshiana** in the Rhamnaceae or Buckthorn family

Part used: bark (aged a minimum of one year)

Taste/smell: bitter

Dosage: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 20 - 70 drops 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Use: Most uses are related to the laxative effect; it acts on the large intestine to stimulate peristalsis and increase secretion of water into the large intestine lumen. Also used as a cholagogue, for constipation, when anal fissures are present, for hemorrhoids and after rectal operations. Specific for chronic constipation with hepatic sluggishness.

Constituents: Bark contains the anthroquinone glycosides: rhamnoemodine, rhamnucoside, shesterine. The active constituents in this herb are activated by intestinal flora.

Contraindications: See contraindications for Aloe.

Turkey rhubarb - **Rheum officinalis** in the Polygonaceae family

Part used: root

Taste/smell: bitter

Dosage: 20-60 drops of 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Stimulating laxative, cathartic, astringent, mild stimulating tonic to the alimentary mucous membranes, the liver and gall bladder. Used for nephritis, in conjunction with other treatments.

The active constituents in this herb are activated by intestinal flora.

Contraindications: See contraindications for Aloe.

Senna - **Cassia spp.** in the Fabaceae or Legume family

Part used: leaves

Taste/smell: bitter and slightly sweet

Dosage: 1 heaping teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 20-60 drops 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Use: Most uses are related to the laxative effect; it acts on the large intestine to stimulate peristalsis and increase secretion of water into the large intestinal lumen. Also used as a cholagogue, purgative, for constipation, when anal fissures are present, for hemorrhoids and after rectal operations. Specific for chronic constipation. The active constituents in this herb are activated by intestinal flora.

Contraindications: See contraindications for Aloe.

Vulnerary Herbs

Vulneraries decrease inflammation and heal irritated tissue. These herbs are primarily used externally as pastes, poultices, oils, suppositories or sitz baths.

Calendula - **Calendula officinalis** in the Asteraceae or Aster family

Part used: flowers prior to fully opening

Taste/smell: slightly bitter, salty

Dosage: 2-3 heaping tablespoons in 1 cup water (infused) or 20-50 drops 1:5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water. Fresh plant succus is best for external use on wounds.

Use: Antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, choleric, demulcent, vulnerary, immunestimulant, anti-viral, supports creation of normal connective tissue structure. Used for healing wounds, burns, bruises, boils, rashes. It promotes the formation of granulation tissue.

Constituents: Contains essential oil, flavonol glycosides, saponins, triterpene alcohols, sterols, carotenes and xanthophylls, polysaccharides, tannins and other constituents.

Comfrey - **Symphytum officinalis** in the Boraginaceae or Borage family

Part used: root and main rib of leaf have the most mucilage and allantoin

Taste/Smell: mucilaginous, nutritious tasting, bland

Dosage & Use: Useful externally as a poultice, paste or fomentation for contusions, sprains, dislocations, wounds, burns, ulcers and all inflammatory skin disorders. Used to decrease inflammation of thrombophlebitis and phlebitis. This herb decreases the healing time for all manner of skin wounds and irritations.

Constituents: It contains 6-8% allantoin, .02-.07% pyrrolizidine alkaloids, 4-6% tannins, intermedine, aetylintermedine, lycopsamine, acetyllycopsamine, symphytine, mucilage, starch, triterpenes (isobauerenol) and sterols (sitosterol).

Contraindications: Not to be used internally due to possible pyrrolizidine poisoning.

Plantain - **Plantago spp.** in the Plantaginaceae or Plantain family

Part used: leaf

Taste/smell: nutritious, mucilaginous, slightly bitter, salty

Dosage: 1 tablespoon (infused) per cup water or 15-40 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Used as an antiseptic, astringent, anti-inflammatory, vulnerary and mucilaginous agent. Cooling agent for use with hemorrhoids.

Saint John's wort - **Hypericum perforatum** in the Guttiferae family

Parts used: flowering tops (best used fresh) when they are a mix of buds and open flowers

Taste/smell: astringent

Dosage: 10-60 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Antiviral, anti-inflammatory, astringent, antibacterial, vulnerary, nervine, sedative, trophorestorative. It is used for hemorrhoids, especially with sharp radiating pain.

Lymphagogues

Lymphagogues support the lymphatic organs and

stimulate activity of the lymph system, thereby improving the removal of wastes from cells and the reception of nutrients.

Burdock: Description listed under "Liver Herbs"

Cleavers - **Galium aparine** in the Rubiaceae or Madder family

Parts used: fresh succulent aerial parts in flowering/seed forming stage

Taste/Smell: fresh, pleasant taste

Dosage: 30-60 drops of 1:1 fresh+dry liquid extract, or add a handful of fresh herb into your juicer when you make a fresh vegetable juice.

Use: A relaxing diuretic, nutritive, vulnerary, hypotensive, lymphagogue. It supports the immune system, corrects inability to pass normal catabolic wastes, and is a vulnerary. Used for bladder and kidney problems, such as benign prostatic hypertrophy, and it acts to reduce stones. Also used for enuresis in children.

Burdock: See Liver herbs below.

Red root - **Ceanothus americanus** in the Rhamnaceae or Buckthorn family.

Part used: Root.

Taste/smell: Astringent.

Tendencies: Drying.

Dosage: Decoction: 1-2 teaspoons per cup of water; or 1:4 dry strength liquid extract: 20-40 drops 1-4 times per day.

Mental picture and specifics: It is indicated for stagnation of fluids, turbid lymph, mucus, swollen glands and poor nutrition to the tissues. Consider red root when the person is melancholic and the tongue is enlarged, swollen, with a dirty white or yellow coating.

Use: (a) Astringent, (b) Lymphagogue, (c) Expectorant.

Red root is used in lymphatic, splenic and liver congestion, enlarged lymph nodes, sinusitis, tonsillitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis, chronic post-nasal drip and mononucleosis. It also can increase platelet counts and is specific for reducing cysts. This herb is best suited for subacute and chronic conditions.

Contraindications: Information unavailable at this time.

Liver Herbs

Supporting the liver decreases blockage in the flow of blood from the rectal veins to the portal vein and therefore decreases venous distention and hemorrhoids due to liver dysfunction.

Burdock - *Arctium lappa* in the Asteraceae or Aster family

Part used: root

Taste/smell: sweetish initially, bitter later, slightly mucilaginous

Dosage: 1 heaping tablespoon per cup water (decocted) or 20-60 drops of 1:1 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Use: Alterative, diuretic (especially the seeds), digestive stimulant, blood and lymph cleanser, liver tonic, choleric and mild laxative. Burdock stimulates the natural flow of lymphatic fluid thereby supporting excretion of toxic byproducts from cells. It helps the skin, kidneys, liver, gall bladder, mucous and serous membranes to remove accumulated byproducts of catabolism.

Constituents: Seeds contain a glycoside (arctine) and a fatty oil. The root contains volatile oils, mucilage and minerals, including calcium, phosphorus, sodium and iron. It also contains vitamins, including thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and ascorbic acid.

Contraindications: Long term use or excessive doses of the seed can cause urinary tract irritation.

Dandelion - *Taraxacum officinalis* in the Aster or Asteraceae family

Part Used: whole plant, leaves, flowers, roots

Taste/Smell: leaf and root are somewhat bitter but also slightly sweet taste in the root

Dosage: 1 heaping teaspoon of root (decocted) or 1 heaping tablespoon of leaf (infused) in 1 cup water, or 1-60 drops of 1:1 fresh+dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day in a little water.

Use: Whole plant acts as a diuretic (especially the leaf), stomachic, mild laxative, cholagogue and choleric. Used to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, decrease edema, normalize blood sugar, and in arthritis and gout. Useful for many female

conditions, as well as skin diseases, because of its effect on the liver. Autumn roots can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

Constituents: Contains bitter substances, eudesmanolides, germacranolides, triterpenes, sterols, carotenoids, flavonoids, carbohydrates (root), fructose (18% in spring), mucilage, 4.5% potassium (greens), inulin (2%, in spring, which increases to as much as 40%, in autumn).

Contraindications: Physical contact with the fresh latex in Dandelions can cause contact dermatitis.

Licorice - *Glycyrrhiza glabra* in the Fabaceae or Legume family

Part used: Root

Smell/Taste: sweet, nutritious

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 20-60 drops of 1:3 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: A demulcent, adaptogen, adrenal-modulator, antibacterial, antiviral, expectorant with secretolytic and secretomotor activity, anti-inflammatory, nutritive, spasmolytic, antioxidant, estrogenic, immune stimulant, liver tonic and protectant. Most known for the effect on mucous membranes. It is effective for many chronic liver conditions with high liver enzymes. Makes a nice addition to formulas which are unpalatable. Glycyrrhizic acid and aglycone glycyrrhetic acid are essential active components. They decrease inflammation by enhancing movement of leucocytes towards inflamed areas. Glycyrrhizin inhibits the activity of phospholipase A and the formation of prostaglandin E2 in activated peritoneal macrophages.

Contraindications: Contraindicated in high blood pressure, kidney disease, liver cirrhosis and cholestatic liver disorders. Chronic use mimics aldosteronism by increasing sodium resorption and potassium excretion by the kidney. Avoid using with pre-existent hypertension. The toxic symptoms are hypertension, edema, hypokalemia, vertigo and headache. This ceases when Glycyrrhiza is withdrawn or by concurrent use of anti-aldosterone agents. Standard licorice doses of 5-15 grams per day should not be taken for more than 6 weeks unless under the guidance of a physician. Persons with high blood pressure, cardiac or renal impairment should consult a physician before taking licorice preparations. Licorice potentiates the

activity of anthraquinone drugs, or herbs containing anthraquinones (such as Cascara, Senna and Buckthorn) by increasing the wettability of the bowel contents because of the high surfactant activity of glycyrrhizin.

Milk thistle - *Silybum marianum* in the Asteraceae or Aster family

Part used: seed

Smell/Taste: bitter

Dosage: 1-2 teaspoons crushed seed (decocted) or 20-60 drops of 1:2.5 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Antioxidant and hepatoprotectant used in liver disease, such as hepatitis, fatty liver, cirrhosis, for liver protection and regeneration immediately after exposure to liver toxins; best used as a protectant before exposure to liver toxins. Silymarin changes the outer membrane cell structure, preventing certain toxins from entering the liver cells. It also stimulates RNA polymerase A (polymerase I) which enhances ribosome protein synthesis and activates the regenerative capacity of the liver cells.

Constituents: Contains 1.5-3% silymarin which mostly consists of silybin, a combination of silibinin, silychristin and silydianin.

Oregon grape root & Barberry - *Berberis spp.* in the Berberidaceae or Barberry family

Part used: root bark and stem bark

Smell/Taste: bitter, astringent

Dosage: 1 teaspoon bark (decocted) or 10-60 drops of 1:5 dry root bark liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: An astringent, antimicrobial, alterative, vulnerary, anti-inflammatory, cholagogue, choloretic, stomachic, mild laxative. Provides immune system support, promotes elimination of catabolic residues, used for sluggish gastrointestinal system, infectious conditions of the stomach, intestines, respiratory tract and urinary tract, liver congestion, skin conditions, such as psoriasis, eczema, acne, and it is used for rheumatism. Consider Oregon grape root when there are atonic mucous membranes, lack of strength, tiredness, especially when associated with digestive problems.

Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy; constituent, berberine, is a uterine stimulant.

Schisandra - *Schisandra chinensis* in the Schisandraceae family

Part used: fruit

Taste/smell: pungent, sour, bitter, salty and sweet
Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water, or eat raw fruit, or 10-50 drops of 1:4 dry liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Antibacterial, antiulcer, hepatoprotective, immunomodulator and cholagogue. Used as a liver restorative, lung tonic and for immune system support. It increases brain efficiency, work capacity and builds strength.

Turmeric - *Curcuma longa* in the Zingiberaceae or Ginger family

Part used: rhizome

Taste/smell: Warming, bitter, slightly pungent

Dosage: 10-40 drops of 1:0.85 fresh liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: Anti-inflammatory, antiarthritic, antibacterial, antifungal, hypotensive, anti-atherosclerotic, cholagogue, choloretic, emmenagogue, lowers cholesterol, stimulates digestive enzymes, carminative, hepatoprotective, vulnerary, anticoagulant (inhibits platelet aggregation). Used for flatulence, jaundice, menstrual difficulties, gallstones, hemorrhage, toothache, bruises, colic, arthritis, sprains, wounds, anticancer agent.

Constituents: Contains polysaccharides: Ukonan-A (phagocytosis activating factor) and Ukonan-D (reticuloendothelial system-potentiating activity), 4-5% orange-yellow volatile oil mainly composed of turmerone, atlantone and zingiberone, 0.3-5.4% curcumin (antioxidant, antiedemic effect), disaccharides: glucose 28%, fructose 12%, arabinose 1%, various resins, proteins, vitamins and minerals.
Contraindications: Contraindicated in pregnancy (uterine stimulant).

Yellow dock - *Rumex crispus/obtusifolius* in the Polygonaceae or Buckwheat family

Part used: Root mostly, mucilaginous new leaves in their leaf sheath.

Taste/smell: Bitter

Dosage: 1 teaspoon per cup water (decocted) or 10-40 drops of 1:5 dry strength liquid extract, 1-4 times per day.

Use: A mild laxative, alterative, nutritive, used for

iron deficiency anemia to assist in absorption, as well as to supply a minor amount of iron. Used for constipation, poor fat absorption, liver congestion, chronic skin conditions. New leaf, in sheath, is used externally as a mucilaginous and healing application.

Contraindications: Use cautiously with a history of oxalate kidney stones.

Making Herbal Products in Your Kitchen

October 8,9,10 (Fri, Sat, Sun)

Friday 6:00 PM-9:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM-6:00 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

\$245.00 if paid prior to September 19th, \$275 After September 19th.

This fee covers the 19-20 hours of class, all handouts including the book "Herbal Medicine From the Heart of the Earth", all products such as tinctures, salves, elixirs, suppositories, lozenges, hand cream etc. that you will take home or consume during the class. It also covers a hearty garden soup and bread for lunch on Sat/Sun as well as desert.

If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter free of charge, please forward this to them or send their email address to us at class@herbaltransitions.com

NW Herb Fest 2005

Herbal Medicine

For Everyone

July 23 & 24, 2005

\$145.00 if paid prior to May 31st,
\$175-\$185 after

Some of the 24 Classes Being Offered

Look, Feel and Be Younger
Herbs for Hypothyroidism
Herbs for Healthy Sexuality
Edible and Medicinal Herbs
Flora's Magical Apothecary
The Ceremonial Use of Herbs
Making Salves is Fun & Easy
Tincture Making Via Percolation
The Green Angels of Forest & Garden
Herb Walks, Herb Walks, Herb Walks
Menopause Without Exogenous Hormones
Plant Families and Their Medicinal Similarities
Botanicals for Cancer-related Pain
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Dopamine Effecting Herbs
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