



# METHODS OF USE

how to harvest, dry, store, prepare, and  
use herbs



### **Roots**

Generally, roots are harvested in the fall after the plant has died back and sent all its energy back into the roots. This is not an absolute and can also be harvested in the spring or really, anytime of the year. The most potent plant material is in the fall. Plants like common mallow and dandelion can be harvested as you pull them from your yard and garden throughout the year. Some plants you can merely pull up and out of the ground, but most will need to be dug up with a shovel or spade. Brush the dirt off the root, wash under running water and then pat dry. Chop roots before drying.

### **Barks**

Barks should be harvested from the twigs and branches not the main trunk of the tree. “Prune” off a branch of the tree or shrub and then peel the outer bark off. This can be composted or discarded. Peel the next layer, which is the inner bark and where the living medicine is located. You can tell it is living because of the moist, sticky feel to it. This can be dried for future use or prepared fresh.

### **Leaves**

Leaves can be harvested anytime of the growing season but are most potent before flowering. They should be gathered in the morning, after the dew has dried or the evening after the heat of the day where the plant is not “depleted”. Aromatic herbs such as basil, thyme, rosemary, etc. should be harvested in the hottest part of the day since the oils are at their strongest. Simply cut what leaves you want off the plant, leaving two thirds of the plant.

### **Flowers**

Flowers are best harvested right before they open. If harvesting from a plant that will give you both blossoms and fruit, leave enough blossoms to turn into fruit for a fall harvest.

### **Saps and Pitches**

Best harvested in early spring by drilling a hole through the bark. Insert a straw or similar tube and put the other end in a collectible container. After a week remove the straw and plug with a fitted twig so the sap stops leaking. For pitch you can snap off a twig and the pitch will ooze from the broken end. You can also collect the sap crystals that form on the bark.

### **Seeds**

Most seeds are harvested by allowing them to dry on the plant. Once brown and “crisp” they can be placed in a paper bag or container. Shake the container to disperse the seeds. Seeds come in many shapes, sizes and forms so this will need to be adjusted from plant to plant.



When drying herbs, it is important to make sure they are in a well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight and moisture. Some of these methods may not work if you live in more humid areas, but for those of us in drier climates, they work great. If you are drying roots, the dehydrator method will work best because of how thick and moist they can be, just scrub the root and chop before drying. These methods will work for all aerial parts. Just remember to dry in a shaded area if outside and keep them dry.

You really don't need to wash or rinse herbs, just brush off what dirt you may see and pull out any other kind of debris, such as cobwebs, seed tufts or other plant material. Remember in *Lesson 2*, that not washing off our herbs we will also be strengthening our gut health, which equals a stronger immune system.

### Dehydrator

Place herbs, roots, or bark on dehydrator trays in a single layer. Leaves and aerial parts can be dried at 80-100 degrees while roots and barks need a bit higher temperature of 150 degrees. Once crisp to the touch they are ready to store. Do not overheat or you will lose potent properties.

### Screens

Simply lay your herbs on screens that have air flow on all sides. I use large screens from an old dehydrator, you could also use a window screen or make something with screen or mesh material. I then lay these on a laundry rack to get good air flow (see picture). Lay the herbs in single layers on the screen, making sure you have air flow and check on them each day. Lift and fluff them as needed.

### Basket Drying

Place the herbs in a basket where air flow can come in, wicker or laundry baskets are both good choices. Make sure they are loosely stacked so air can reach all parts.

### Hanging Bundles

Take a small bundle of herbs, small enough that there is room for air flow, and tie them up and hang them. You can use elastics to tie and attach to rafters, bars, the laundry rack shown above or any other creative devise you may come up with.





# Storing Dried Herbs



Once your herbs are crisp and snap when you break them it's time to store them for future use. Keep the herbs in as whole of form as possible to preserve the medicinal properties longer. Crushing herbs will start the decomposition process, as will light and moisture. Glass is the best way to store your herbs, they keep out air and moisture because it doesn't "breathe" like other containers and bags can. Re-use jars from food you buy at the grocery store and canning jars are great. I have a friend, whose family has an addiction to pickles, so she buys the Costco size pickles and gives me all the jars. Herbs in large quantities can be stored in 5-gallon storage buckets. Just make sure whatever container you use is airtight. Once "bottled", label your herbs, and keep them in a dark, cool place.

Many books and sources will tell you that dried herbs will only last a year and then discard them. I still have a jar of peppermint leaf that was dried and stored 3 years ago, and it is still as potent as the day it was stored. When it comes to dried herbs your "expiration date" depends on three factors: color, smell, and taste. If your herb still has a vibrant color, smells aromatic and tastes potent, they are still good. Once they lose their color and potency, it is time to discard them.

# Herbal Preparations

There are so many ways to utilize the healing properties and nutrients of herbs. Here we will go over in detail all the ways you can put those herbs to use. When you see parts in a recipe, a part is any measurement you decide upon. If making a small batch of something, you may use a teaspoon as your part. If making something in bulk than a cup might be your part. Parts can be in spoons, cups, ounces, or any other measurement.



Herbal tea or tisane as we discussed in *Lesson 4*, is the best way for the body to absorb and utilize the properties of herbs. When using to treat any condition you will generally be taking 3-4 cups of tea a day, so the best way to make it is by the quart, although you can make it by the cup. Measurements are given at the end of this section, although they can be made stronger or weaker depending on the person and what their body needs. Once you have prepared your tea following one of these methods, strain the herbs from the water using a mesh strainer or cheesecloth. You can even purchase mug strainers that fit over the top of your mug. Sweeten to taste if you desire, with raw honey (for added nutrients and microbes) or natural sweetener of your choice. You can even add a stevia leaf or two to the infusion for a natural sweetener. The tea will stay good for about 72 hours. Herbal tea is also used as a gargle, mouthwash, hair or body rinse, bath, foot soak, and compress.

There are two basic types of herbal tea: an **infusion**, which is made from the aerial parts; leaves, fruit or flowers that involves steeping the herb. And a **decoction**, made from the bark, seeds, or root of the herb, that involves simmering to extract the harder to reach constituents. There are a variety of ways to make tea, find which method works best for you. I use different methods based on the season, time, and how I feel.

**Basic Infusion:** The most common way to make an infusion is by pouring boiling water over the herb and letting it sit for ten to twenty minutes. For a stronger tea you would put the herb in cold water in a pan and let heat until it is gentling boiling. Remove from heat and strain. If you

would like an even stronger tea, use either method then let the herbs sit in the tea over night before straining.

**Decoction:** This method is to be used with the tougher parts of bark, seeds, or root. It is also used when making a tea blend that has roots or bark in it. Add herbs to a pan and pour cold water over them. Turn heat to medium low and wait for the water to simmer. Cover and continue to simmer for 20-40 minutes, for a more concentrated tea, leave the cover off. Strain.

**Solar Infusion:** This is my favorite way to make tea during the summer months. Place your herbs in a glass jar and fill to the top with water then cover with a lid. Set the jar in direct sunlight for a few hours.

**Cold Infusion:** The same method as solar infusion except you place the jar on your kitchen counter for a couple of hours or overnight.

**Tea Bags:** You can purchase empty tea bags and fill them yourself. Pour boiling water into a cup and place the tea bag in the water for 10-15 minutes. Squeeze the bag to get all the goodies out, then sweeten with raw honey to taste if needed.

**French Press/Tea Pot Strainers:** You can purchase a French Press, which you can put your herbs in, pour water over the herbs and place the lid on. Follow instructions for whatever method you'll be using from above. A similar device is a tea pot with a strainer in the middle. You fill the strainer portion with the herbs and pour water to fill the pot.



## General Tea Measurements

### Dried Herb

1 cup water – 1 teaspoon of herb

1 quart water – ¼ cup herb

### Fresh Herb

1 cup water – 2 tablespoons of herb

1 quart water – ½ cup herb

## General Tea Dosages

When treating acute conditions, make a quart of tea and sip on it throughout the day. Rosemary Gladstar suggests ¼ cup of tea every half hour. Continue a quart a day until symptoms subside. For chronic conditions follow the same quart a day, just do it for several weeks, taking a break for a day or two each week.





Tinctures are highly concentrated liquid herbal extracts made with either dried or fresh herbs. They are the most convenient way to take your herbs and have a longer shelf life than other methods. There are generally three kinds of solvents (called a menstruum) that are used to extract the medicinal properties of herbs into a liquid extract. Each has pros and cons, which will be explained so you can decide what would work best for your situation. The three menstruum to choose from are alcohol (the most commonly used), vegetable glycerine and vinegar.

**Alcohol:** This is the most common way of making a tincture as well as the easiest. Alcohol has many benefits over the other two solvents. It has the longest shelf life, indefinitely, and it makes a more potent tincture due to its ability to extract more of the constituents in the herb than any other liquid. In fact, there are some herbs that require alcohol in order to get to the medicinal qualities. These herbs include lomatium, St. John's wort, black walnut hulls, gumweed, teasel and usnea. Always use alcohol that is ethanol, which is found in wines and liquors, the most common being Vodka. Rubbing alcohol is made from isopropyl alcohol and must never be taken internally.

**Alcohol Tincture How To:** First prepare your herbs by chopping them finely. Let them sit to dry wilt for a couple of hours to remove some of the moisture. This is not a set rule but will make a more potent tincture. Fill a jar  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of the herbs, then pour alcohol over them, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch head space. Cover with a tight lid and let sit for anywhere from 2 – 6 weeks. After the first day, check the bottle to see if the herb has absorbed all the vodka. Add more alcohol to keep at the  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch head space level. Strain and then pour into airtight containers and keep in a dark, cool place.

**Vegetable Glycerine (called a glycerite):** Vegetable glycerine has the capacity to break down and remove certain chemicals and preservatives from the body. It is demulcent, emollient, soothing, and healing when diluted with distilled water. It also has a sweet flavor which is more suited for children and the elderly. It also has the benefit of being heated over a short period of time, which will make a fast tincture. On the downside, a glycerite will only last 3–5 years and

is not as potent as an alcohol tincture. Storing them in a fridge will help prolong the shelf life. Stephen Buhner says that if you add 10% vodka to a glycerine tincture, it will store indefinitely. I store mine in the fridge for a longer shelf life as well.

**Glycerite How To:** Make sure you purchase food grade vegetable glycerine. There are a couple of ways you can make a glycerite, you will want to use at least 10% more glycerine than distilled water. In other words, the ratio of water to glycerine is 40% water to 60% glycerine.

**Method 1:** Fill a jar  $\frac{1}{2}$  full if using dried herbs or  $\frac{3}{4}$  full using fresh, chopped herbs. Bring some distilled water to a boil and then pour over the herbs until they are just barely covered. Fill the rest of the jar up to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " headspace with glycerine (remember the 40/60 ratio). Shake or stir to incorporate well and place in a warm, spot for 4-6 weeks.

**Method 2:** If you want a faster version, put the jar in a crockpot filled to the top with water and let it steep on low setting for 3 days. Keep the water level to the top by adding more water as it evaporates. Strain and bottle. Keep stored in a dark, cool location. Alternatively, you can put a towel in the bottom of a large pot, place your jar in it and fill with water to just below the rim of the bottle. Keep the pan on low for several hours, up to three days, keeping the water level to just below the rim.

**Method 3:** Place the herbs in a crockpot with distilled water covering them. Leave the crockpot on low heat for an hour to two hours, making sure there is always enough water to cover the herbs. Next, add the glycerine. Leave the crockpot on low for two to three more hours. Then, turn the crockpot off and leave to cool. Strain them through a cheese cloth or a light cotton towel and ring out every bit. For stronger tinctures, leave herbs in crockpot after cooling for up to four days before straining. Store tincture in a dark, cool place.

**Apple Cider Vinegar:** Vinegar tinctures are used mainly for culinary and personal care purposes; they do not pull medicinal properties as well as alcohol and glycerine and they only have a shelf life of 1 year. You can also use white distilled vinegar for making herbal tinctures used for cleaning purposes, such as a multi-purpose cleaner (never take internally).

Advantages for using ACV; it's a renewable resource that you can make at home, it is high in vitamins and minerals and can be easily incorporated in your regular meals, making it a great choice for a tonic. It's also great for your hair and body, making it a good match for hair rinses and skin toner.

The only difference for making a vinegar tincture vs. an alcohol tincture is warming the vinegar before adding it to the herbs. This will help release the herbal properties from the herb since vinegar doesn't break down the constituents as well. Keep it in a warm, sunny spot for 4-6 weeks. Then strain and bottle.

**Liniment:** These are made just like a tincture but when it is used externally the name is changed to a liniment. Liniments are used to disinfect wounds and massage into sore, aching bones and muscles. They can be a traditional tincture made with 80-100 proof vodka, an herbal oil, or a tincture made with rubbing alcohol (make sure it is never taken internally).





### Make Your Own Vinegar:

For every quart of water add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sugar and stir until dissolved. Fill a jar with apple scraps (peel, core, stems, etc.) and pour the sugar water to just below the rim. Keep the scraps submerged in the water. Cover loosely with a lid. Keep in a dark location for a week. After a week check for bubbles, if there are bubbles, strain the liquid out and place in a new jar. If no bubbles, wait until there are some before straining. Cover the new jar with cheesecloth or a coffee filter and place in a dark location for 6 weeks. Check for a vinegar smell, if it still smells like alcohol, let it sit longer until it gets the vinegar smell. It's ready to go now.

**Other solvents:** You can also use witch hazel or aloe vera liquid as solvents for external uses. I love to make facial toners with aloe vera tinctures, and wound wash and bug repellents with witch hazel tinctures. Make them the same way as an alcohol tincture.

### Tincturing Powdered Herbs:

Powdered herbs can be used but are difficult to tincture. If using powdered herbs only fill the jar  $\frac{1}{4}$  full and use a fine mesh cheesecloth to strain them. You may need to strain several times to remove all the herb material.

### **Tincture Dosages**

**Acute conditions:**  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon every hour or 1 to 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  dropperfuls, for a total of up to 6 teaspoons a day.

**Chronic issues** or using as a **tonic:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 teaspoon or 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 dropperfuls, two or three times a day for up to 3 teaspoons daily.

These are just guidelines; the body is the best healer and will know if you need more or less. I have taken 2 dropperfuls of Echinacea (as well as my children) every half hour for as long as symptoms have continued for some infections and illness. It was what the body needed to heal, so always listen to your body.



To make a truly medicinal honey it is important to use raw honey. Raw honey is full of nutrients, microbes that build the flora in your gut, as well as antimicrobial and antibiotic properties. Add herbs to that and you have a potent medicine. I have used raw honey alone in healing conditions such as impetigo, cold sores, wounds, stings and diabetic sores. I have also made many types of medicinal honey which get used quite a bit throughout the winter months, spread on hot toast, stirred into water as a tea, add to culinary dishes, or by the spoonful.

Herbal Honey How To: If you want a long shelf life with your herbal honey always use dried or powdered herbs, the exception to this rule is thyme, which makes an amazing antiviral and delicious honey. Use four tablespoons of dried or powdered herb per 1 cup of raw honey. If your honey is hard you want to heat it over low just until soft enough to pour (never go above 100 degrees or you will kill all those beneficial bacteria and nutrients). Put your herbs in a jar and pour the honey over them. Stir to combine well and cover with a lid. Keep in a warm, sunny spot for at least two weeks before using. The herbs will float to the top of the jar, and you can scrape them off the top, or stir them in every time you use it. Herbal honey should keep indefinitely.

### **Honey Dosages**

You can use medicinal honey just as you would any other remedy, syrup, tincture, or medicine. The typical dosage for an adult is one teaspoon, three times a day. Children half a teaspoon, three times a day until symptoms subside. You can simply swallow the honey by the spoonful or mix it into some warm water to dissolve and drink as a tea.



Syrups are made by mixing a concentrated herbal tea with a sweetener. Syrups are used to add sweetness to a remedy, making it easier to take your medicine. Depending on the herb they can also be used as a topping for breakfast foods and desserts.

Syrup How To: Using 2 oz. of herbs per one quart of water, heat in a pan over low heat. Simmer the liquid down by half. Strain the herbs and pour the liquid back into the pot. Now add your sweetener, raw honey is the best because of its own healing and nutritional benefits. You want to use two parts tea concentrate to one-part sweetener. Warm over low and stir until it is well combined. Remove from the heat and pour into a bottle with a label. Store in the fridge. This should last for several weeks, up to months.



### Syrup Dosage

**Acute** conditions use half to one teaspoon of syrup every two hours, for a total of up to ten teaspoons a day.

**Chronic** conditions use one to two tablespoons of syrup twice daily or as needed. These are guidelines so follow the body.





Capsules are a good way to go for those who cannot handle the taste of herbs through the other methods mentioned above. Some herbs have a very strong, even unpleasant taste and these would be great for encapsulating. They are also good for those who like the convenience of popping a pill and they are easy to make. You will need to purchase a capsule machine and some glycerine capsules. There are two common sizes: 00 is the most common and 0 is a little smaller for those that have a hard time swallowing the larger capsules.

**Capsule How To:** Grind your herbs of choice in a coffee grinder or high-powered blender after they have been dried thoroughly. You can also purchase powdered herbs. Place the capsules in the capsule machine and fill with the powdered herbs. Join the two sides of the capsule machine together and press down firmly, then pop out. The capsule machine has detailed instructions.

### **Capsule Dosage**

These dosages are based on the size 00 capsules. Adjust as needed for the smaller 0 size.

**Acute** conditions 1 or 2 herbal capsules every 2 hours, for a total of 8 capsules a day.

**Chronic** conditions 2-3 capsules 2 or 3 times a day for a total of up to 6 capsules a day.

These are just guidelines, go with what the body needs.





Herbal oils are also known as oil extracts and medicinal oil. These can be used to make salves, massage oils, liniments, creams and even for cooking. There are several different methods you can use for infusing herbs into an oil so find what works best for you.

A tip from Kami McBride of *The Herbal Kitchen* is to add a 1 ½ teaspoons of 100 proof Vodka (per pint) to the herb and give it a stir before adding the oil. This helps extract the most out of your herbs. Also note that when using one of the heated methods the oil will start to breakdown faster so it will not have as long a shelf life as a cold infusion.

Herbs: You can use either fresh, dried, or even a combination of both when making an herbal

infused oil. There are a couple of differences in how you prepare the herbs for infusion. When using fresh, let them dry wilt for a few hours to remove some of the moisture. Finely chop them and then fill the jar 3/4 full of herb. If using dried herb, crush them up if you have a whole dried herb, if you purchased the herbs they will already be chopped finely. Fill your jar 2/3 full. If using powdered herbs, use one-part powdered herb to five parts oil. If doing a mix of fresh and dried, just be sure to dry wilt the fresh herb first and fill the jar just under 3/4 full.

Oil: You can use any type of oil to infuse your herbs and what you choose may depend on what you want to achieve. Some of the factors in differing oils are the *weight*; some are heavy, some light, some solidify at room temperature; *shelf life*, some oils go rancid quicker than others; *healing properties*, each oil has its own set of healing properties and functions that can play into the overall product. Extra virgin olive oil is one of the best oils to use, it has a longer shelf life and full of nutrients and skin soothing properties. Other commonly used oils are coconut (which will solidify), sweet almond, grape seed and sesame oil. Olive oil and coconut oil are the most stable, others will go rancid quicker.

**Solar Infusion**: Choose your herbs and follow the method for preparing them as outlined above. Once your jar is filled with herbs, pour your, high quality, oil of choice over the herb up to the top of the bottle. Place a lid on the jar for dried herbs or a coffee filter or cheesecloth fastened with an elastic or canning ring, for fresh herbs. This allows the moisture left in the herbs a place to evaporate. Label the jar and place outside in the sun, or even on a windowsill that gets a lot of sun coming in. Leave the jar for two weeks or more.

**Cold Infusion**: Prepare just like the solar infusion but instead of placing in the sun or a warm spot. Leave on a countertop.

**Hot Extract – Stove Top**: This method allows you to have your oil ready within a day rather than waiting the two weeks. Prepare your oil as above and place the jar in a pan of water with a towel or rag on the bottom to prevent your jar from breaking. Next fill the pan with water to where the herbal infusion starts or to just below the top of your pan, depending on how big the pan is. Bring the water to a soft simmer on low heat and let the oil sit in the simmer water for a minimum of 4-5 hours and up to 72 hours, keeping the water filled as it evaporates.



**Hot Extract – Crock Pot:** This is the best of hot extraction, not only do you not have to worry about watching the stove, but you can also fit two to three jars in at one time. Line your slow cooker with a towel, just like with the stove method. Place in your jars and then fill the crock pot up to the top with water. Set on low for 2-3 days, keeping the water filled to the top. My cooker only does 10 hours of slow cooking and switches to warm, which is fine, but I just restart the time on low and go the full 3 days.

**Simmer Extract:** Place herbs in a pan with enough olive oil to cover the herbs. Turn the heat on low until it begins to simmer. Let simmer for a few minutes, and then remove from heat. Let cool. Strain herbs from oil. Be careful with this method because you do not want to burn your oil or herbs. Watch carefully and go by smell. You can also use a double boiler to heat the oil and herbs together.



A salve is the way to take the medicinal properties of an herbal oil and make them into a solid form. Once applied to the skin the healing properties will slowly absorb into the body over a longer period. Ointments and balms are a salve with less beeswax for a softer application.

**Salve How To:** For every cup of herbal oil use one ounce of beeswax for a salve or less for an ointment, adjust based on your preference for hardness. Put both the oil and beeswax in a pan and melt the beeswax over low heat. Remove from the heat and pour into a container. Optionally you can add essential oil to your salve after removing from the heat for added medicinal properties. Add enough essential oil so that your salve smells strong but not overpowering, I find about a ½ teaspoon or

so per cup of oil usually does the job. Label and store in a dark, cool location. Salves should last for several months to years depending on the herbs and how well it is stored. It is no longer good when it loses its color and smells like rancid oil.





Richo Cech describes a poultice perfectly in his book, *Making Plant Medicine*: “A poultice is simply vegetable material, whole or mashed, which is layered or spread on the skin. Its primary function is to pull poisonous or infected matter from swollen tissues, wounds, or cysts. The hot poultice increases circulation, while the cold poultice reduces inflammation. Poultices also permeate the injured area with healing substances from the plant.”

Poultices are simple but a very effective and powerful way of healing wounds, splinters, infections, inflammation, swollen glands, skin eruptions, bug bites and stings, breaking up mucus, pull toxins from the body, accelerate healing, and decrease pain and inflammation. Poultices can be made from fresh or dried

herbs and mixed with teas, tinctures, olive oil, or honey. There are many ways you can prepare a poultice depending on material and equipment available to you:

**Fresh Poultice:** The most basic of poultices is to simply place the fresh herb or plant over the area of concern. You could also crush, mash, or chew the plant material to release more of its healing properties.

**Powdered or Dried Herbs:** You can easily hydrate powdered or dried herbs by pouring a small amount of boiling water over the plant material and letting it sit for a few minutes. Strain without squeezing out the liquid, wrap in cheesecloth or thin cotton fabric and apply. You can also apply the poultice directly to skin and cover with a cloth, plastic wrap, or ace bandage to keep it from rubbing off.

**Tea Bag:** A very easy and convenient way to make a poultice is by simply making a cup of tea and using the tea bag as the poultice. These can be used either hot, straight from the cup, or cold, letting the bag cool to room temperature or placing in the fridge.



## COMPRESS

A compress is also known as a fomentation. They are used to relieve pain, inflammation, reduce swelling and relax areas of the body. Any liquid can be used including herbal tea, herbal infused oil, castor or olive oil, essential oils added to water, Epsom salts dissolved in water, apple cider vinegar, herbal tincture added to water, or even just plain water. Like poultices they can be used hot or cold, depending on what you are treating (see below).

**Fomentation How To:** Prepare your liquid and use either hot or let it cool to room temperature or refrigerate, depending on what temperature you want. You can also alternate hot and cold when dealing with stagnation, like with lymph conditions or circulation issues. Soak some gauze, cheesecloth, cotton cloth, or towel in the liquid and wring out lightly – just enough that the liquid doesn't drip. Apply to area of concern and if using it hot, follow instructions for the hot poultice/compress below. Change as it cools, several times a day. For a cold compress keep applied until the cloth warms from the body heat, re-soak in cool liquid and re-apply until desired results are achieved.



**Hot Poultice/Compress:** You want to use a hot poultice or compress when you need a pulling action such as for splinters, infection, or any type of skin eruption. They are also used to break up the mucus in respiratory and sinus infections. Use either fresh or dried herb but heat it with a small amount of hot water for a few minutes. Strain, but don't squeeze. Once applied, cover with plastic wrap to hold in the moisture and heat, then apply a thick towel or a heated water bottle. As it cools change it for a fresh, hot poultice until desired results are reached.

**Cold Poultice/Compress:** A cold poultice is used to reduce swelling and inflammation. They also are soothing for puffy, irritated eyes and very effective when treating eye infections. Prepare poultice or compress from one of the methods above but let the material cool to room temperature or place in the fridge or freezer.



An herbal bath is like immersing yourself into a big pot of tea. The warm water opens the pores of the skin allowing it to absorb the medicinal properties of the herb, while also eliminating toxins. This is one of the easiest ways to administer herbs to children. Here are a couple ways to prepare an herbal bath:

**Herbal Infusion:** This is the most effective method. Make a very strong batch of herbal tea, strain and then pour the tea into the bath. A strong batch could be one-part herb to two parts water.

**Tea Bag Method:** Fill a muslin bag with herbs and tie up. Hang over the faucet as the hot water fills the bath, then throw the whole bag into the bath water while bathing. Alternatively, you can also place the herbs in a washcloth, handkerchief, or nylon stocking and tie up the ends.

**Loose Herbs:** Throw your herbs directly into the bath water, the heat from the water will extract the properties into your bath water. This is messy and you will need to filter out the herbs before draining your bath water.

**Foot Soak:** A foot soak is more concentrated than a bath and sometimes easier to administer. The feet have the largest pores of the body, therefore absorbing the herb more quickly into the blood stream. Just fill a basin, bucket, or tub with water as hot as you can stand. Use the same methods as the bath.

**Steam Inhalation:** Wonderful for opening the sinus and respiratory systems. It is also used for deep cleansing the pores of the skin. Heat a large pot of water until it is steaming. Add a handful of herbs, good ones for sinus are mullein, peppermint, lavender, thyme, and rosemary. Set the pot on a table, be careful, it is hot. Lean head over the pot and cover with a towel. Inhale the steam for 5-10 minutes or for as long as you feel.





After drying your herbs, place them in a coffee grinder or high-powered blender to grind into a powder. They will break down faster after powdering so I usually powder right before using. These can be used to make herbal capsules, pills, poultices, pastes, gruel, and sprinkles.

**Sprinkle:** As a sprinkle for cooking, just crush to a coarse powder as you would find at the grocery store. These are fun to make special blends and combinations for all sorts of use in the kitchen. Store in old spice jars and used to incorporate into meals. (*The Herbal Kitchen* by Kami McBride has some great recipes for sprinkles and there are few recipes spread throughout this book). Sprinkles can also be used over cuts and wounds as with the First Aid Powder (recipe in *Lesson 11*).

**Gruel:** Place powdered herbs in a bowl and add enough water, honey, pure maple, or other liquid to form a stew like consistency. I like to add filler ingredients as well such as psyllium seed or flax seed if an herb is too strong.

**Paste:** A paste is made just like a gruel except your consistency is going to be thicker. These can be applied as a poultice.

**Liquid Herbs:** My body does not like herbal capsules, so I came up with a quick, instant way to take herbs that I haven't made into tinctures yet. I get a shot glass, add the amount of powdered herbs I'm taking (a capsule generally has 1 teaspoon of herb packed in it). Add water to fill the glass, stir well, chug it down.



Also known as an herbal sachet, used for many different purposes such as, headaches, aches, pains, stress relief, sweet dreams, deep sleep, and freshening laundry – to name a few. These can be as simple as placing herbs into a drawstring muslin bag, a re-usable tea bag or sheer fabric drawstring bag and then pulling the drawstring tight. You could fill a sock and tie up the end or sew your own little pillow and fill with the herbs.

**Boo Boo Bags:** Use for headaches, aching bones and muscles, bumps, bruises and owies of any kind. The best herbs for these purposes are lavender and peppermint. Place in a freezer zip bag and keep stored in the freezer. The added cold helps with soothing inflammation.

**Dream Pillow:** Use to aid in a restful sleep, dispel nightmares and calm before bed. Dream pillows are either placed inside the pillowcase or my little guy likes to snuggle right up to it like a stuffed animal. The purpose is to inhale the aroma of the herbs and oils during the night.

**Herbal Rice Bag:** Make a traditional heating rice bag into an herbal one by adding 3 parts rice (or beans or other grain) and 1-part herbs.

**Hot Pillow:** A combination of a poultice and compress. Fill your pillow or cotton draw string bag with your herb of choice then sew or pull tight. Boil some water in a pan and place a rack on top of the pan, place the pillow on the rack. The herbs will swell as they absorb the steam and also release their healing properties. When the pillow is warm and not too wet, remove it and apply to the area of concern (do a heat test before applying to the skin and let cool if needed). You can also apply a hot pad or hot water bottle over the pillow to keep a constant heat going. You can reuse your pillow two or three times if you let it dry completely between uses.

**Laundry Pillow:** These are so fun since you can change them up depending on the season and your mood. I use two different kinds, a cotton bag kind to pop in the dryer with each batch of laundry and a sheer drawstring bag type for use in the drawers and closets. These can also be used in storage bins, coats, bags, or anything you want to freshen up or keep fresh. For the dryer pillow I add fresh essential oils directly to the cotton cloth for each batch, my favorite laundry oils are pine, lavender, lemon, lime, and orange. The sheer drawstring bag can easily be refreshed with new herbs once they lose their fragrance.



All these methods use liquids or powdered herbs to put nutrients directly in the colon or vagina, while also flushing out toxins, and soothing inflammation. They are used to get herbs right up against or as close as possible to lower parts of the body such as the vagina, prostate, and colon, while readily being absorbed into the bloodstream, similar to taking them orally. They are used for cleansing the colon, shrinking hemorrhoids, tumors, lesions, and cysts, to treat infection, inflammation, and fever, while nourishing, soothing, and toning these systems. They can also get herbs into the body of persons who cannot (or will not) take them orally, such as infants, young children, the elderly, special needs, etc.

## Enema

Enemas have been used to cleanse the colon, flush out toxins, soothe inflammation, and to get nutrients into the body where they can be readily absorbed. As the bowels are cleansed and toxins removed improvement has been seen with fevers, coughs, congestion, headache, flu, diarrhea, sore throats, and even earaches. Dr. Jethro Kloss defined 4 types of enemas:

1. Ordinary enema: uses a small amount of fluid to cleanse the rectum and lower colon.
2. Astringent enema: taken to relieve inflammation in diarrhea, dysentery, etc.
3. Nourishing enema: getting nutrients into the body quickly (small doses, through a bulb).
4. High enema: given to thoroughly cleanse the entire length of the colon. Instructions below are for a high enema.

## Preparations:

Enema kit (a variety of options to purchase) or syringe bulb for babies and children

1-2 quarts of distilled water or solution of choice (see below)

Lubricant (petroleum jelly, olive oil or a mild salve)

Time (you want to stay by a toilet afterwards so plan accordingly)

# ENEMA SOLUTIONS

## Garlic Tea Solution:

¼ teaspoon garlic powder per cup of water (made as a tea strain with a fine cloth) or

1 clove, minced garlic per pint of water (made as a tea, strain all particles) or

1/2 teaspoon garlic oil per cup of water

## Herbal Tea Solution:

1 tsp. to 1 Tbsp. herb per cup of distilled water

Catnip is a good basic herb of choice unless you have a specific herb you want to use.

Bring distilled water to a boil and pour over cut herb. Steep for 30 minutes. Strain the herb and set in refrigerator until tea is cooled to preferred temperature. Pour into enema bucket or bag. For a child, use half the amount.



### Solution Temperature:

There are differing opinions from herbalists on what temperature your solution should be. I believe this goes back to *Lesson 1* where every “body” is different and we should take into consideration the condition we are treating and the person’s constitution. I will share what two respected herbalists’ have to say then invite you to use your gift of discernment for which way feels right for your unique situation.

Cold enemas (Dr. Christopher) - “A cold enema will cause the anus and rectal area to contract and retain the fluid until it warms to body temperature. It will then cause the area to relax and void the fluid and fecal matter. If the patient has a fever, the body will hold the enema longer until the fluid reaches the body’s heated temperature. This allows the liquid to stay in the body longer, permeating more dried waste matter and loosening it.”

Warm enemas (Dr. Jethro Kloss) – “The material used for the enema, whether water, herb tea, etc., should be about body temperature. Otherwise, the colon becomes irritated and contracts, causing cramps and making it difficult or impossible to retain the solution.”

### Instructions:

You can find instructions on how to perform an enema on the box of your enema kit, from google, or from your medical provider. I have loved the detailed instructions from Dr. Jethro Kloss’s book, *Back to Eden* as well as the instructions for children from the book *The ABC Herbal* by Steven H. Horne. These are a combination of both with a dash of Dr. Christopher.

1. Before beginning the enema prepare a bed or your floor as your area of application. If using a bed put a plastic sheet or waterproof material over it, then cover with towels. If using the floor, lay out a towel with extras close by.
2. Follow the instructions for filling your particular enema kit with solution or if using a bulb for a child, fill the bulb with the enema solution by squeezing and sucking up the solution and then turn it upright and squeeze any remaining air out. Finish filling with solution.
3. Lubricate the anus and the tip of the syringe or bulb with your lubricant of choice. Start the solution while lying flat on your back, on the prepared bed or floor.
4. For syringe bulb use with children, gently insert the tip of the syringe into the anus and gently squeeze. Make sure to not suck as it is withdrawn. Wait a few minutes and if nothing comes out add a little more solution every five minutes until the bowels release to a soft stool. This may need to be repeated several times.
5. For adults, insert the enema tip several inches into the rectum. Allow the solution to flow slowly and when you start to feel full, turn off the flow.
6. Immediately turn halfway onto the left side and when the pressure eases start the flow again and let as much run in as possible. Again, when you feel full turn off the flow and turn all the way onto the left side for several minutes.
7. Start the flow again and slowly turn onto the back and then to the right until all the way on the right side. Let as much solution as possible flow in while in this position until you feel full then turn off the flow.
8. Turn further to the right almost onto the stomach and stay for several minutes, then turn onto the back once more. Remove the enema tip.
9. Dr. Kloss suggests repeating this process until the returns are clear, maybe several times. The purpose for rolling from side to side is so the solution is able to run through the entire colon, even if a “kink” is present.

\*Do not use high enema's regularly, just in needed cases. They can become habit forming where the body depends on them for bowel movements rather than performing them on its own.

## **Suppository/Bolus**

A suppository is defined as something that is "placed underneath," designed to penetrate and dissolve in a body cavity other than the mouth, while a bolus is "a rounded mass of anything", a large pill, lump, or clod. Generally, we refer to a bolus as a suppository, but they are really used interchangeably. Herbs are added to a solid base that will dissolve and disperse when in contact with body tissue. These can be inserted into the vagina or the rectum depending on what you want to treat. Suppositories work like a salve, giving a prolonged administration and absorption of herbs in contrast to the instant absorption or flushing of a liquid tea with an enema or douche.

### Basic Suppository Recipe:

¼ cup cocoa butter  
¼ cup coconut oil  
1 tablespoon olive oil (or use an herbal oil)  
2 tablespoons powdered dried herbs

Combine cocoa butter and oil in a small saucepan, melting them over medium heat, stir to combine and remove from heat. Add the infused oil and herbs, stirring well. Pour the mixture into suppository molds and refrigerate until firm. Store in the refrigerator or freezer until ready to use.

### Basic Bolus Recipe:

Mix powdered herbs with melted coconut butter and roll together until a pie dough consistency is achieved. Roll the entire "dough" out worm like, until the size of your finger. Cut in 1-inch-long lengths. Place on a tray in the refrigerator until solid. Keep stored in the fridge or freezer.

Insert into vagina or rectum as needed before going to bed so the body is in a horizontal position. Line the underwear with a pad or thick cloth to catch any drip out.



## **Douche**

Douche is a French word meaning wash or soak. This method washes out the vagina while applying herbs directly to the source for infections, cysts, prolapse uterus, and other vaginal conditions.

1. Make a concentrated tea by doubling the amount of aerial parts for an infusion or simmering a decoction down to half its original amount.
2. Use a slant board or arrange pillows so you can lie head down with the bottom raised.
3. Fill a douche bag or syringe with herbal tea, about ¼ to ½ cup.
4. Inject the douche into the vaginal opening and gently press the bag or push the syringe bulb.
5. Leave in as long as possible before voiding.
6. During the procedure, massage the pelvic and abdominal area to help the herbal tea assimilate into the uterus.