

## HERBAL REMEDIES

### Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)

#### Biology

The ginkgo is the world's oldest living tree. *Ginkgo biloba* can be traced back in the fossil record over 200 million years. In fact, it was found as a fossil before it was found in the living form in a small valley in China.

Ginkgo's pharmacological activity is due to its high content of terpenes, flavonoids, pro-anthocyanidins and flavoglycosides.

Its actions include: enhancing energy production, Increasing cellular glucose intake, Inhibiting platelet aggregation. *Ginkgo biloba* extract also promotes radical scavenging activity, Increases blood flow to the brain and improved transmission of nerve signals.

In clinical trials, both patients with chronic cerebral arterial insufficiency and peripheral arterial insufficiency respond favorably to *Ginkgo biloba*.

Patients displayed a statistically significant regression of the major cerebral vascular insufficiency symptoms including: short-term memory loss, vertigo, headache, ringing in the ears, lack of vigilance, depression. The improved cerebral blood flow from *Ginkgo* provides an increase in oxygen and glucose utilization in the brain. *Ginkgo*'s antiaggregatory effect on platelets offers additional protection against a stroke. Also, since *Ginkgo* improves some aspects of neural transmission, it may be effective in some cases of senility including the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease.

### Echinacea (*Coneflower, Echinacea angustifolia*)

Indians of the western plains held the coneflower in high regard. Magicians washed their hands with coneflower juice before plunging them into scalding water, and one Winnebago tribesman said he used the plant before placing a red-hot coal in his mouth.

The plains Indians chiefly employed the plant medicinally for: The Sioux Indians used it for Snakebite and other poisonous bites and stings, Hydrophobia, Toothache, Enlarged glands such as those resulting from mumps. Inhaling the plant smoke was recommended as a headache remedy. It has also been found to be an important in anti-putrefaction, arresting pus-formation and eliminating the disagreeable odors of foul surface and fetid discharges. It is an excellent healing agent wherever tissue decay is imminent or taking place. Other studies have found that *Echinacea* is effective against bacterial and many viral infections, both internally and externally. Extracts have also been shown to stimulate the immune system. It is now taken at the onset of a cold along with zinc.

### St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

The ancient Greeks believed that the fragrance of St. John's wort would cause evil spirits to fly away. The early Christians converted the herb into a symbol of St. John the Baptist because it flowers about June 24 (St. John's Day). Christian priests in the Middle Ages continued to follow the pagan example by using the plant in exorcisms, and European peasants employed a sprig of St. John's wort as a charm against witchcraft. American Indians used a tea brewed from the plant for tuberculosis and other respiratory ailments. Plant extracts have exhibited anti-inflammatory activity in laboratory animals and in test tube experiments extracts have been active against the tuberculosis bacterium.

### Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

Garlic is among the oldest of plants cultivated by man. Garlic is said to have given strength to the pyramid builders, courage to the Roman legions and was trusted as a charm against evil. Whatever the purported powers, its medicinal uses have been documented for centuries. At least three folklore uses of garlic have prompted in depth research: effects on the cardiovascular system, it has been used for centuries to treat hypertension and to alleviate blood clots, beneficial effects have been found in preventing and possibly reversing atherosclerotic disease, infections diseases and cancer

Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*)

As readers of the Tale of Peter Rabbit remember, it was chamomile tea that Peter's mother administered to him after he had overindulged in Mr. McGregor's vegetable garden.

Generations of humans, to have relied upon chamomile tea to help comfort an upset stomach and is still used for this purpose. It is listed in modern herbals as an antispasmodic, useful for menstrual cramps, as an appetite stimulant, as a mild sedative, used in reducing pain and swelling from injury.

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

Ginger has been used in China for almost 2,500 years and claimed as an ingredient in almost half of all oriental herbal medicines. The Chinese prescribe fresh ginger for abdominal distension, coughing and vomiting. The warm, pungent tang of ginger tea, made by boiling pieces of fresh gingerroot in water, has long been prescribed for colds, coughs, flu and hangovers. It is valued as a food flavoring because of its pungent aromatic qualities. It is also used as an appetite stimulant. In Japan, a ginger-oil massage is a traditional treatment for spinal and joint problems. It is known to be a rebefficient, reddening the skin by stimulating the flow of blood to a given area, and this property alone accounts for much of its ability to ease soreness.

The main components of ginger oil are monoterpenes and sesquiterpenes and fatty acids. Powdered ginger was found to be more effective than the antihistamine dimenhydrinate against motion sickness. Appears to be very effective against migraine headaches.

UNSAFE HERBS

Arnica	<i>Arnica montana</i>	Arnica is an active irritant which can produce violent toxic gastroenteritis, nervous disturbances, changes in the pulse rate, intense muscular weakness, collapse and death
Belladonna	<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	Poisonous plant which contains toxic alkaloids
Comfrey	<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	May cause cancer if taken internally over a long period of time
Goldenseal	<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	contains poisonous alkaloids if take in large amounts
Hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Contains poisonous alkaloids
Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	Contains poisonous alkaloids
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	The oil is a potential carcinogen