Natural Herbs and Vitamins for Depression

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 10 to 15 million Americans suffer from depression each year. Symptoms of depression can last for months or even years if not treated. There are numerous prescription medications that are now used for depression, as well as many herbs and vitamins that may be beneficial.

St. John's Wort

According to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, St. John's wort, while not effective in relieving major depression, has been found to be effective in cases of minor depression. St. John's wort is available in capsule, tea and extract form. It can interfere with prescription medications so a doctor should always be consulted before use.

SAM-e

SAM-e (S-Adenosyl-L-Methionine) is a compound produced in the human body. Supplementation of SAM-e is thought to help
depression. When reviewing clinical studies, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found SAM-e to be more effective than a placebo in improving symptoms of depression. Like St. John's wort, SAM-e can interfere with medications.

Kava

Kava may be helpful for people suffering from depression, as it has been shown to be beneficial in relieving anxiety, a common symptom of depression. There has, however, been some controversy as to the effects of kava on the liver. A doctor should always be consulted before using this herb.

Vitamin B Complex

B vitamins are needed for the brain to function normally. According to Michael Lesser, M.D., deficiencies of some B vitamins, such as folic acid, have been linked to low serotonin levels. Low levels of this neurotransmitter are common in those suffering from depression. Niacin and vitamin B6 are also necessary for serotonin production. Vitamins B12, B1 and B5, while not directly linked to serotonin production, may help with some of the symptoms of depression such as anxiety and fatigue.

Vitamin C

Levels of vitamin C are frequently lower in depressed people than in those who are not. Since no vitamin C is made in the body, it is important to get vitamin C through food and supplements.

Magnesium

In his book, "The Brain Chemistry Diet," Dr. Lesser also recommends magnesium for people suffering from depression, as a deficiency can cause symptoms.

Zinc
Zinc has also been found to be deficient in those suffering from depression. According to the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, zinc, along with vitamin C and folic acid, can assist in stabilizing the mood.
Natural Herbs for Diarrhea

**Astragalus** (*Astragalus membranaceus*)
Because of the astragalus anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties it is considered a good natural remedy for diarrhea. It contains polysaccharides which provide support for the immune system and stimulate the activity of phagocytes (white blood cells). It also raises the level of natural antibodies found in the blood stream.

**Picrorhiza Kurroa** (*Picrorhiza kurroa*)
This medicinal herb for diarrhea should be given only in low dosages. Higher doses can actually exacerbate diarrhea and cause flatulence in some people. As a bitter herb, it stimulates the digestive process. Picrorhiza stimulates the immune system including B and T cell activity and white blood cell activity. It can be used in the treatment of liver ailments and has anti malarial properties.

**Goldenseal** (*Hydrasis Canadensis*)
Goldenseal has an intestinal antibiotic action and helps to reduce adhesive E.coli while it stimulates the immune system. One of the
active ingredients in goldenseal is berberine. Berberine has been proven to increase the activity of macrophages which digest bacteria and viruses.

**Barberry** (*Berberis Vulgaris*)
Barberry also contains berberine, which has anti protozoic properties. Protozoic diseases which cause diarrhea include giardia, dysentery, candida and cholera vibrio. Both berberine and palmatine are active ingredients in barberry and have anti bacterial properties. Another component of barberry is berbamine. Berberine and berbamine are alkaloids and strong antibacterials which are believed to increase the production of white blood cells and platelets.

**Echinacea** (*Echinacea angustifolia*)
Echinacea is well known as an immune stimulant. It's active ingredients are polysaccharides and alkamides, which stimulate the body's immune responses. It also contains polyaceytylenes which have anti fungal, anti bacterial and anti viral properties. Echinacea appears to interfere with the activity of the enzyme hyalurnidase. This enzyme breaks down the connective tissue and allows bacteria and other microbes to travel throughout the body.

**Agrimony** (*Agrimonia eupatoria*)
Agrimony has been used as an herbal remedy for treating diarrhea due to its high tannin content. Several clinical trials confirm this use and Commission E endorses agrimony for common diarrhea.

**Carob** (*Ceratonia siliqua*)
Carob is very rich in tannins, which are astringent substances found in many plants, that have a binding effect on the mucous membranes of the intestinal tract. This makes its effectiveness high in adults with diarrhea, but even more so when used for children and infants experiencing diarrhea. The primary chemical constituents are largely sugars and tannins found in the carob pods. When these pods are eaten the gum like stability acts as a thickening
agent to aid the body in retaining water and fastening together watery stools.

**Psyllium** (*Plantago ovata*)
Psyllium is used as an herbal remedy for diarrhea and relieving constipation due to its high mucilage and fiber content. The husks of the seeds swell by absorbing water, thus adding bulk to stool.

Other natural herbs that have been used for diarrhea.

- **Bilberry** - (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)
- **Blueberry** - (*Vaccinium*, various species)
- **Blackberry** - (*Rubus fruticosus*, *Rubus allegheniensis*)
- **Raspberry** - (*Rubus idaeus*)
- **Fenugreek** - (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)
- **Pomegranate** - (*Punica granatum*)
- **Silverweed** - (*Potentilla anserina*)
- **Lady's Mantle** - (*Alchemilla vulgaris*)
- **Ginger** - (*Zingiber officinalis*)
- **Meadowsweet** - (*Filipendula ulmaria*)
- **Slippery Elm** - (*Ulmus rubra*)
- **Marshmallow Root** - (*Althea officinalis*)
- **Boswellia Serrata** - (*Boswellia Serrata*)
- **Iceland Moss** - (*Cetraria*)
- **Allspice** - (*Pimenta dioica*)
- **Fennel** - (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
- **Black Walnut** - (*Juglans nigra*)
- **Pleurisy Root** - (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- **Yarrow** - (*Achillea millefolium*)
- **Oregon Grape** - (*Berberis aquifolium*)
- **Lemon Grass** - (*Cymbopogon citratus*)
- **Andrographis** - (*Andrographis paniculata*)
- **Yellow Dock** - (*Rumex crispus*)
- **Flaxseed** - (*Linum usitatissimum*)
- **Lavender** - (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- **Vervain** - (*Verbena officinalis*)
- **Dill** - (*Anethum graveolens*)
- **European Ash** - (*Fraxinus*),
The Use of Herbal Remedies and Herbs for Diarrhea

While these remedies do not have the same prophylactic qualities as a vaccine, they can give the body a better chance at remaining healthy. Simple effective measures that should always be taken, like washing hands often, not drinking from bottles whose seal has been broken and not eating raw foods that can't be peeled before consumption, will reduce exposure to potentially harmful organisms. Travelers should avoid eating foods purchased from street vendors. Hydration salts should be included in a traveler's first aid kit to combat the dehydration caused by diarrhea.

A doctor or health care provider should be consulted before taking any herbal supplements for the treatment of diarrhea. It is always possible that the underlying cause of the diarrhea is of serious nature in which case, the use of herbal remedies might worsen the condition. Although diarrhea is not harmful by nature, it is vital to seek medical attention if it is experienced for more than 5 days, or accompanied by abdominal or rectal pain, blood in stool, signs of dehydration or a high fever.
20 Herbs that can fight cancer

1 ASTRAGALUS (Huang Qi): A Chinese herb; an immune system booster, known to stimulate body’s natural production of interferon. It also helps the immune system identify rogue cells. Work with the herb in both cancer and AIDS cases has been encouraging. The MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Texas conducted research showing that taking Astragalus when having Radiotherapy doubled survival times.

2 BERBERIS FAMILY (e.g. Podophyllum peltanum): Slow active purgative. Research has shown these herbs to have a strong action against cancer and they have been used with many cancers, especially Ovarian cancer.

3 BLOOD ROOT (Sanguinaria canadensis): Research shows consistent anti-neoplastic activity. It is effective against cancer tumours, and can shrink them; and has proven useful with sarcomas.
4 BUTCHERS BROOM (Ruscus aculeatus): The active ingredients of this herb has been found to be the ruscogenins which have tumour-shrinking and anti-oestrogenic abilities. Thus its use in the treatment of breast cancer.

5 CAT’s CLAW (Uncaria tormentosa): An adaptogen and powerful immuno-stimulant, it enhances the white cells’ clean up process (phagocytosis). It is an excellent companion to astragalus, curcumin and echinacea. Research indicates it can reduce tumour size, particularly with skin cancers. It also helps reduce the side-effects of chemo and radiotherapy.

6 CHAPARRAL (Larrea mexicana): Cancer Watch covered a major research study from the US which heaped praise on this herb. It appears to boost the immune system, stop metastases and reduce tumour size. Seems especially interesting with breast cancer. It is also an anti-oxidant and anti-microbial, with low toxicity.

7 CURCUMIN (Turmeric): This spice (Curcuma longa or Turmeric root) has been shown to have significant anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory activity. That alone seems enough for certain hospitals in America to consider using it in the treatment of polyps and colon cancer. However new research shows that it can both shrink cancer tumours and inhibit blood supply growth to tumours. It is a powerful antioxidant with liver protective benefits, and outperformed several anti-inflammatory drugs without side-effects in research.

8 DANG SHEN ROOT (Codonopsis pilosula): increases both the white blood cell and red blood cell levels, so can be extremely helpful to patients having chemotherapy and radiotherapy, or to patients whose cancer diminishes levels of either.
9 **ECHINACEA:** Another known immune system booster, it gained a populist reputation in treating colds. There is research on its helpfulness with brain tumours apart from its abilities to increase the levels of certain immune white cells in the body.

10 **FEVERFEW:** This herb caused a storm when research from Rochester University in New York showed it to be more effective than the drug cytarabine in killing leukaemia cells. The US Food and Drug Agency put the active ingredient, parthenolide, on to its ‘fast track’ programme. Nothing has yet been heard. But then, the FDA has never approved a herb for use as a cancer treatment.

11 **GOLDENSEAL:** One cause of stomach cancer can be the bacterium Helicobacter pylori. This burrows into the mucous lining of the stomach to ‘hide’ from gastric acids, and then causes irritation, acid reflux, ulcers and even cancer. Goldenseal is generally anti-microbial and is used in the Caribbean and South East Asia against parasites. Goldenseal, helped by the mineral Bismuth, will kill Helicobacter pylori. Vets seem to know this, even if doctors don’t.

12 **MILK THISTLE:** Known for years to be helpful to the liver, this herb has now been shown to be capable of protecting the liver during chemotherapy. Research in America showed that leukaemia patients who took milk thistle had reduced liver toxicity and chemo side-effects. There is a little evidence that it has its own anti-cancer activity too.

13 **PAU D’ARCO:** This tree bark was original thought to be a strong anti-cancer agent, but then its actions were clarified as strongly anti-bacterial, anti-yeast and anti-microbial. That alone might be enough in some cases of cancer cause. But new research on the differing ingredients has shown the quinoids possess immune strengthening abilities and seem to help in cases of blood and lymph
cancers.

14 RED CLOVER: Research from a number of centres including the Royal Marsden has shown its potential as a part of a treatment programme against oestrogen-driven cancers, from breast to prostate. One active ingredient in the so-called ‘Herb of Hippocrates’ is the anti-oestrogen Genistein.

15 SHEEP’s SORRELL: Used in Essiac and other herbal remedies it is a cleanser and aids healthy tissue regeneration. There is some suggestion from research that it helps ‘normalise’ damaged cells and tissue. It is also a highly praised ‘vermifuge’ - intestinal worms have little or no resistance to this herb.

16 SKULLCAP (Scutellaria barbata): Research has shown action against many cancer types, for example against cancers of the lung, stomach and intestines.

17 SUTHERLANDIA (Cancer Bush): Peer reviewed research studies indicate that this herb is anti-inflammatory, anti-viral and anti-fungal. It boosts the immune system and inhibits Tumour Necrosis Factor, known to drive ‘wasting’ in cancer patients.

18 THOROWAX, or HARES EAR (Bupleurum scorzoneraefolium): Research has shown its ability to enhance the production of natural interferon and it seems especially useful in bone cancer.

19 WHEATGRASS: One of the top private hospitals in South East Asia extols the benefits of freshly juiced wheatgrass. One shot gives you the chlorophyll of some 12 or more kilograms of broccoli. It acts as a blood purifier, and liver and kidney cleansing agent. After two weeks of daily use, blood and tissue oxygen levels improve,
as does circulation. And oxygen is the enemy of the cancer cell, as Otto Warburg told the world.

20 WORMWOOD: Another Chinese Herb, this has outperformed certain anti-malaria drugs and is now used by the aid agencies. It is strongly anti-microbial and anti-yeast and can be used as an effective part of an anti-candida diet. Also certain cancer treatments cause excesses of yeasts to form (for example, in Leukaemia treatment) threatening the patient’s health further. Excess yeasts are even felt by some cancer experts to be one of the causes of cancer. However, in recent research Wormwood has been shown to have direct anti-cancer properties.

Many of these herbs are available freshly prepared via the Natural Selection shop. Click here to go to the shop.

HEALTH WARNING!
Please be clear, no one is saying these herbs are not without any side-effects. Equally they may conflict with some drugs. The important point is that we are still discovering many of their benefits, albeit very slowly, because individual local herbalists just do not have the funds to conduct large scale clinical trials like the drugs companies do. You should seriously consider the usefulness of herbs as a part of your integrative cancer-fighting programme. They just might make a serious difference to your health. But please make sure you go to an expert medical herbalist for clear and informed advice.
Click here for more details.
When it comes to brain health, most of us turn to superfoods such as berries and leafy greens, but the world of herbs also offers help in maintaining a healthy mind. Herbs contain antioxidants and other helpful properties that can improve memory, boost cognitive function and keep your brain in shape as you age. The best part? They're already part of your diet or daily routine!

**Ginkgo biloba:** Ginkgo, one of the best-known brain herbs, improves circulation to the brain and has been shown to help treat memory problems, depression and Alzheimer’s disease. Ginkgo can also protect brain cells and repair nerve tissue damage resulting from low blood flow to the brain. Take 120 mg two to three times daily.
**Gotu kola:** This Ayurvedic herb has long been used in Indian medicine to boost memory and brain function as well as treat nervous disorders such as epilepsy. Take 120 mg daily.

Keep your brain in good health with these brain herbs! [Photo By Prakhar Amba/Courtesy Flickr.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/prakharamba/)

**Turmeric:** Commonly used in curry, this Indian herb contains a compound called curcumin that fights inflammation and plaque buildup in the brain that can lead to Alzheimer’s disease. Add the health benefits of turmeric to your diet with this recipe for a [homemade curry blend](https://www.example.com/homemade-curry-blend).
**Sage:** Take some "sage advice" and add this savory herb to your brain-boosting regime. Sage contains volative oils and flavonoids that can enhance memory and cognitive function. Sage also shares common compounds with traditional drugs used to treat Alzheimer’s, making it an alternative treatment for this disease. Add sage to soups and chicken dishes, or try this recipe for braised farm sausage with garden fennel and sage.

**Rosemary:** Carnosic acid, the active ingredient in rosemary, protects the brain from neurodegenerative problems associated with aging. Rosemary can also increase blood flow to the brain, aiding concentration. Add rosemary to meats and baked goods, or try this recipe for rosemary mashed potatoes.
5 Herbs To Help Overcome Your Thyroid Condition

Many people with thyroid and autoimmune thyroid conditions are interested to know which herbs can help restore their health back to normal. Of course there isn’t a single herb or nutritional supplement that can accomplish this on its own. However, when used in combination with other factors, such as eating well, some herbs can be extremely helpful not only in managing the symptoms of both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism, but they can also be an important part of restoring someone’s health back to normal.

For example, when I was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease, which is an autoimmune hyperthyroid condition, I used multiple herbs as part of my natural thyroid treatment protocol. Some of these herbs I’ll be discussing below. While using these herbs alone wouldn’t have restored my health back to normal, combining them with other changes I made in my lifestyle did help to contribute to my successful recovery from Graves’ Disease.
As you’ll soon find out, not all of these herbs are necessary to take. Some of these herbs are beneficial for hyperthyroidism, while others should be taken when someone has a hypothyroid condition. Some of these herbs can be taken with either condition, while others are contraindicated for certain conditions. For example, one of the herbs I took while on a natural thyroid treatment protocol was Bugleweed, which can be extremely helpful for hyperthyroid conditions, but is contraindicated for hypothyroidism. Similarly, the herb Bladderwrack can be taken by many people who have a hypothyroid condition, but is contraindicated for someone who has hyperthyroidism.

I don’t recommend that anyone just randomly begin taking these herbs, but instead they should consult with a competent natural healthcare professional first. After all, different people will require different herbs, as well as different dosages. And while these herbs are natural, this doesn’t mean that there aren’t risks involved when taking them, which is yet another reason not to self-treat your thyroid condition. With that being said, let’s take a look at some of the following herbs that might be able to help restore your health back to normal:

1. **Eleuthero.** This herb is one that people with both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism can take (including both Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis and Graves’ Disease). The herb doesn’t directly affect the thyroid gland, but instead helps the body to adapt to stressful situations, and also helps with the health of the immune system. For people with adrenal problems, which is common in people with thyroid and autoimmune thyroid conditions, this is a very beneficial herb. This is one of the herbs I took when I was initially diagnosed with Graves’ Disease, and many people who have problems with their adrenal glands can benefit from taking this herb.

2. **Echinacea.** This is very popular herb, and is responsible for enhancing the immune system function. People with Graves’ Disease
or Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis can of course benefit from this herb, since it will help with their immune system health. However, one needs to realize that the quality of the herb you take is important. This of course is the case with all of these herbs I’m discussing. But the reason why I brought this up now is because Echinacea can be purchased in many different places, including health food stores, nutrition stores, retail stores such as Wal-Mart and Target, as well as most pharmacies. So it’s important to make sure that you purchase a high quality product in order to receive optimal results.

Some people are concerned about Echinacea “boosting” the immune system and thus exacerbating the autoimmune response. Kerry Bone, who is a well known herbalist with over 20 years of experience, gives Echinacea root to most of his patients with autoimmune conditions, and rarely encounters a problem. I don’t give this herb to every person with Graves’ Disease and Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis, but I have given Echinacea root to many people, and also took this herb without incidence when I was following a natural treatment protocol for my autoimmune thyroid condition. So while Echinacea might not be for everyone, it sometimes can be an important component of a natural treatment protocol.

3. Bugleweed. This is my favorite herb for hyperthyroidism, as when I was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease this herb did a great job to help manage the hyperthyroid symptoms I was experiencing. Once again, this isn’t to suggest that everyone with a hyperthyroid condition should take Bugleweed, as you do want to consult with a holistic doctor first. But as someone who decided not to take any anti-thyroid drugs or beta blockers, I will admit that I might have not been able to avoid taking prescription drugs if it wasn’t for this herb. I also consult with people who are taking Methimazole or PTU and want to try weaning off the medication and instead take the Bugleweed, which essentially is an “antithyroid herb”. As mentioned earlier, this herb is contraindicated for people who have
hypothyroidism, and also shouldn’t be taken by those women with hyperthyroidism who are pregnant or lactating.

4. **Bladderwrack**. This herb is for people with hypothyroidism. Taking this herb, along with other herbs and supplements, plus incorporating other lifestyle factors, can help restore the health of someone who has hypothyroidism. This of course can mean that someone who has been taking synthetic or natural thyroid hormone may eventually be able to stop taking these drugs with the help of this herb (under the supervision of their medical doctor of course). In fact, Dr. Janet Lang, who is the founder of Restorative Endocrinology, talks about this herb as being “liquid magic” for people with hypothyroid conditions. When combined with the herb Ashwaganda this herb can stimulate the production of thyroid hormone in some people with hypothyroid conditions.

This herb does include iodine, and as a result, some people with Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis don’t do well when taking this herb. However, since the amount of iodine is low, most people with Hashimoto’s don’t have a problem taking this herb, although some will still choose to avoid it out of fear that it will exacerbate their condition. I don’t consider this an “essential” herb for someone with hypothyroidism or Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis, but for someone who wants to follow a natural treatment protocol and isn’t taking synthetic or natural thyroid hormone, taking Bladderwrack can be very helpful. This herb shouldn’t be taken by those with hyperthyroidism, and is contraindicated in women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

5. **Ashwagandha**. Yet another herb for people with thyroid and autoimmune thyroid conditions that has many different benefits. And that’s one of the great things about most herbs, as they usually benefit the body in many different ways if used appropriately. For example, Ashwagandha helps the body to cope with stress, and is also beneficial to the immune system. It also has some other benefits
as well, as it has some anti-inflammatory effects, and is also used as a tonic for children.

In addition to these five wonderful herbs, I wanted to briefly mention two additional “herbal complexes” I took when I was diagnosed with Graves’ Disease. These complexes are manufactured by the company MediHerb, and can be taken by either people with hypothyroidism, as well as those with a hyperthyroid condition.

1. Adrenal Complex. As the name implies, “Adrenal Complex” is a great product for people who have adrenal problems…specifically low cortisol levels. Licorice is the main herb in this complex that helps with the low cortisol levels, although this herb has other benefits as well. Rehmannia is another herb in this complex, and this offers both adrenal and immune system support. I took both Eleuthero and Adrenal Complex to help strengthen my adrenal glands. Of course just taking these two herbs alone wasn’t responsible for strengthening my adrenals. Eating well, getting sufficient sleep, and doing a good job of managing stress are all important lifestyle factors when it comes to adrenal gland health.

2. Rehmannia Complex. This is another complex which consists of numerous herbs, and just like some of the other herbs I mentioned in this article, this complex also helps with the immune system, as well as offering some support to the adrenal glands and liver. In addition, another benefit is that it helps to remove toxins. Perhaps the most important herb this complex includes is Hemidesmus, which is an herb which helps to suppress the autoimmune response, which of course is important with both Graves’ Disease and Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis.

In summary, using one or more of these herbs can help restore the health of someone who is following a natural thyroid treatment protocol. They do carry some risks when not used appropriately, and there are contraindications as well, which is why it’s best not to self-treat your condition, but instead it’s wise to consult with a
competent natural endocrine doctor. Doing this is the best approach if you want to receive optimal results. There are of course other herbs which might be beneficial for thyroid and autoimmune thyroid conditions, but these are just some of the more effective ones.
Top 10 Natural Weightloss Aids

Some years ago I read an excellent article by Dr Ron Rosedale which discussed the effects of insulin resistance in keeping people overweight and unhealthy. The effect is basically that when you eat too many carbohydrates, your body overproduces insulin (which is used in the breakdown of sugars) and your body begins to build a resistance. The worst effect of this, is that you lose your ability to recognize when you are full – which ultimately leads to overeating. In his article he discussed a variety of natural remedies that he uses to dramatically reduce insulin resistance, thereby reducing cravings and ultimately fat. These remedies are all readily available in most western countries without a prescription.
1. Coenzyme $Q_{10}$ (CoQ$_{10}$)

*Rosedale’s Recommended Dose: 100-300mg*

This vitamin-like substance is, by nature, present in all human cells and responsible for the production of the body’s own energy. In each human cell food energy is converted into energy for our body in the cell power plants with the aid of CoQ$_{10}$. It is an essential compound required in the proper transport and breakdown of fat into energy; 95% of all our body’s energy requirements is converted with the aid of CoQ$_{10}$. Clinical studies have shown that CoQ$_{10}$ may help promote weight loss. In one study coenzyme Q$_{10}$ levels were found to be low in fifty-two percent of overweight subjects tested. Treatment with 100mg of CoQ$_{10}$ was found to accelerate weight loss resulting from a low-calorie diet.

2. Chromium

*RRD: 1000mcg*

*Caution:* This daily amount is much higher than the US FDA recommended daily dose. If you experience any side-effects, stop taking it immediately.
Chromium is required in trace amounts for sugar metabolism in humans. It is usually found as Chromium picolinate or Chromium Chloride. Chromium plays a key role in increasing the body’s sensitivity to insulin. Without chromium, insulin’s action is blocked, blood sugar levels are elevated, and thermogenesis is inhibited. Since increasing insulin sensitivity is a critical goal in promoting weight loss, chromium supplementation would be quite beneficial in people trying to lose weight. In a study of 59 college-age students at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, researchers found that women taking 200 micrograms of chromium picolinate a day gained almost twice as much lean body mass as those who did not take the supplements. This can result in long-term reductions in body fat, since lean body mass burns more calories than fat. Chromium also improves the effectiveness of insulin. For this reason, chromium may also be helpful in preventing diabetes, which is common in people who are overweight. People with diabetes who take chromium should be under medical supervision, since their insulin dosage may need to be reduced as their blood sugar levels drop.

3. Carnitine

**RRD: As much as you can afford**

Carnitine helps transport fats in the bloodstream into the mitochondria (where the cellular energy or power produced) for burning. It has the ability to break up fat deposits and aids in weight loss. It also helps to reduce cravings for sweets and fats. Though the body naturally produces carnitine, people who are overweight rarely make enough. In clinical trials, overweight volunteers taking 200 mcg of chromium picolinate with 100 mg of L-carnitine daily, plus vitamins and minerals, have been shown to average a 15-pound weight loss in eight weeks. This combination was observed to increase their metabolism as well. You should increase your daily exercise when taking carnitine.
4. Glutamine

RRD: As much as you want

Glutamine is the most abundant naturally occurring, non-essential amino acid in the human body. In the body it is found circulating in the blood as well as stored in the skeletal muscles. It becomes conditionally essential (requiring intake from food or supplements) in states of illness or injury. Food sources of glutamine include meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and dairy products. There have been several recent studies into the effects of glutamine and what properties it possesses, and, there is now a significant body of evidence that links glutamine-enriched diets with intestinal effects; aiding maintenance of gut barrier function, intestinal cell proliferation and differentiation, as well as generally reducing septic morbidity and the symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Glutamine is also marketed as a supplement used for muscle growth in weightlifting, bodybuilding, endurance and other sports.

5. Vanadium

RRD: 25mg (first 3 months then reduce and stop)

Vanadium is an element (elemental symbol V). It is found in most living organisms. Vanadium, in many ways, mimics insulin, thus it
helps accomplish the function of insulin without requiring extra effort on the part of your pancreas. Vanadium and Chromium together are a smart pair in controlling blood sugar. This, in turn, suppresses blood sugar spikes and the formation of excess body fat following meals, especially meals containing refined carbohydrates.

6. Gymnema Sylvestre

Gymnema sylvestre is a herb native to the tropical forests of southern and central India where it has been used as a naturopathic treatment for diabetes for nearly two millennia. While it is still being studied, and the effects of the herb are not entirely known, the herb has been shown to reduce blood sugar levels when used for an extend
Top Five Herbs that Promote Kidney Health

(NaturalNews) While many herbs are popular for liver and colon health, the best herbs for kidney maintenance are not as well known in Western medicine. Those suffering nausea, loss of appetite, stunted growth, dry skin, sleep disorders, concentration problems, or puffy eyes should consider a kidney flush. This article will review five plants traditionally used to promote and maintain kidney health.

The Top Five

1) Couch grass - *Agropyron repens* (Gramineae)
A vigorous perennial harvested throughout the year, couch grass is found on every continent except Africa. Couch grass contains polysaccharides (including *triticin*), volatile oil (including *agropyrene*), mucilage and other nutrients. Used medicinally since about 25 AD, couch grass increases urine production and treats urinary tract infections such as cystitis and urethritis. Couch grass relieves and even
partially dissolves kidney stones. Couch grass (considered an invasive weed in many areas) can treat an enlarged prostate. The fresh juice can treat liver problems such as jaundice. The root can be roasted and ground as a coffee substitute. Couch grass has diuretic, demulcent and antibacterial properties.

2) Green tea - *Camellia sinensis* (Zingiberaceae)
Native to the Orient, green tea has been consumed for thousands of years. The young, unfermented leaves of the green tea plant contain compounds known as polyphenols (plant antioxidants), which inhibit kidney stones and prevent cancers of the prostate, ovaries, liver, breast and colon. Green tea also helps the liver by reducing fatty deposits. Known to encourage improvement of the heart, circulatory system, brain, pancreas and liver, green tea also assists with weight loss by strengthening the metabolism via *thermogenesis* (an increase in body temperature that helps break down fat). Green tea also reduces cholesterol and is used as a heart tonic. Green tea is a stimulant (containing caffeine) and has anti-inflammatory, astringent and diuretic properties.

3) Java tea - *Orthosiphon aristatus* (Lamiaceae)
A shrub with lilac colored flowers, java tea is native to Asia and Australia. The leaves of java tea (also known as *kidney tea* and *cat whisker plant*) are used medicinally. Java tea contains flavones (including sinensetin), glycoside (including orthosiphonin), volatile oil and large amounts of potassium. Java tea is listed in French, Indonesian, Dutch and Swiss pharmacopoeias as a remedy for kidney ailments. Thought to increase the kidney's ability to eliminate
nitrogen-containing compounds, java tea treats kidney stones, kidney infections and renal function. Java tea has diuretic properties.

4) **Rehmannia** - *Rehmannia glutinosa* (Scrophulariaceae)

A perennial with large sticky leaves and purple flowers, rehmannia is the most important herb for kidney and adrenal health in Chinese medicine (where it is called *di huang*). Rehmannia root is used medicinally and it contains phytosterols and antioxidants (including *rehmannin*), along with iridoid glycosides (including *catapol*). Rehmannia is primarily used as a kidney tonic and also to detoxify the liver and to treat hepatitis. Rehmannia treats autoimmune disorders such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and fibromyalgia. Rehmannia helps treat hair loss, respiratory disorders, menopause and other hormone related disorders. Rehmannia has diuretic properties.

5) **Uva ursi** - *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Ericaceae)

Also known as *bearberry*, uva-ursi is a low-lying evergreen shrub native to Europe and even found in the Arctic. The leaves are gathered in autumn along with the berries. Uva-ursi contains hydroquinones (including *arbutin* - up to 17%), tannins (15%), phenolic glycosides and flavonoids. Uva-ursi is one of the best urinary antiseptics. Used extensively in herbal medicine since the 2nd century, uva-ursi is primarily used to help disinfect and astringe the kidneys. Uva-ursi was also traditionally smoked along with tobacco. Uva-ursi has antiseptic and antibacterial properties. **Note:** uva-ursi should not be used by pregnant women or for more than 7-10 days at a time. While promoting *kidney health*, uva-ursi should not be used to
treat existing kidney infections.
Anti-inflammatory Herbs for Arthritis

If you were born in the baby boomer years when you see the word “herbs,” marijuana might be one of the words that come to mind. Well, medical marijuana is listed as one of the Anti-inflammatory Herbs for Arthritis; however thank goodness it is not the only herb with anti-inflammatory characteristics. Since medical marijuana requires a prescription from a doctor to be legal, I am providing you with links to my research nevertheless, this will not be the main focus within this hub.

Prior to listing the anti-inflammatory natural herbal remedies that my research has revealed that do not require a prescription; let’s take a look at the crippling disease of arthritis. Delve into Google Health and you will learn that arthritis is inflammation of the joints which results in pain, swelling, stiffness, and limited movement.
Symptoms and Causes of Arthritis

Please note that rheumatoid arthritis is only one type of arthritis; there are over 100 different types of arthritis and the depilating symptoms can be:

- pain and or warmth around a joint
- redness of the skin and or reduced ability to move the joint, and
- stiffness or swelling of one or more joints

Causes of this joint inflammation may occur for numerous reasons including:

- general “wear and tear” on specific joints
- a broken bone and or serious injury to the joints
- an autoimmune disease in which the immune system tricks the body into believing there a foreign body part and attacks the joints in that location, or
- infection which can be caused by viruses or bacteria

The type of treatment one receives is determined by the cause of the arthritis, the severity, which joints are affected and how the condition affects your daily activities. Your doctor should take into consideration your age and occupation as well. There are numerous prescription drugs available to treat arthritis, however if you are like me, and many others you might prefer to explore alternative
medicines prior to taking strong prescriptions. For me this is a personal preference that has to do a lot with my heritage of which perhaps I will discuss in another hub, and what happened to my dad. But for now let’s take a look at the numerous places arthritis can attack your body and the anti-inflammatory herbs for arthritis information I’ve discovered.
Doctors’ for Herbal Remedies

- To repair the joints by taking a combination of glucosamine sulfate, MSM, and Chondrotin along with a good multi-vitamin.
- To restore function through movement by begin to stretch, exercise, lose weight if necessary, and the application of heat.
- To rule out and treat infections and food allergies, which can cause inflammation and aggravate arthritis symptoms.
- To reverse inflammation by taking natural anti-inflammatory herbs to assist in reducing swelling thus eliminating pain.

Natural Arthritis Herbal Remedies and Foods

Salai Guggal

Boswellia Serrata

Boswellia is a moderately large branching tree found in the dry hilly areas of India. The tree trunk is tapped and a gummy oleoresin is exuded. A purified extract of this resin is used in modern herbal preparations and has anti-inflammatory action much like conventional nonsteriodal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

- **What is Boswellia?**
  Boswellia is a purified extract of this resin is used in modern herbal preparations.
• **Boswellia Reduces Inflammation**
  The ancient herb boswellia has been used for thousands of years to treat conditions that, in recent years, have been found to be caused by inflammation.

**Salix alba**

**White willow or Willow bark**

The ancient Egyptians used white willow for inflammation. The white willow tree is a native to Europe and Asia. This arthritis herbal remedy can be used instead of ibuprofen or aspirin because it does not appear to be an irritant to the stomach lining.

• **White Willow**
  Description of white willow, its habitat, medicinal uses, and other useful tips.
White Willow Bark - What is White Willow Bark?
Information about the medicinal uses of the herb white willow bark, side effects, drug interactions, and research.

Prunus

Cherry

Cherries can be found in America, Europe, and Asia. The University of Michigan researchers have performed a recent study that has revealed that a cherry-enriched diet reduced inflammation markers in animals by up to 50 percent. Other studies have indicated that the anthocyanins in cherries may be beneficial for arthritis, including a range of other inflammatory-related conditions.

- Cherry Health: Arthritis, Inflammation and Gout Relief
  For decades, tart cherries have quietly grown a devoted fan base of arthritis and gout sufferers who routinely consumed the fruit (particularly as juice) to help soothe their symptoms.

- Thinking Is Dangerous: Recommended Arthritis Cure - Cherries
  googling "cherries, arthritis" brings up reams and reams of companies either promoting cherries as an arthritis cure
Zingiberaceae - Circuminoid

Curcumin

The rhizomes of the turmeric plant are boiled for several hours and then dried in hot ovens, and then are ground into a deep orange-yellow powder commonly used as a spice in curries and other South Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine. It is said to stimulate blood circulation, solves blood clot, is an antioxidant and an anti-inflammatory agent that relieves pain. Curcumin is an active ingredient that has an earthy, bitter, peppery flavor and a mustardy smell.
Zingiber officinale

Ginger

This underground stem or knobby rhizome has been grown in Asia, India, and Arabia since ancient times. It is known to aid digestion, treat an upset stomach, and nausea for more than 2000 years. In recent years it has been found to reduce inflammation. In a study of 261 people with osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee, when the ginger extract was used twice a participants experienced less pain and required fewer pain-killing medications.

- **Ginger**
  In addition to providing relief from nausea and vomiting, ginger extract has long been used in traditional medical practices to reduce inflammation.
- **arthritis pain relief - rheumatoid arthritis symptoms and remedy**
  Full strength natural alternative medicines, health remedies
and organic health supplements. Numerous articles and a newsletter with health news and tips.

Harpagophytum procumbens

**Devil’s Claw**

This herb comes from the southern portion of Africa. The active ingredients are believed to be iridoid glycosides called harpagosides found within the secondary root. The *Rheumatology* journal published a study that compared devil’s claw extract to the anti-inflammatory prescription drug Vioxx (now off the market, but one of the drugs my dad was on for years). Within six weeks the devil’s claw was deemed as effective as the Vioxx for reducing pain and it also appears to work in the same manner as the Cox-2 anti-inflammatory drugs such as Celebrex (another one of the drugs that my dad took for years).
Symphytum officinale L

**Comfrey**

Comfrey cream – Comfrey is an herb with a plant origin in Asia and Europe. It is a perennial with oblong dark green leaves that is full of vitamins, minerals, and chlorophyll. Chlorophyll acts as a catalyst, to promote healing within the body and is a valuable blood purifier. Comfrey cream has been taken off the market as an oral supplement however; it can be used as a topical cream containing comfrey extracts.

The herb *comfrey* contains potentially dangerous levels of pyrrolizidine alkaloids (a toxic substances) so it is not to be taken orally any longer. Studies have shown that individuals using comfrey extract cream during a three week period showed an improvement in mobility and pain.

**Medical Marijuana**

Marijuana requires a prescription to use for medical reasons otherwise it is illegal to use. Most of the articles that I read revealed that this herbal drug showed improvement in movement, less pain, better sleep and a reduction in inflammation. However, this drug is still illegal in many states and research is still being done to determine how and what this drug will be prescribed for.
• Arthritis and medical marijuana
• Medical Marijuana - Pros/Cons
• marijuana and arthritis

Other Alternatives for Arthritis

• EXCELLENT NATURAL CURE FOR ARTHRITIS - by Tajana-Mihaela
  Bones are important part of our immune system: blood cells develop in bone marrow...
• Homeopathic Ant Remedy Relieves Rheumatic Arthritis Gout and Itching- by Debby Bruck
  Extensive article about homeopathy and other scientific facts related to one homeopathic remedy for arthritis, rheumatism,

Ending Notes...

In summary I would like to say that the purpose of this hub has been to inform readers that at times there are alternative medicines that can assist an individual through pain and illnesses just as well as prescription drugs. For years doctors, the government, and the FDA have been against herbal medicines. However, within recent years numerous doctors have began researching and recommending some alternative medicines. Personally, I feel blessed to have found a doctor that works with me and meets me half way when it comes to prescription verses herbal drugs.

Please do not view this as a pro herbal remedies and con prescription drugs rant; however in some ways it might should be. Over the years I’ve watched my dad suffer badly with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) I was under the impression that he had been taking some herbal remedies and getting relief from them. However, it was not until he was on his death bed that I realized the numerous harmful prescription drugs he was continuously taking. My dad’s last days were spent bleeding profusely from all major organs
because of previous side effects from the medications he had taken over the years.

He spent his last days having numerous blood transfusions and dying a slow painful death as he was taken off of all previous medications that relieved pain and reduced swelling. I am not a doctor, or an herbalist; I am just a daughter that loss her dad way too soon. And the saddest thing is that if my dad had lived through this ordeal, his doctors were talking about possible herbal remedies that could be suggested for him; to assist in elevating the pain and suffering associated with RA. The doctors knew he could NO LONGER be on the prescription drugs that he had been using for so many years. Now that is an example of the full-circle of bureaucratic crap that is centered around natural remedies and alternative medicines.

Common sense to me would have deemed to have Dad on herbal remedies first and used the prescription drugs as emergency alternatives. Anyway, hopefully someone else can benefit from this story. So please keep an open mind to herbal remedies that might have less harmful side effects than some prescription drugs. And by all means whatever you are taking be it prescription or natural herbs take time to research, ask questions, and research some more to find out what the product is doing to your body.

If you like this hub and want additional information; you will find the below link helpful as well:

Disclaimer:

This information is solely for informational purposes. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL ADVICE. Before engaging in any complementary medical technique, including the use of natural or herbal remedies, you should do your own research, and then consult your present physician. If your doctor does not believe in alternative medicines and you would like to give them a try then
find a reputable doctor familiar with natural herbal remedies for arthritis that can assist you in deciding what treatments might meet your specific needs.
Herbs for Blood Clots

According to the American Medical Association (AMA) in the book "Complete Guide to Prevention and Wellness," plaque buildup can cause cracks in the arterial walls. The body reacts quickly by rushing to repair the leak with platelets, which clot the crack with
blood. Platelets are sticky and while able to seal the crack, can also cause a blood clot to form and grow in size. If blood clots get too large, they block blood flow. According to the AMA, blood clots inhibiting blood flow to the heart and brain are a reason for heart attacks and strokes. Herbs may aid in lowering blood pressure and allowing proper blood flow, but only a physician can decide the best course of treatment for the patient.

**Gingko biloba**

Ginkgo biloba has been used in Chinese medicine to strengthen vascular and circulation. Ginkgo is an anti-inflammatory and also inhibits the formation of blood clots. It dilates blood vessels. According to Holly Boon, author of "55 Most Common Medicinal Herbs," the recommended adult dose is 300 mg daily in powder or pill form, or 40 mg in extract or tincture form.

Since ginkgo does affect blood pressure, the patient should consult with a physician prior to taking the herb, especially if under blood pressure medication treatment.

**Green tea**

Green tea contains two antioxidant properties, EGCG and polyphenol oxidase, that help in circulation and plaque reduction. EGCG, epigallocatechin-3-gallate, is believed to be responsible for green tea's use in disease fighting, according to Arthur Roberts, M.D., author of "Nutraceuticals." Dr. Roberts also writes that green tea is well documented in providing many health benefits, including preventing platelet clumping.

Green tea begins working, according to Mark Goldstein, author of "Your Best Medicine" in as little as one cup daily, although many of the teas found in grocery stores are not as potent to provide the needed circulatory boost or plaque reduction. An adult dose should be a minimum of two strong cups of tea made with loose green tea.
leaves, or a pill containing 40 mg to 90 mg of EGCG once daily.

Only a physician can determine whether a green tea regimen will be beneficial to the patient.

**Grapeseed Extract**

Grapeseed extract, according to Arthur Roberts, author of "Nutraeuticals," contains antioxidant properties that help with circulation by relaxing the blood vessels. Grapeseed extract prevents oxidation of LDLs, one component in plaque formation which causes blood clots, and also reduces platelet clumping, another component that forms blood clots.

Grapeseed extract comes in pill form and an adult dose is 50 mg to 200 mg daily. While no side effects are currently listed for grapeseed extract, the patient should not take this herb without consulting a physician.

References
Herbs for Diabetes

Since antiquity, diabetes has been treated with plant medicines. Recent scientific investigation has confirmed the efficacy of many of these preparations, some of which are remarkably effective. Only those herbs that appear most effective, are relatively non-toxic and have substantial documentation of efficacy are covered here.

Pterocarpus marsupium (Indian Kino, Malabar Kino, Pitasara, Venga)

The tree is the source of the Kino of the European pharmacopoeias. The gum-resin looks like dried blood (Dragon's blood), much used in Indian medicine. This herb has a long
history of use in India as a treatment for diabetes. The flavonoid, (-)-epicatechin, extracted from the bark of this plant has been shown to prevent alloxan-induced beta cell damage in rats.

Both epicatechin and a crude alcohol extract of Pterocarpus marsupium have actually been shown to regenerate functional pancreatic beta cells. No other drug or natural agent has been shown to generate this activity.

**Bitter Melon** *(Momordica charantia)*

Bitter melon, also known as balsam pear, is a tropical vegetable widely cultivated in Asia, Africa and South America, and has been used extensively in folk medicine as a remedy for diabetes. The blood sugar lowering action of the fresh juice or extract of the unripe fruit has been clearly established in both experimental and clinical studies.

Bitter melon is composed of several compounds with confirmed anti-diabetic properties. Charantin, extracted by alcohol, is a hypoglycaemic agent composed of mixed steroids that is more potent than the drug tolbutamide which is often used in the treatment of diabetes. *Momordica* also contains an insulin-like polypeptide, polypeptide-P, which lowers blood sugar levels when injected subcutaneously into type 1 diabetic patients. The oral administration of 50-60 ml of the juice has shown good results in clinical trials.

Excessively high doses of bitter melon juice can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Small children or anyone with hypoglycemia should not take bitter melon, since this herb could theoretically trigger or worsen low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia. Furthermore, diabetics taking hypoglycemic drugs (such as chlorpropamide, glyburide, or phenformin) or insulin should use bitter melon with caution, as it may
potentiate the effectiveness of the drugs, leading to severe hypoglycemia.

**Gymnema Sylvestre** (Gurmar, Meshasringi, Cherukurinja)

Gymnema assists the pancreas in the production of insulin in Type 2 diabetes. Gymnema also improves the ability of insulin to lower blood sugar in both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. It decreases cravings for sweet. This herb can be an excellent substitute for oral blood sugar-lowering drugs in Type 2 diabetes. Some people take 500 mg per day of gymnema extract.

**Onion and Garlic** (Allium cepa and Allium sativum)

Onion and garlic have significant blood sugar lowering action. The principal active ingredients are believed to be allyl propyl disulphide (APDS) and diallyl disulphide oxide (allicin), although other constituents such as flavonoids may play a role as well.

Experimental and clinical evidence suggests that APDS lowers glucose levels by competing with insulin for insulin-inactivating sites in the liver. This results in an increase of free insulin. APDS administered in doses of 125 mg/kg to fasting humans was found to cause a marked fall in blood glucose levels and an increase in serum insulin. Allicin doses of 100 mg/kg produced a similar effect.

Onion extract was found to reduce blood sugar levels during oral and intravenous glucose tolerance. The effect improved as the dosage was increased; however, beneficial effects were observed even for low levels that used in the diet (e.g., 25 to 200 grams). The effects were similar in both raw and boiled onion extracts. Onions affect the hepatic metabolism
of glucose and/or increases the release of insulin, and/or prevent insulin’s destruction.

The additional benefit of the use of garlic and onions are their beneficial cardiovascular effects. They are found to lower lipid levels, inhibit platelet aggregation and are antihypertensive. So, liberal use of onion and garlic are recommended for diabetic patients.

**Fenugreek** *(Trigonella foenum-graecum)*

Experimental and clinical studies have demonstrated the antidiabetic properties of fenugreek seeds. The active ingredient responsible for the antidiabetic properties of fenugreek is in the defatted portion of the seed that contains the alkaloid trogonelline, nicotinic acid and coumarin.

**Blueberry leaves** *(Vaccinium myrtillus)*

A decoction of the leaves of the blueberry has a long history of folk use in the treatment of diabetes. The compound myrtillin (an anthocyanoside) is apparently the most active ingredient. Upon injection it is somewhat weaker than insulin, but is less toxic, even at 50 times the 1 g per day therapeutic dose. A single dose can produce beneficial effects lasting several weeks.

Blueberry anthocyanosides also increase capillary integrity, inhibit free-radical damage and improve the tone of the vascular system. In Europe, it is used as an anti-haemorrhagic agent in the treatment of eye diseases including diabetic retinopathy.

**Asian Ginseng**
Asian ginseng is commonly used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat diabetes. It has been shown to enhance the release of insulin from the pancreas and to increase the number of insulin receptors. It also has a direct blood sugar-lowering effect. A recent study found that 200 mg of ginseng extract per day improved blood sugar control as well as energy levels in Type 2 diabetes (NIDDM).

**Bilberry**

Bilberry may lower the risk of some diabetic complications, such as diabetic cataracts and retinopathy.

**Stevia**

Stevia has been used traditionally to treat diabetes. Early reports suggested that stevia might have beneficial effects on glucose tolerance (and therefore potentially help with diabetes), although not all reports have confirmed this. Even if stevia did not have direct antidiabetic effects, its use as a sweetener could reduce intake of sugars in such patients.

**Ginkgo Biloba**

Ginkgo biloba extract may prove useful for prevention and treatment of early-stage diabetic neuropathy.

**Cinnamon - Triples insulin's efficiency**

**Barberry** - One of the mildest and best liver tonics known. Dosage: tincture, 10-30 drops; standard decoction or 3-9 g.

**Herbal Combinations**

For all pancreatic problems:
1 part uva ursi
1 part goldenseal
1 part elecampane
2 parts dandelion root
2 parts cedar berries
1 part fennel part ginger

Mix the powdered herbs and put them in #00 capsules. Take them after every meal.