

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Urinary Stlppott herbs: provide general healing support for the urinary system. Herbs: agrimony, couchgrass, elder flowers, plantain, yarrow, juniper (not with inflammation), horsetail, Lady's mantle, saw palmetto.

Foundation support herbs- provide overall nutritional and adaptogenic support. Herbs: nettles, red clover, super blue-green algae, astragalus, the ginsengs, acidophilus, burdock.

Demulcents- will help soothe and coat irritated, inflamed tissue. Herbs: marshmallow, comfrey, plantain, violet, mullein, comsilk.

Antispasmodics- assists in helping the body reduce muscular spasms along the urinary tract. Herbs: marshmallow, hops, red raspberry, scullcap, chamomile.

Alkalizing herbs-may help alkalize the urine. Herbs: sarsaparilla, peppermint, marshmallow, comfrey root., plantain, ginger.

Atiti .. microbials (including urinary antiseptics) - help overcome and destroy pathogenic bacteria and strengthen the immune responses. Herbs; echinacea, goldenseal, myrrh, burdock, garlic, bilberry, uva ursi, feverfew, honeysuckle, barberry, buchu.

Diuretics- help stimulate the kidney and bladder and increase the flow of urine. Herbs: dandelion, comsilk, sassafras, juniper berry, fennel, cleavers, uva ursi, horsetail, goldenrod, meadowsweet, pipsissewa, plantain, shepherd's purse

AntHnpammatory- are indicated to lessen the inflammation that may have been caused by bruising or trauma, or from the present infection. They will assist in lessening the pain and discomfort. Herbs: ginger, echinacea, yellow dock, licorice, gotu kola, comfrey, chamomile, marshmallow.

If there is bleeding-Shepherd's Purse is one of the most effective herbs to stop bleeding of all sorts. It is a diuretic and is useful for genitourinary problems especially bladder infections with bleeding and difficult urination. Marshmallow and plantain will also help stop urinary bleeding.

For cystitis with weakness and exhaustion - beth root, horsetail, hydrangea, com silk, barberry, black haw.

For kidney involvement including kidney stones- gravel root, marshmallow leaf, couchgrass, barberry, stone root, hydrangea, com silk, uva ursi.

Herbs effective against specific bacteria:

- For Enterobacter- eucalyptus
- For Candida- ginger, yarrow, barberry, fennel, black cohosh
- For E. Coli- Yarrow, uva ursi, calendula, fennel, St. John's wort, chamomile, Oregon grape root, thyme, ginger
- For Klebsiella - uva ursi, thyme, St. John's wort, honeysuckle, ginger
- For Proteus- garlic, eucalyptus, thyme, horseradish

For Streptococcus faecalis - calendula, blessed thistle, ginkgo, thyme, ginger

SPECIFIC HERBS AND THEIR ACTIONS

Juniper berry - contains aromatic compounds that increase the flow of urine. It increases the production of digestive fluids which assists in its absorption. Juniper relieves pain and is antiseptic, diuretic, and stimulant. It is useful in cases of chronic cystitis but is best not used when there is acute inflammation as it may result in irritation of the bladder.

Uva Ursi - contains bitter compounds that are antiseptic and increase the flow of urine. It also contains astringent compounds that shrink inflamed tissues. It is effective against E. coli in the bladder. The herb possesses tonic properties and is useful for weakened liver, kidneys, and other glands. Uva ursi is a strong, non-irritating diuretic and urinary antiseptic for bladder and kidney infections. When combined with marshmallow it helps to eliminate stones from the kidney and bladder. It strengthens and tones the urinary passages and is effective to treat blood in the urine. Its diuretic properties are at their most effective if the herb is infused into cool or tepid water. Hot water alters its diuretic properties.

Uva Ursi is good to use if there is an irritable bladder or an atonic boggy bladder. It is also good to use when there is bacterial vaginosis and if there is ulcerative cystitis. It may cause the urine to become brownish-green and it works best with alkaline urine.

Plantain- has cooling diuretic properties that make it beneficial for kidney and urinary bladder infections.

Dandelion root - contains bitter compounds that enhance the efficiency of the body's eliminative and detoxifying functions. These compounds help restore normal liver function, increase the production of digestive fluids and enzymes, particularly bile. It increases the flow of urine and has a laxative effect. It acts as an effective diuretic. Herbal diuretics help to cleanse the system. By promoting the release of fluids from the tissues it helps to relieve the false sensations of urgency characteristic of cystitis.

Chamomile flowers - contain aromatic compounds that increase the production of digestive fluids, reduce muscle spasms and pains, reduce inflammation and are antiseptic. These compounds have a sedative and relaxing effect.

Couch grass- strongly diuretic with a soothing, anti-inflammatory healing effect on the lining of the bladder. Useful when there is mucus discharge from the bladder with painful and frequent urination.

Cleavers- soothing diuretic which is useful for acute or chronic cystitis with swollen lymph nodes and uterine inflammation.

Nettles- mild diuretic which is useful if there is a possibility or history of kidney infection. It builds the blood and is a nutrient rich herb.



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Buchu- a urinary antiseptic diuretic and that can also be taken after the acute phase of an infection has passed to restore damaged mucosa. Buchu works as a urinary disinfectant. Its volatile oil stimulates urination and is excreted virtually unchanged by the kidneys, rendering the urine slightly antiseptic. Good for use with a bladder infection accompanied by a burning sensation and if there is acidic urine with a constant desire to urinate with no relief from doing so. It should not be used if there is acute inflammation.

Echinacea- improves overall immune responses, stimulates circulation and removes toxins from the blood. It is also an effective anti-inflammatory. Echinacea contains a natural antibiotic (echinacoside) which is comparable to penicillin in its broad spectrum activity. It also strengthens tissues against assault by invading microorganisms. Body tissues contain a chemical (hyaluronic acid) that acts as a shield against germ attack. Many germs produce an enzyme (hyaluronidase) that dissolves this chemical shield, allowing them to penetrate tissues and cause infection. Echinacea contains a substance (echinacein) that counteracts the germs tissue-dissolving enzyme, keeping them out of the body's tissues.

Echinacea also helps stimulate immune responses. It boosts macrophage (big eaters that engulf and digest microorganisms) activity and increases the production of infection-fighting T'-cells up to 30 percent. In addition, echinacea may act like the body's own virus-fighting chemical, interferon. Interferon released in the body boosts the cells' ability to resist infection. Untreated cells and cells bathed in an echinacea extract were exposed to two potent viruses, influenza and herpes. Only a small proportion of cells treated with echinacea became infected compared to the untreated cells

Cornsilk - is a soothing, anti-inflammatory diuretic that directly reduces painful symptoms and swelling due to inflammation. It is a diuretic and urinary demulcent. It is especially useful with excessively alkaline urine and for bladder irritation in children.

Hydrangea- good for stimulating the kidneys and flushing them clean. It is useful if there is urinary pain and back pain from kidney involvement. Helpful if there is irritation of the bladder and urethra with quick, sharp pains in the urethra. It works quickly on acute cutting urethral pain and is considered one of the best general urinary anodynes.

Goldenseal- good for bladder infections if there is bleeding. It is an effective antimicrobial and choleric. Repeated use of goldenseal can destroy the intestinal flora and should not be used on a continual basis. Goldenseal should not be used during pregnancy.

Marshmallow root- increases the acidity of the urine thus inhibiting bacterial growth. It helps to strengthen and cleanse the bladder. It is a demulcent, emollient, and diuretic. Marshmallow is the best source of easily digested vegetable mucilage which lubricates the body, protecting it against irritation and dryness. It soothes the urinary system and is usually combined with other diuretic herbs to treat kidney and bladder inflammations, difficult or painful urination and kidney stones or gravel. It stops bleeding in the urine.



Yarrow- anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, spasmolytic, diaphoretic, astringent, tonic. It regulates many urination problems and soothes and heals mucous membranes. It clears heat and congestion by aiding elimination via the kidneys through its diuretic effect.

Gravel root- a mild diuretic, stimulant, tonic and urinary anodyne. Helpful in cases in which there is deep seated back ache with cloudy, milky urine, and aching bones. Good for women with uterine prolapse and a tendency to form kidney stones.

Horsetail- is an active diuretic that is used if there is scanty, dark colored urine with an irritable bladder resulting in spastic urge to urinate.

Cranberry- Unsweetened cranberry juice may prevent bacteria from sticking to the cells that line the urinary tract. An experiment showed that 73 percent of recurrent UTI sufferers showed significant improvement after drinking a pint of cranberry juice each day for three weeks. Researchers at Tufts University have found that one of the effects of taking cranberry juice is that bacteria are unable to adhere to the lining of the bladder. Drinking cranberry juice therefore helps sweep the bacteria from the bladder.

In the bladder, cranberry juice breaks down into hippuric acid, a compound that has natural bactericidal properties. Some research has shown that the urine of those who eat cranberries contains a bacteria fighting chemical called hippuric acid. However some researchers believe that urinary acidity and hippuric acid have nothing to do with the herb's effectiveness but that it is the ability of the juice to prevent bacteria from adhering to the lining of the bladder that makes it effective in helping to resolve cystitis.

Cranberries have quinolic acid and vitamin C that have an impact on bacteria. The quercetin in all berries, including cranberries, helps resolve inflammation. This may not be enough to make a significant antibacterial difference but it may be enough to head off an infection if it is started right away.

When drinking cranberry juice it is best to purchase pure, unsweetened juice. Avoid commercial cranberry juice cocktail products as they contain very little cranberry juice and contain high fructose com syrup or other sweeteners.

The acidity of the cranberry juice can enhance the effectiveness of the antibiotic nitrofurantoin. However, some antibiotics like erythromycin are more effective at a more alkaline pH. In that case you would want to stop drinking the cranberry juice and perhaps take 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 oz. of water. Some herbalist recommend that cranberry juice should be used at the very beginning of symptoms and after symptoms have subsided. If herbs are being taken for active symptoms cranberry juice is not recommended at this time.

Barberry- the berberine in barberry has remarkable infection fighting properties. Studies show that it kills microorganisms (E. coli, staphylococci) that cause urinary tract infections. (High doses can cause nausea, vomiting, convulsions, hazardous drops in blood pressure and depression of heart rate and breathing. Those with heart disease or chronic respiratory problems should be careful not to take large doses. Pregnant women should not take barberry.)

Burdock- contains chemicals (polyacetylenes) that kill disease causing bacteria and fungi. It has been used traditionally for urinary tract infections.

Goldenrod- a mildly antiseptic and stimulating diuretic which is good to use if there is pain in the kidneys and scanty, dark urine.

Cinnamon - one German study showed that it 'suppresses completely' the cause of most urinary tract infections (*E. coli*) and the fungus (*Candida albicans*) responsible for vaginal yeast infections. Use 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon of powdered herb to one cup of boiling water. Drink up to 3 cups a day. Cinnamon infusions should not be given to children under 2 years old. For older children and those over 65 start with low-strength preparations and increase strength if necessary.

In powdered form, culinary amounts of cinnamon are nontoxic, though allergic reactions are possible. Cinnamon oil, however, should not be ingested as it may cause nausea, vomiting and even kidney damage.