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10 Best Herbs for Women's Health

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Overview

Women's health is very important to society, as women are the ones who breast-feed humanity. It is in their lap that civilizations are cradled. All the ancient cultures in the world respect women and their role in the society.

From a baby girl to a grandmother, or from the onset of menstruation as a preteen to the years after menopause, she plays an important role throughout her life. During this period, the qualities of love, care, compassion, forgiveness and kindness all stick to her even though she undergoes a lot of changes in her physiology and psychology.

During these transitions, if she did not pay attention to her health then imbalances would occur. We should respect and embrace these transitions, and with the help of Ayurvedic wisdom, we can keep our health in good condition.

The most common imbalances in women's health include cramps, bloating, irregular menstrual cycles, hot flashes, headaches, poor circulation, acne, stress, anxiety, depression, and infections. There is a big list of symptoms that women will experience throughout their lifetime.

A range of herbal remedies tailored to the different phases in a woman's life can help ease menstrual difficulties, promote fertility, help in menopause and keep our hearts and bones strong.

Teens

During the teen years (and into childbearing age), menstruation is frequently accompanied by PMS, cramps, headaches, bloating, mood swings and acne. The following herbs may help ease these discomforts:

Aloe Vera is a smooth muscle relaxant that specifically targets the pelvic area and *Apana Vayu*. It soothes cramps by relaxing muscle tension and spasms.

Recipe:

¼ cup Aloe vera juice + ½ tsp. cumin powder + 2 pinches hing

Musta is used to treat menstrual disorders such as dysmenorrhea, PMS, irritability, menstrual pain and the retention of water. It also helps in the treatment of yeast and Candida formation, parasites, sluggish liver, indigestion, dysentery, loss of appetite, chronic fevers, gastrointestinal problems and menopausal symptoms. Musta also helps to reduce inflammation and heals the skin, making it great for treating breakouts and acne during adolescence.

Asafoetida is known to increase progesterone, a hormone that helps initiate the menstrual process. If your period frequently starts out light, this herb should help to start it on time and maintain more regularity. It also reduces the pain associated with menstruation, gas and bloating.

Dandelion helps eliminate excess water weight associated with PMS and relieves that uncomfortable balloon feeling. Due to its detoxifying effects on the liver, Dandelion can help treat the root cause of the bloating rather than just masking symptoms.

Recommendation:

Drink one cup of dandelion tea 2-3 times daily.

Child bearing age- (20s-40s)

Throughout the childbearing years, the primary focus of herbal treatment for women's health issues is on fertility. Even if you do not plan on having children, these herbs can help regulate your menstrual cycle and keep your reproductive system healthy. The following herbs are recommended:

Shatavari is an asparagus root that is used as a rejuvenative tonic, nutritive, diuretic, antispasmodic, emmenagogue and Antacid. Shatavari is considered to be the best herb for the female reproductive system. It is useful for treating infertility, decreased libido, miscarriage, menopause, leucorrhea, dryness in the vaginal wall, and has the ability to balance pH in the cervical area. It contains *saponins* or phytoestrogens, which has an effect on the female mammary gland.

Fenugreek is considered the finest herb for enhancing feminine beauty. It also aids in sexual stimulation, balances blood sugar levels, and contains *choline* which aids in the thinking process. It is very useful in the treatment of diabetes and the prevention of breast cancer. Its ability to balance hormone levels helps control the symptoms associated with both PMS and menopause. Fenugreek has been found to promote the growth of new breast cells and increase the size and fullness of the breasts. In addition, the antioxidants contained within Fenugreek help slow the ageing process.

Lodhra is astringent, cold, anti-inflammatory and *Grahi* in properties. It is predominately used in the treatment of diarrhea, dysentery, bleeding piles, hemorrhagea, metrorrhagea, leucorrhoea, blood disorders, skin disorders and other uterine disorders. Lodhra is also used to treat skin conditions such as acne, redness and inflammation.

Red Clover helps promote fertility and aids in the treatment of hormonal imbalances, PMS, ovulation, lack of menstruation and painful menstruation. Women who are trying to conceive can utilize red clover for its alkalinizing effects, as it balances vaginal pH in favor of conception.

Perimenopause - Menopause

According to Ayurveda, menopause is not a disease but rather a natural transition in women that occurs between the ages of 45-55 years. This is a transition that should be honored. Menopause is also associated with the process of aging in women. Since ageing is a 'Vata' predominant stage of life, the symptoms of menopause experienced by some women are often similar to the symptoms associated with an aggravated Vata. There are three types of menopause: (1) vata dominated menopause, (2) pitta dominated menopause and (3) kapha-dominated menopause.

Some of the symptoms experienced by women going through menopause include hot flashes, night sweats, tension, irritability, headache, palpitation, insomnia, numbness, depression, dryness, dizziness and a lack of interest in sex.

With the proper Herbs and simple lifestyle changes, women can easily avoid most of the unpleasant side effects associated with menopause. The proper use of Herbs can help in strengthening and rejuvenating the reproductive system as well as in regulating the hormones and calming the emotions.

Recommended Herbs Include:

Shatavari, Ashwagandha, Sandalwood, and Licorice.

Licorice contains estrogenic compounds and is useful in the treatment of depression. Licorice also reduces stress levels by preventing the breakdown of adrenal hormones such as cortisol, the body's main stress-fighting hormone, making them more available to the body.

Ashwagandha is considered an *adaptogen*. It also improves physical energy and increases white blood cell formation, thereby increasing immunity and vitality. Ashwagandha stabilizes hormonal balance. It helps to reduce panic attacks, insomnia and mood swings. It improves memory and cognitive function. Due to an aphrodisiac property, it helps to improve the libido in women during and after menopause. It also has a mild sedative effect on the central nervous system and acts as a muscle relaxant.

Guduchi works as a *rasayana* and promotes the reversal of aging. It is an anti-inflammatory, anti-pyretic and diuretic alterative. Guduchi is used in the treatment of urinary disorders, general debility, autoimmune diseases and dyspepsia. It also acts as a mild cleanser.

Post Menopause

After menopause, most of the signs and symptoms of the transition are over. Some continuation of a routine that nourishes the body, protects the heart and bones, and calms the nervous system is warranted. It is in this phase of life that you will enjoy your time as an ‘experienced wise woman’. Please note that in general you will have to follow some routine in order to keep yourself healthy. A recommended routine is provided below:

- **Create a daily and seasonal routine** by staying in tune with Nature.
- **Maintain a healthy routine** physically, mentally and spiritually to open the heart and strengthen your inner connection.

Physically: Exercising properly and regularly

Mentally: Transforming stress and addictions

Spiritually: Meditation, prayer, yoga

- **Utilize proper nutrition** by eating for good health and longevity while avoiding dietary risk factors. This includes dietary aware food choices, digestion, absorption, and elimination.
- **Detoxify the body** through internal cleansing and purification techniques.
- **Rejuvenation**