

AHG, Nov 2013; Bend, Oregon

Utilizing the Synergy of Aroma-Herbalism

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Herbs and essential oils are used in phytotherapy practices throughout Europe, especially in France where specially trained doctors prescribe essential oils; pharmacists compound them and in many instances they are paid for by socialized medicine. This class will introduce you to the synergy of herbalism and aromatherapy for overall greater therapeutic value than either modality used alone. The external and occasionally, the internal use of essential oils is an effective adjunct to most herbal protocols and is well practiced in many medical institutions around the world. With attention paid to their safety issues, this combined therapy can be more effective than conventional treatments alone. Whether it is a simple first aid matter treated at home or a client in your clinical practice needing more professional care, you will find it simple, effective and pleasant to add essential oils in some form along with your herbal suggestions.

Most essential oils have some degree of antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral properties, but they also exhibit physical and emotional effects such as stimulation, relaxation, stress reduction, pain relief and healing, depending on the chemical constituents of each individual essential oil. These oils can be easily incorporated into phytotherapeutic protocols for a more effective outcome in both acute and chronic problems. External use of diluted oil is the safest application. At the very least, the use of pleasant scented aromatics can help reduce stress, the first step in all healing.

Further study than can be provided in our time together is highly encouraged. In this class I will be discussing the oral use of essential oils. Ultimately, this requires a broad education and is not to be entered into lightly. Self-medication demands extensive self-education. Safety, contraindications, quality of oil, medical history, allergies, dosage and many other parameters must be considered before administering essential oils internally. In *HerbalGram* #57 (2003), Jane Buckle, RN states, "While tinctures are a common way of using herbs, essential oils are rarely administered orally by aromatherapists. This could be because most aromatherapy training suggests the oral method is fraught with danger. However, many essential oils may be administered orally with safety." She further states, "If essential oils are being used for a clinical condition, it makes good sense that the person using the oils is trained to use them clinically. Even if essential oils are not being used clinically, it is best to understand how to use them safely because they are so concentrated." Interestingly, the Commission E monograph for lavender includes lavender essential oil for both internal use and as a bath additive. In fact, in most European pharmacies essential oils can be purchased in capsules intended for oral use.

Throughout this workshop we will emphasize safety and explore some of the preventive measures and synergistic adjuncts of herbs, diet, lifestyle and essential oils for the treatment of general health concerns. The power point presentation for this class will supplement the information provided here. As an example of putting such a protocol into practice I have provided an example for cystitis. It utilizes herbs, essential oils, supplements, diet and lifestyle into a treatment plan for this bladder infection.

Phytotherapeutic Protocol for Cystitis

Cystitis is a bladder infection that affects both genders, but is more prevalent in women. Bladder infections occur in about 20 percent of women, many of whom suffer recurrent bouts. Statistics show that more than 20 percent of women who develop bladder infections have three or more recurrences per year. Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are the most frequent secondary medical complication during acute care and rehabilitation; and urinary-system disorders are the fifth most common primary or secondary cause of death. About 90 percent of bladder infections are caused by the bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, a microorganism that lives in the gut. Women are more prone to these infections due to a short urethra and general anatomy, allowing *E. coli* bacteria a shorter route to infection. This infection usually causes painful urination and urgency. Severe symptoms can include fever, low back pain and blood in the urine, and should be checked by a medical practitioner.

If you experience recurring bouts of this disorder prevention habits should be adopted as a matter of daily course. Implementing the following lifestyle adjustments and dietary measures will help guard against chronic problems and help prevent future occurrences. As always, seek proper medical advice before self medicating and work in cooperation with your doctor.

Herb teas

Diuretics, aquaretics, antiseptics, pain relievers, demulcents and antispasmodics:

Uva ursi, buchu, cleavers, dandelion leaf, saw palmetto, horsetail, corn silk, marshmallow, kava, hydrangea, golden rod, echinacea, lovage, nettle, pipsessewa, sage. Make an infusion or decoction as necessary, either of a single herb or any combination as a blend, and drink 3 cups per day (one cup water to 2 tsp dried herb; steep ten minutes). A sitz bath of these herbs can also be used with helpful results.

Foods

Incorporate the following foods into your daily diet: cranberry, blueberry, parsley, celery, flax, melons, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, burdock root. Leafy green vegetables should be a staple, with less emphasis on sugars, grains and other carbs.

Preventive Lifestyle Measures

Drink 8 glasses of water per day

Wear breathable cotton underwear; Avoid tight clothing

Practice good hygiene (wipe from front to back)

Urinate before and after sex

Take showers instead of baths (no bubble baths)

Avoid chemical douching and feminine hygiene sprays

Avoid alkaline bar soaps – liquid soaps are more likely to be pH balanced

No tampons, use pads

Urinate often - a full bladder is more prone to infection

Avoid citrus fruits which create an alkaline environment, a better host for bacteria

Avoid sodas, caffeine and alcohol; drink cranberry juice

Practice Kegel exercises for better bladder control

Supplements

D Alpha Mannose - Bacterial adherence to urethral mucosa allows a urinary tract infection (UTI) to flourish. D-Mannose has a high affinity to the bacteria lectins (glycoproteins) that are used to adhere to the urinary tract lining. This soluble sugar blocks the adhesion of the bacteria to the binding cells, discouraging colonization. D-Mannose is absorbed eight times slower than glucose, and when ingested, is not converted to glycogen or stored in the liver, but rather goes directly to the blood stream from the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Hence, it is safely used by those with blood sugar concerns. D-Mannose is mostly filtered through the kidneys and routed to the bladder; it works about 80-90% of the time because the bacteria disabled by Mannose causes 80-90% of UTIs. Studies suggest that D-Mannose is 10 times more effective than cranberries in dislodging *E. coli* bacteria from the bladder wall, and can therefore ameliorate most UTIs in 24-48 hours. Antibiotic treatment radically changes GI bacterial populations required for good health, potentially causing fungal or gastrointestinal infections. D-Mannose doesn't kill friendly bacteria; it is non toxic and bacteria won't become resistant to it, so it is safe for extended use. It's safe for kids and pregnant women. Follow manufacturers instructions on the dietary supplement label as concentrations and dosages can vary from product to product.

Vitamin C –1000 mg 4x per day when the cystitis is present; the calcium or magnesium ascorbate form of vitamin C is preferred over ascorbic acid

Beta-carotene - 25,000 IU per day (promotes tissue repair and immune function)

Zinc - 30mg per day (tissue repair)

Bromelain - 500mg, 3 times a day between meals (anti inflammatory) Note: there may be some sensitivity to this product in certain individuals

Cranberry supplements (prevent adhesion of bacteria to wall of urethra)

Acidophilus (this probiotic provides friendly bacteria for re-colonization)

As a last resort- this oral protocol should be done only under qualified supervision.

Cystitis Blend of Essential Oils –

Latin name	common name	%	purpose
<i>Satureja montana</i>	savory	25	anti inflammatory
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis CT verbenone</i>	rosemary verbenone	25	liver cleansing
<i>Melaleuca alternifolia</i>	tea tree	15	immune modulating
<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	sage	10	anti bacterial
<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	lemon eucalyptus	10	anti inflammatory
<i>Citrus aurantium var. amara</i> (leaf)	petitgrain	10	decongestant
<i>Mentha piperita</i>	peppermint	5	liver cleansing

This blend can be used externally for those prone to UTIs.

In an acute situation, they can be taken orally.

Fill empty capsules (corn or gelatin) with carrier oil (olive, flax, EPO, rose hip, cranberry, black cumin, raspberry, etc.) and add 2 drops of the essential oil blend and recap. Put into a dry glass jar and store in the refrigerator. The drops may also be mixed with vegetable oil and taken by spoon without a capsule.

In the following instructions the total drops per day must be taken in divided doses of two drops per dose or per capsule.

Dosage:

GENERAL - Take 6-8 drops total per day, for the first 3 days, in divided doses. Take 4 drops a day for the next 7 days.

CHRONIC - take 4 drops a day for 15 days (one capsule containing two drops, morning and night). Continue with the same dose for one week per month, for the next 3 months.

EXTREME / ACUTE - Take 4 drops at the first sign of symptoms, then 2 drops every 2 hours for the next 6 hours, depending on symptoms; then follow general protocol. If severe symptoms persist, consult medical advice.

External use of another essential oil blend:

Mix 4 drops each of palmarosa, rosewood, sandalwood, and thyme CT thuyanol in one ounce oil or lotion; apply a small amount three times a day to lower abdomen and low back.

Adjunct therapies listed above will increase the recovery time.

A note about MRSA and essential oils

In medical settings aromatic medicines are gaining attention in the treatment of many diseases, but none so much as with infections where antibiotics have lost their effectiveness, such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). The University of Manchester and many other medical institutions have carried out clinical trials on the effectiveness of essential oils against “super bugs” unresponsive to conventional antibiotic therapies. According to the researchers, studies revealed specific essential oils that killed MRSA, *Shigella* and *E.coli*, as well as many other bacteria and fungi, some within minutes of contact.

We have all seen the dramatic headlines warning us of the overuse of antibiotics and their failure to treat infections which they once effectively eradicated. In spite of commonly held assumptions that all bacteria are bad, optimal health requires that we maintain a symbiotic, health-enhancing partnership with many types of bacteria. For example, many different bacteria live within our digestive system and are essential for proper digestion and long term health. Every time we use an antibiotic, we undercut this bacterial partnership. By indiscriminately killing off all bacteria, we create an environment that may be filled by health-compromising pathogens or antibiotic-resistant bacteria that now have no competition for growth. Continued reliance on antibiotics has ominous future implications, given the increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Essential Oils studied for these microbes include orange, coriander, and most essential oils from Australia. HerbalGram Magazine (#88 Nov 2010-Jan 2011) devoted a lengthy article to this subject. Controlling airborne bacteria thru diffusion into the air is a decidedly effective preventive and treatment of many bugs. Effective oils used in hospital settings include lavender, lemongrass and geranium.

Materia Medica for 15 Common Essential Oils

Boswellia carterii (frankincense) - inflammation, wound healing, skin care, meditation aid

Chamomilla recutita; *Matricaria chamomilla* (German chamomile) - inflammation, bruising, sprains, tension, pain

Chamomilla nobile; *Anthemis nobilis* (Roman chamomile) - spasms, swelling, insomnia, skin care, bruising

Citrus bergamia (bergamot) - digestive tonic, sore throat, detox, acne, lymphatic congestion, depression

Cupressus sempervirens (cypress) - astringent, tonic, varicose veins, sore throat, excessive menstruation, allergic rhinitis, respiratory problems

Eucalyptus globulus (eucalyptus) - congestion, inflammation, pain, colds, flu, herpes, shingles

Helichrysum italicum (helichrysum, everlasting, immortelle) – pain, arthritis, bruising, inflammation, sun damaged skin

Lavandula angustifolia (lavender) - insect bites/stings, sunburn, headache, bruises, sprains, acne, rash, sedative, wound healing, antimicrobial

Melaleuca alternifolia (tea tree) - athlete's foot, burns, warts, acne, cold sores, flu, insect bites

Mentha piperita (peppermint) - indigestion, nausea, headache, fatigue, fever, sinusitis, liver tonic, pain relief, antiviral; substitute spearmint during pregnancy

Oreganum majorana; *Majorana hortensis* (sweet marjoram) - anti spasmodic, sore muscles, insomnia, menstrual cramps, arthritis

Pelargonium graveolens (geranium) – dandruff, menstrual cramps, PMS, balancing in skin care, anti inflammatory; antifungal; antiviral

Rosa damascena (rose) - liver and digestive tonic, vascular tonic, menstrual aid, heartache, grief

Rosmarinus officianalis (rosemary) - headache, fatigue, constipation, muscle aches, circulatory tonic, liver tonic, muscle pain

Salvia sclaria (clary sage) - post natal depression, low estrogen, PMS, varicose veins, nervous fatigue

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