

An Herbalist's Notes on the COVID-19 Virus

Northeast School of Botanical Medicine
7Song.com

March 6, 2020

I feel cautious adding my opinion about herbal treatment for the COVID-19 coronavirus, as I don't have *any* experience with it. But I've worked with other seasonal flus, so based on my prior experience with these, I am going to make some recommendations.

If you think that I am speaking out of turn here, I suggest just ignoring this post, and finding other sources that you trust.

At the Ithaca Free Clinic, we are starting to set up precautionary protocols for the virus, though we are in the beginning stages of what that will look like. At this point, I am asking that only a small group of herbalists handle any of the herbs and herbal medicines. And that we exclude ourselves from the clinic if we have any viral symptoms (which is similar to what we've done previously).

If you use herbal medicines, I would suggest stocking up on them now. It is useful to have a well-stocked at-home herbal apothecary for most health issues, so that you don't have to go out when you are not feeling well.

For those of you who make your own herbal medicines, this may be a good time to make larger amounts of the herbal preparations that you think you will need for yourself, family and community.

For prevention and preparation see this CDC page

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>.

A Comparison between Covid-19 and the current seasonal flu in the US

While I do think the Covid-19 virus carries particular risks and we should do what we can to avoid catching and spreading it, I want to point out the current CDC statistics for the seasonal flu that is going around. Since October 2019 there have been approximately 34,000,000-49,000,000 cases and of these, there have been between 20,000-52,000 deaths. I don't write this to be alarmist, but to give you these statistics to offer a comparison.

Herbal Treatment

I am going to divide the herbs into categories. Some categories are useful for almost any respiratory virus, while some herbs are used only on an as needed basis, for instance, herbs for anxiety and sleep.

Herbs with an asterisk * should be used cautiously, while keeping in mind that people can have idiosyncratic reactions to any herb or medicine.

There is scant information about how herbal medicines might interact with pharmaceuticals and other medications. I suggest monitoring your health as best you can to make sure the herbs are not altering your medications in any detrimental way.

These lists are far from complete; please add other recommendations that you think may be helpful.

Below are some formulas with dosages that can be altered to fit your specific needs. There is also a common name/botanical name chart to cross-check the plants.

Herbal Preparations-different ways to administer herbal medicines internally and externally.

Note-when discussing tinctures and glycerites I use milliliters (ml) as a dosage rather than dropperfuls, as it is more consistent. The glass part (pipette) of a 1 oz or 2 oz dropper when full is approximately 2 ml. So a ½ dropperful is about 1 ml.

1. Bath
2. Capsule
3. Compress
4. Essential oil
5. Gargle
6. Glycerite
7. Honey
8. Neti pot
9. Steam inhalation
10. Tea
11. Tincture

Therapeutic Categories

Prevention and Immune Tonics

* Note-on a recent thread, some people who have autoimmune disorders described their negative reactions with some of the below plants. There was no clear correlation between the person, illness or herb. So if you have a pre-existing autoimmune condition, you may want to monitor yourself to make sure these herbs don't worsen your symptoms.

1. Astragalus
2. Ceanothus americanus
3. Chaga fungus
4. Echinacea root
5. Marshmallow root
6. Reishi mushroom
7. Rosemary
8. Schisandra
9. Turkey tail mushroom

Antiinflammatories

Many of the viral symptoms are due to the body's inflammatory response

1. Black birch
2. Chamomile
3. Ginger

4. Japanese knotweed
5. *Licorice-may elevate blood pressure
6. Marshmallow
7. Meadowsweet
8. Steeplebush, Meadowsweet
9. Turmeric
10. Willow
11. Wintergreen

Antiviral

These are some of the main herbs to help fight off a virus. They should be taken about 5 times daily if sick, about 2-3 ml at a time (depending on age and size). Many of these also have antibacterial activity.

1. Baptisia
2. Barberry
3. *Boneset-discontinue use after 2 weeks, do not use with liver disease
4. *Chaparral-may be hard on the liver. Very strong tasting.
5. Elder
6. Garlic
7. Myrrh
8. Oregon grape root
9. Osha
10. Yarrow

Anxiety & Sleep

These herbs can be relaxing and help one fall asleep when uncomfortable

1. Blue vervain
2. Damiana
3. Kava kava
4. Oatstraw
5. Passionflower
6. Rosa
7. Skullcap
8. Tulsi
9. Valerian

Bioavailability

These plants can increase the ability of medicines to diffuse through capillaries into local tissue increasing the effectiveness of other herbs. They are also circulatory stimulants

1. Cayenne
2. Prickly ash

Decongestants

Help dry up the sinuses and respiratory tract

1. Yerba mansa
2. Horseradish
3. Beggar ticks
4. Cayenne
5. *Ephedra/Ma huang- can raise blood pressure and increase anxiety
6. Yerba santa
7. Gumweed

Demulcent Herbs

To help moisten dry irritated

1. *Licorice
2. Marshmallow
3. Slippery elm

Essential Oils

Used as a steam, to help loosen phlegm

1. Eucalyptus
2. Thyme
3. Rosemary
4. Tea Tree

Liver Health

An overall general health approach

1. Artichoke leaf
2. Dandelion root
3. Milk thistle
4. Schisandra fruit
5. Turmeric

Respiratory Support

Antitussive-helps control coughing

Expectorant-helps bring up phlegm

1. Coltsfoot-anti-tussive
2. Elecampane-lung support
3. Garlic-respiratory antibacterial, antiviral
4. Horehound-expectorant
5. Hyssop-expectorant
6. *Lobelia-bronchial dilator
7. Mullein-respiratory antiinflammatory, expectorant
8. Osha-respiratory antiviral, antibacterial, expectorant
9. Thyme-respiratory antiviral, anti-tussive

10. Wild cherry-antitussive

Common Name/Botanical Name

1. Artichoke leaf-Cynara scolymus
2. Astragalus-Astragalus membranaceus
3. Baptisia-Baptisia tinctoria
4. Barberry-Berberis spp
5. Beggar ticks-Bidens spp
6. Black birch-Betula lenta
7. Blue vervain-Verbena hastata, V. spp
8. Boneset-Eupatorium perfoliatum
9. Cayenne-Capsicum spp
10. Chaga-Inonotus obliquus
11. Chamomile-Matricaria chamomilla
12. Chaparral-Larrea tridentata
13. Coltsfoot-Tussilago farfara-coughing
14. Damiana-Turnera diffusa
15. Dandelion-Taraxacum officinal
16. Echinacea root-Echinacea spp
17. Elder-Sambucus canadensis, S. niger
18. Elecampane-Inula helenium
19. Ephedra/Ma huang-Ephedra spp
20. Eucalyptus-Eucalyptus spp
21. Garlic-Allium sativum
22. Ginger-Zingiber officinale
23. Ginkgo-Ginkgo biloba
24. Goldenrod-Solidago spp
25. Gumweed-Grindelia spp
26. Horehound-Marrubium vulgare
27. Horseradish-Armoracia spp
28. Hyssop-Hyssopus officinalis
29. Japanese knotweed-Reynoutria japonica
30. Kava kava-Piper methysticum
31. Licorice-Glycyrrhiza uralensis, G. glabra
32. Lobelia-Lobelia inflata
33. Marshmallow-Althaea officinale
34. Meadowsweet-Filipendula ulmaria
35. Milk thistle-Silybum marianum
36. Mullein-Verbascum thapsus
37. Myrrh-Commiphora spp
38. Oatstraw-Avena sativa, A. spp
39. Oregon graperoot-Berberis spp
40. Osha-Ligusticum porteri
41. Passionflower-Passiflora incarnata
42. Prickly ash-Zanthoxylum clavaherculis, Z. spp
43. Redroot-Ceanothus americanus, C. spp
44. Reishi mushroom-Ganoderma lucidum, G. tsugae
45. Rosa-Rosa spp
46. Rosemary-Salvia rosmarinus
47. Sage-Salvia officinalis
48. Schisandra-Schisandra chinensis
49. Self heal-Prunella vulgaris
50. Skullcap-Scutellaria lateriflora
51. Slippery elm-Ulmus fulva
52. Steeplebush, Meadowsweet-Spiraea spp
53. Tea tree-Malaleuca alternifolia
54. Thyme-Thymus spp
55. Tulsi-Ocimum tenuiflorum
56. Turkey tail mushroom-Trametes spp
57. Turmeric-Curcuma longa
58. Valerian-Valeriana officinalis
59. Wild cherry-Prunus serotina
60. Willow-Salix spp
61. Wintergreen-Gaultheria procumbens
62. Yarrow-Achillea millefolium

63. Yerba mansa-*Anemopsis californica*
64. Yerba santa-*Eriodictyon angustifolium*

Immune Supporting Tea

I am not sure how well herbs can help prevent the transmission of the virus once someone comes into contact with it. But for people with a lowered immunity (and/or find that they easily get sick), it may be helpful. Also, see the notes about the herbs under 'Prevention' above.

1. Astragalus
2. Reishi mushroom
3. Echinacea root

Directions

To make 1 quart, use 1.25 oz herb

Put equal parts of the above plants and fungi in a pot. Add water and cook for 40 minutes. Turn off heat and let sit for about 15 minutes. Strain and drink a 4-6 oz cup about every 4 hours. This will be bitter. The leftover tea can be refrigerated and heated up again later.

Anti-Viral Tea

1. Echinacea root 3 pt
2. Berberis spp 3 pt
3. Yarrow leaf 2 pt
1. Marshmallow root or leaf 2 pt
2. Boneset 2 pt
3. Meadowsweet 2 pt
4. Licorice 2 pt
5. Osha 1 pt

Longer, Stronger Directions

Use approximately 1-1.25 oz of herbs for 1 quart of tea

Simmer the Echinacea, Berberis, and Osha for about 10 minutes in a covered pot. Turn off heat and stir in the other herbs, cover, and let sit for another 15 minutes. Strain and drink about a 4-6 oz cup every 4 hours. This will be very strong tasting, you may want to add honey to help it go down. The leftover tea can be refrigerated for later.

Shorter Easier Directions

Put 1 oz of all the herbs in a 1-quart French press. Fill with hot water, push the plunger about ¼ way down to make sure all the herbs are covered in hot water. Let steep 15 minutes.

Antiviral Tincture

1. Yarrow
2. Oregon grape root
3. Boneset
4. Echinacea

5. Licorice
6. Osha
7. Willow

Directions

I prepare all of these tinctures separately and then add them together for this tincture blend. I use approximately equal amounts of all of the above herbs. Take 2-3 ml 4-6 times daily

Gargle

For sore throat due to infection

1. Licorice-antiinflammatory, demulcent
2. Sage-antibacterial, antiviral
3. Thyme-antibacterial, antiviral
4. Yerba mansa-antibacterial, astringent

Directions-to make a ½ quart of tea use ½ oz of the above herbs.

Pour hot water over an individual or combination of these herbs in a French press. Push the plunger down about ¼ way down to keep herbs under the hot water. Let steep for about 15 minutes. Strain. While warm, gargle the tea a few times each day. Unused tea can be stored in the refrigerator and heated up again for use.

Garlic Honey

This is something that can be added to teas or other medicines to give them a slight garlicky antimicrobial edge while making the medicines taste a little better for those who like garlic and don't mind a little 'dragon breath'.

- Garlic-to taste
- Honey-a pint to a quart

Cut the garlic up into small to medium sized pieces. Put in a jar and pour in the honey leaving some air space at the top. Cover and let sit for a few weeks. That's all. Add a teaspoon or so to tea, or add a small amount into a tincture.

Antimicrobial Throat Spray Tincture

There are many different herbs that can be used for sore/infected throats. I prepare all of these separately as tinctures and then combine them together and put them in a small spray bottle. I add the vegetable glycerin so it is not as harsh tasting. You could also prepare one or more of these herbs as a glycerite instead of adding glycerin. Spray onto the throat throughout the day. You may need to put the spray top into your mouth to get the herbs directly onto your throat. For this reason, you should clean the spray top between each use, especially if more than one person is using it.

- Calendula 4 pt
- Echinacea 4 pt

- Osha 3 pt
- Baptisia 3 pt
- Berberis spp 3 pt
- Propolis 2 pt
- Thyme essential oil 5 drops per oz.
- Vegetable glycerin-5-10% of the final volume

I hope you find this information helpful. ~7Song