TINCTURES

You can make your own tinctures and store them in glass bottles for at least 10 years, using and mixing and matching as you need.

Start with a wide mouth glass jar (such as a big pickle jar). If you can get dark coloured glass jars, good, otherwise you can spray pain the outside of jars black to prevent light from entering. Do the same if storing herbs. Clean the jar and sterilize it with either bleach or hydrogen peroxide, rinse well to get rid of any residue. If you don't have these products, boil or steam the lid and jar for 30 minutes.
Get the plant material you wish to use ready. It can be leaves, buds, stems, flowers, bark, root.
Wash to get rid of dirt and bugs. Leaves and flowers can be used as is, but cut up bark, roots, or any hard pieces into 1" size pieces.
Use one part (eg. 1 cup) of the cut up plant material, to 5 parts (eg. 5 cups) alcohol. If you are using flowers, or leaves or buds they are soft and easy to extract the constituents you can use any type of alcohol such as brandy, vodka, rye. If you are using the harder roots, bark or stems, you will need to get the 100 proof type alcohol.
Mix the plant material with the alcohol in the jar, put the lid on and leave for 4-6 weeks. Shake it gently every day to help encourage the action of the tincture.
When finished, strain and bottle in sterilized glass bottles and store in a dark, cool place (not the refrigerator). In truth, we have stored them in the cupboard of our kitchen and they were fine, but we want to give you the best information here.
The usual dosage is 1 teaspoon taken 2-3 times a day. It will taste strong because of the alcohol therefore most people dilute it with 1/2-1 cup of water. For alcohol sensitive people, pour 1/2 cup boiling water over the teaspoon of tincture in a cup and let it sit for 5 minutes to cool, the alcohol will have dissipated.

We have made tinctures from wild weeds as well as herbs that we have grown in the garden. We also keep our eyes open when we travel across country for different herbs that grow in areas that we can use. There are many herb books on the market as well as good information on the internet to help you know what to use for what. In addition, in this book we have given you a good idea of what to use for different ailments. Here's a list of what we have tried.

Rose Hips
Plaintain - all parts
Chickweed plants and flowers
Irish moss
Yarrow flowers
Mullein leaves
Dandelion root and leaves
Calendula flowers

HOW TO PRESERVE HERBS FOR FUTURE USE

OBTAINING THE HERBS

You can find lots of sources over the internet that sell raw herbs. If you have any difficulty, you can phone us for help. You can also start to collect your own. Herbs are everywhere for free harvesting, just remember not to pick any that may have been sprayed with herbicides or pesticides.

Leaves are best picked in the early morning or late evening when they are the freshest. Pick the healthiest, strong leaves that look like they have good 'energy' and 'vitality'. If the plant has fruit, such as raspberry plants, pick the leaves before the fruit is ripe, once the plant is in full fruit the energy of the plant is sitting in the fruit, wait until the fruit is finished, then the energy has gone back into the leaf and you can pick the leaves again.

Fruit is best picked when it is fully ripe. Don't pick anything that looks diseased or eaten by bugs.
Roots are best taken late in the fall when the plant above the ground is finished.
Bark and stems can be used in the fall or spring before the leaves are out.

Plants can be dried, frozen, or you can make tinctures from them. It is really quite easy.
Tinctures easily can last 10 years for later use. Freezing can prolong the life by a year, and drying can prolong the life by a couple of years at least.

DRYING

To dry the plant material, spread on paper (say newspaper) and allow to dry until there is no water left in the plant. If there is water left, when you put them in jars, they will go mouldy and cannot be used. For fruit such as rose hips or juniper berries, this can take several days to dry. Many speed up the process by using dehydrators or putting the herbs in very low temperature ovens. Check often to see if they are ready by your touch that way you will develop a sense of communication with nature.

Store the dried material in jars with tight lids. We use old large pickle jars and we also spray paint the outside of the jar with black paint so the light doesn't get into the jar and damage the contents.
Don't forget to label the jar as to the date you stored the herbs. Then you will know how long it's potency is good for. After a couple of years the herbs are still useful, but you will have to increase the dosage.
Don't like the taste of herbs? If you invest in a simple capping machine, you can grind the herbs in your blender or grinder and cap them.
A simple capping machine costs about $25 and lasts forever. We use the "00" size of gelatin or vegetable caps in our clinic. You should be able to get these on the internet, but if you can't, let us know and we'll get it for you. The capping machine doesn't use any electricity, caps 50 at a time. Store the finished product in bottles or zip lock baggies - don't forget to mark what they are and the date you stored them.

FREEZING

Clean the herbs and pat dry. Store in proper freezer zip lock baggies. Don't forget to label the product as to what it is and the date you froze it.

TINCTURES AND EXTRACTS

Difference between tincture and extract. A tincture is 5 parts alcohol to 1 part herb (or weaker).
An extract is much stronger, being 2 to 1 ratio or even 1 to 1. At our clinic we use tinctures because they are less likely to be overdosed.

They take a month make, but also last almost permanently if kept in dark glass bottles in a dark cool place. In general they can keep for 3-5 years without refrigeration or special attention.

When you make a tincture you extract water and fat soluble constituents (medicinal principles).

As well as alcohol, glycerine, or apple cider vinegar may be used.

A minimum of 25% alcohol content is required for sterility so bacteria doesn't grow in your product.

Tincture proportions range from 1:2 (plant:fluid) to 1:10. These proportions are not critical as long as the tincture is labelled for proper subsequent dosage to be given. The most common is 1:5, that is one part plant mixture to 5 parts alcohol.

If you are preserving leaves and flowers, you can use ordinary alcohol such as brandy or vodka. If you are preserving roots or bark which are much tougher, you will require grain alcohol that is called 'overproof' or 95%.

When taking dosage, if you are sensitive to alcohol, put dose in boiling water for 5 minutes and the alcohol will evaporate.

All calculations following are for dried herb plant:fluid preparation.

For leaves and flowers - they can be crushed or left whole.
For bark and roots/rhizomes - cut into smaller pieces for easier storage and extraction.

Place the herbs in a glass jar. Pour over the alcohol. Put the lid on. Every day for a month, shake the jar. Strain off the liquid and store in clean glass bottles (dark glass is best), or non-toxic plastic containers. Store the product in a dark, cooler area if possible eg. the basement or part of the house away from the hot kitchen or furnace room.

Don't forget to label the finished product with the date you stored and the ingredients.

Many people just make a tincture by covering the plant product with alcohol or apple cider vinegar and say it works just fine for them, but at the clinic we like to be more exact when dispensing any tincture.

The average therapeutic dose for a tincture is 1 tsp (5 ml) 2-3 times a day. They are very concentrated, you don't need to take a lot. Extracts would be taken at 10 drops 2-3 times a day.

Most people dilute the remedy in 1/2 - 1 cup of water so the taste is not so strong.

Pregnant women should not ingest alcohol. If you want to use remedies, pour 1/2 cup boiling water over the remedy and let stand 5 minutes before taking it so the alcohol has been evaporated. Also be careful of what herbs are ingested, many stimulate the uterus and could cause miscarriage - see "Pregnancy" in this book.

Add unboiled water to the clay until it reaches a half inch or so over the clay. Let the clay rest for some hours without touching it. When it is stirred up it becomes sticky and difficult to handle. It loses its porosity becoming smooth and impermeable. Its possibilities of absorption are then very much reduced. It is not necessary to touch it before use. It dilutes itself alone quite well. Handle it as little as possible when placing it on the supporting cloth. Do not smooth its surface, it will settle naturally when put into place.

The prepared clay should be made into a smooth, very homogeneous paste, not very concentrated but just enough to avoid falling apart. When possible, place the container in the sunshine, covering it with a gauze in order to avoid impurities.

Clay can be any temperature. It depends on the problem.

Cold Preparations:

Each time it is used on a feverish or overactive or naturally warmed organ (eg lower abdomen) it must be cold. The cold treatment must bring about an overheating of the body due to the stimulation of organic functions such as oxidation and circulation. This means the body's temperature must rise slowly; only when it produces this effect is the cold treatment beneficial. A few minutes after applying the poultice it should feel tepid. If the cold sensation persists it is not advisable to continue the cold poultice. On the other hand, if the poultice starts to feel very hot, it is necessary to change it after 5-10 minutes.

Warm Preparations:

When the clay is used for revitalization purposes, for rebuilding, for kidneys, for gallbladder, liver etc. it must be warm, or at least tepid.

The guide is that every action is followed by a reaction. Using on feverish, angry or congested parts, we need to refreshen it. Using it to revitalize and strengthen requires it to be warm. Apply it to a weak or feeble organism or organ, it is possible to make cold applications of cold water, air or mud, but the overheating, which is the goal of this application, must follow rapidly.

Tips on taking herbal combinations

* **taking capsules with a warm drink will produce faster results.**
* **do not take citrus juice if the formula contains ginseng**
* **doing 24 hr juice fast before starting herbal formulas will often produce greater effectiveness**
* **abstain from alcohol, red meat, caffeine and tobacco if possible during use to give the herbs a cleaner environment in which to work.**
* **herbs are concentrated foods and are identified by the body as such. They are quickly assimilated by the digestive enzyme activity. With a few exceptions, they should be taken before (15-30 min) or with meals.**
* **when taking herbs for short term use (eg one week), it is generally it is best to take herbal capsule combinations in descending strength:**

  6 the first day
  5 the second day
  5 the third day
  2 the fifth day
  2 the sixth day for the first week.
  rest on the 7th day
  Decrease to the daily maintenance dose recommended for each particular formula.

  Having said that, we often give herbs 2 caps 2-3 times a day for 1-3 months just because it is easy for the person to remember what to do and not overwhelm them with details.
* **Most combinations should be taken no more than 6 days in a row to give the body a chance to restore its own balance.**
* **A herbal healing program works best when combined with eating a natural foods diet. Subtle healing properties are more effective when they don't have to labor through excess waste material, mucous, or junk food accumulation (most of us carry around 10-15 pd) of excess density and debris.**
* **Herbs are high in minerals and trace minerals (the basic elements missing or diminished in today's "quick-grow", over-sprayed,, over-fertilized farming). These are bonding agents between you and your food, and a basic element in food assimilation. Mineral rich herbs provide not only the healing essences to support the body in overcoming disease, but also the foundation that allows it to take them in.**

HOW TO:

Make an INFUSION: this is a TEA made from leaves, stems and flowers of powdered herb. For leaves and flowers pour 1 cup boiling water over 1 tablespoon of fresh herb (or 1 teaspoon of dried herb) or 4 opened capsules of powdered herb (1/2 to 3/4 tsp). Cover and let steep 15-20 min. Do not boil. l A cold infusion can be made by simply allowing the herbs, especially powders, to stand in cool water for an hour or more. "Sun tea" is a cold infusion where the herbs are placed in covered jar and allowed to stand in the sun for many hours. Usually taken 1 cup twice daily.

Both infusions and decoctions can be used as poultices where you dip cloths into the mixture and place on the skin:

Make a DECOCTION: this is a TEA made from roots and bark. Put 2 tablespoons of cut pieces into 1 cup cold water. Bring to a light boil, cover and simmer gently for 20-30 min. Strain. For best results, repeat the same process with the same herbs. Strain again and mix both batches. Usually taken 1 cup twice daily.

Herbal CAPSULES: generally these are 4 times stronger than teas, more concentrated. Capsules can make both oil and water soluble herbs available through stomach acid and enzyme alteration. Grinding herbs into powders creates facets on the whole herb structure causing potential loss of volatile oils.

Herbal TINCTURE/EXTRACTS: generally they are 4-8 times stronger than capsules. Very effective when taken as drops and held under the tongue, by-passing the digestive system and its acid/alkaline breakdown. They are effective for emergency measures. Very small doses can be used repeatedly over a period of time to help build a strong base for restoring body balance. 10-15 drops diluted in 1/4 cup of water or held under the tongue as long as possible 3-4 times a day are effective for the first week of an acute condition. After this first week, the vital force of the body will often have been sufficiently stimulated in its own healing ability, and the dose may be reduced to allow the system to take its own route to balance. Take for 6 days in a row, rest on the 7th before resuming encourages the body to do its own work. As the body increases its ability to right itself, the amount, frequency and strength of the dosage should be decrease. Herbal extracts are usually alcohol based (usually very strong), but apple cider vinegar, or vegetable glycerin are also used. If you are alcohol sensitive, add very hot or boiling water (1/4 cup) to the mixture and allow it mix for a few minutes to kill off the alcohol potency. Tinctures are usually taken 1 tsp (5ml) three times a day (TID). Shelf life of alcohol tincture is at least 10 years if stored in cool dark place, glass container is best.

Difference between Tincture and Extract: A Tincture is 5 parts alcohol to 1 part herb (or weaker). An Extract is 2 to 1 or 1 to 1. We use the weaker tinctures because it is easier to handle the making of the product and it is harder to hurt yourself if you accidentally ingest too much.

Tinctures take a long time to make, but also last almost permanently if kept in dark glass bottles in a dark place. You can easily keep them for 3-5 years without refrigeration.

When you make a tincture you are extracting water and fat soluble constituents (medicinal principles).

As well as alcohol, you can use glycerine (a naturally occurring substance which is 65% sugar plus fat and has solvent properties and is a by-product of the soap making industry, out of lye). Apple cider vinegar (4% acid tincture) may be also be used.

The -OH, glycerine and vinegar is called "menstruum" and acts as a preservative as well as extractant. Every herb requires a particular amount of alcohol for the best quality of extraction.

BACTERIA GROWTH: 25% alcohol content is required for sterility so bacteria doesn't grow.

Tincture proportions range from 1:2 (plant:fluid) to 1:10. These proportions are not critical as long as the tincture is labelled for proper subsequent dosage to be given. The most common is 1:5, that is one part plant mixture to 5 parts alcohol.

If you require 45% alcohol, use straight vodka, whisky or brandy (ie no H_20). If in doubt, use higher percentage of alcohol, rather than less. You can obtain grain alcohol the States and now in Canada also - it is 95-100% which is often call 'overproof'. In the liquor store there is one called 'Everclear'. The only time we use the stronger alcohol if when working with bark, or roots. We rarely like to work with roots because you have to hurt the plant to get the root whereas leaves are easily obtained without hurting the plant.

When taking dosage, if you are sensitive to alcohol, put the dose in 1/2 cup of boiling water until alcohol has evaporated.

All calculations following are for dried herb plant:fluid preparation.

<u>Alcohol Tincture Method 1: easy method</u>
Most mixtures are 5:1 ratio. Pour 5 parts alcohol such as brandy over 1 part chopped dried herbal leaves in a clean glass container. Cover and place aside, shaking up once a day for 30 days, then strain and preserve in glass or non-toxic plastic container in a dark cool place. If using chopped roots or bark, you will need to use a stronger alcohol for it to work, such as the Everclear (overproof). Standard dose is 1 teaspoon three times a day.

<u>Alcohol//water Method</u> 2:
ie. for 1:5 (200g:1 L) metric is weight=volume with 25% alcohol required.
Use 200 gram dried herb (not powdered but finely cut). Place in large glass jar. Pour 250 mls of alcohol (95% grain alcohol counted as 100% pure alcohol) over herbs in jar. 250 ml alcohol is one quarter (25%) of the total fluid volume of 1 litre. Shake well. Pour 750 ml pure water over herbs, now total fluid volume is one litre. Shake well. Place jar on side and leave in dark place (ideally) and shake every day, often for 14 days. This process terms "macuration").
Strain off the liquid into special non-toxic plastic or glass containers.
Label jar and tincture bottle with latin name, common name, part of plant used, proportions (plant to fluid), alcohol strength, and date.
The standard dose for a standard 1:5 25% tincture would be 5 mls (1 teaspoon) twice daily in water before meals. If the formula has several herbs, then 5 ml three times daily for adults.

<u>To Make TINCTURES using GLYCERINE:</u>
This is not recommended when doing resins and gums but can be used for leaves, flowers, bark and roots. The glycerine taste is very sweet which children like. It is also tolerated easily by those who must avoid alcohol. It is similar to using alcohol - you can use fresh chopped herbs or finely chopped herbs. If using fresh herbs, increase how much herb you use by 25% to allow for water content in the fresh herb.
To make a litre use 250 gm herbs. Use glass or ceramic or chinese clay pot, avoid using any metal. Pour herbs into the pot, slowly add about a liter of vegetable glycerine so herb is totally covered. Heat pot slowly to a boiling point, immediately turn down and simmer gently for 5 minutes, then take the pot off the heat and allow to cool for 15 minutes so that when you pour it into your glass container, it doesn't crack the glass. Pour simmered mixture into your glass container, close tight. Allow mixture to mature for 20-30 days. Shake container a least once a day. After 20 days strain out mixture using a fine sieve.
Shelf life is about 1 1/2 years.

To Make TINCTURES using VINEGAR:

Vinegar dissolves alkaloids, but doesn't draw all the medicinal properties from the herbs. Use if the person is sensitive to alcohol or if you are making a tincture of tonic type herbs that will be taken for a long period of time. Vinegar tinctures only have a 6 month shelf life even if stored in a cool dark place.

Make the same method as alcohol, herbs must be completely submerged in the vinegar. If using fresh herbs, spread them out in an airy place to wilt them first to reduce the amount of water content which helps reduce the opportunity of spoilage.

To Make TINCTURES using WINE:

The Chinese herbal masters often use wine as the menstruum. You place all the ingredients of the formula into a glass jar - there may be 10 different roots, barks, leaves, animal parts, all mixed in together. Then pour wine over everything so all bits are completely immersed. Seal and store for at least 1 1/2 years, giving it a shake and observation occasionally. Many are 10 years old. This is why they are quite expensive to buy.

To Make HERBAL SYRUPS:

You can add sugar or honey to any type of infusion or decoction and make a syrup. Remember that sugar reduces your resistance to infection, increases calcium loss and helps yeast overgrowth such as candida flourish. Honey will also feed yeast overgrowth and it is sweeter than sugar so you need 1/2 the amount.

1 cup(8 fluid oz/250ml) decoction weighs 8 oz(250 gm). 1 cup(8oz/250ml) of infusion or decoction requires 1/2 pd(250 gm) sugar. If using honey use 4oz(125gm) to every cup of infusion or decoction.

Add the sweetener to the hot liquid. Bring to a boil. Pour boiling hot syrup into a sterilized bottle, cap it.
Adding a tablespoon (15ml) of brandy, vodka etc will further stabilize the syrup.
Store in a refrigerator for 3-6 months.
Dosage is 1 tsp (5ml) for 125-150 pd person up to 8 times a day. Child is half dose

Method 2 Herbal Syrup: boil 3/4 pd raw or brown sugar (use 1/2 that amount for honey) in 2 cups herb tea until it reaches syrup consistency then remove from heat and while it is cooling add a herbal extract or tincture in the amount of one part tincture to 3 parts syrup.

Make a POULTICE or COMPRESS

A COMPRESS (fomentation) is a cloth wet with a hot herbal infusion used on the skin.
A POULTICE is a cloth with the moistened dried herb (the tea dregs) wrapped in it and placed on the skin.
With fresh herbs, place the crushed herb leaf directly on the skin.

Types of Poultices:

Potato: highly alkaline, draw out acid irritations. Cut, grate or liquidize and apply as compress or poultice to jugular veins. Relieves congestion in the head which is usually experienced in the common cold, sinus trouble, hay fever and asthma. Relieves the swelling in the veins so they can drain and function. Slice of raw potato will help bee stings.

Red beets: powerful drawing effect when grated and applied as compress or poultice to the affected part. They even draw out pus, infections, splinters that may be deeply imbedded in external areas. Common clay has been used also but not as effectively as red beets.

Raw Cucumbers: grated or liquidized are good for the skin by simply applying them as compresses or poultices. Also good for bee stings is a slice of raw cucumber.

White Oak Bark: made into a decoction, then as a compress or poultice to the area for 30 minutes at a time, many times a day to help blood clotting and stagnation.

Plantain or Comfrey Leaf: Insect bites and poison ivy rashes respond wonderfully to poultices of comfrey leaf, plantain or jewelweed and bee stings to a slice of raw cucumber, potato, squash or zucchini.

Onions, Mustard, Bran, Clay: Naturopaths rely on hot poultices of onions, mustard, bran or clay to detoxify the body in various ills and congestions. There are wonderfully soothing. See the printout on clay separately.

IMPORTANT:

In cases of immune deficient, opportunistic and degenerative diseases, it takes a great deal of time to rebuild a healthy system. Even when a good healing program is working, and obvious improvement is being made, adding more of the healing agents in an effort to speed progress can often aggravate the symptoms and bring unwanted results.

The immune system is very fragile and can become overwhelmed instead of stimulated. An afflicting virus can even seem to mutate and be nourished by supplementation instead of arrested by it. In this type of case, including Candida, Multiple Sclerosis, Epstein Barr virus, Lupus and AIDS, moderate amounts are excellent, mega doses are not. Much better results can be obtained by giving yourself more time and gentler treatment.

Got lots of problems? Address the worst problem first. Often other conditions are really complications of the first problem and will take care of themselves as the body comes into balance.

A good rule of thumb is to cleanse a little, then build a little, then cleanse a little, then build a little. It is a gentler approach and works very well.

DOSAGES:

60 drops = 1 teaspoon	**5 ml = 1 teaspoon**
1 ounce - 28.4 grams solid	**1 fluid ounce = 29.57 ml**
1 teaspoon tincture - 2 "00" capsules	**3-4 ml = 1 dessertspoon**

Most formulas are given in adult dosages, based on approx 130-150 pd person. Here's a guideline for children:

1/2 dose if 10 - 14 years of age	**1/3 dose if 6 - 10 years of age**
1/4 dose if 2 - 6 years of age	**1/8 dose for infants and babies.**

It can be difficult to give herbs to children. Often homeopathics are a better solution. However, if you wish to give herbal medication, you can open the capsule and put the contents in honey, juice, peanut butter or a cookie.

ABOUT USING ALCOHOL:

One banana contains the same amount of alcohol as 30 drops of most herbal tinctures. We consume alcohol surreptitiously in the foods we eat like fruit, juices, potatoes. If you eat a balanced diet you are eating natural alcohol. Our liver can filter 7 grams of alcohol per hour. 7 grams of alcohol is equivalent to 300 drops of most tinctures. In general, the normal dose of tincture is 15-20 drops which is efficiently metabolized within a healthy body within 4 minutes. If people are alcohol sensitive, we suggest they pour a 1/4 - 1/3 cup of boiling water over the dosage of tincture which dissipates the alcohol within a minute, then they can ingest safely.

PREGNANCY

Most herbs are not suitable for pregnancy. They usually excite the uterus which may bring on miscarriage. There are a few herbs that are beneficial however and raspberry leaf is one. It may be taken as tea throughout the whole pregnancy which helps prepare for a better and stronger birth.
Pregnant women should not ingest alcohol because of the effects of FAS and FASD.