

Ayurvedic Herbal Remedies for Women's Health and Wellness

A.S. Tiwari*, P.P. Pandey

^{1,2}*Assistant Professor, Sumatibhai Shah Ayurved Mahavidyalaya Malwadi, Pune,
Maharashtra, India*

***Corresponding Author**

Email Id: avinash_tiwari@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Some common problems that women face are irregular periods, menstrual pain, premenstrual pain, acne, anaemia and many more. Though allopathic medicines are available for all the problems but popping too many painkillers or increased dependency on self medication is not a good idea. What is better is to take ayurvedic treatments which can not only control but also prevent these common problems that women face. Let's have a look at some such herbs which can ease the pain and discomfort of all you ladies out there.

Keywords: *Herbal Remedies, Women's Discomfort, Women's Health, Ayurvedic Treatments.*

INTRODUCTION

A wide range of herbs that work to modulate and correct most female health concerns. These herbs are always tailored to the individual and what is going on for them. Natural herbs and supplements are all time and wise-women proven to remedy the common discomfort and irritability that occasionally come along with owning a uterus and vagina. When suffering from a health discomfort, (with all due respect to modern medicine), is to always trying and heal naturally first and having these remedies on hand makes it easy [1].

Ayurveda treatment for Painful Menstruation

All women face different types of problem during the menstruation days. But some common problems faced by women during this time are nausea, fatigue, cramps, constipation, bloating and vomiting [2].

Easy Lifestyle for Menstrual Discomfort

Be physically active and exercise daily. Though during menstrual days if you feel uncomfortable you can take rest and resume your workout later. But if you

practice some simple yoga asanas it can help you relive menstrual pain. Some such Asanas are bow pose (Dhanurasana), forward bend (Janu sirasana), camel pose (Ustrasana), fish pose (Matsyasana) and cobra pose (Bhujangasana) [3].

- 1) Avoid fried, spicy and oily food, as all such foods lead to bloating and constipation.
- 2) Try and consume vegetables which are easily digestible and are light to eat.

Ayurvedic treatment for Pre-menstrual Pain [4]

- 1) Have homemade food.
- 2) Avoid alcohol, smoking and fast food.
- 3) Maintain a balanced diet which will lead to a regular bowel movement.
- 4) Take cold showers and consume plenty of liquids.

Ayurvedic treatment for Piles

If you face difficulty while passing the stool (which can be bleeding and itching around the rectum area) then you can take herbs like *Terminalia chebula* and Indian Yam. You can also have *Abhayarista*, which is a great ayurvedic medicine for

piles. Along with the medicines, you should also maintain a healthy diet which should be high in fibre. Have plenty of liquids along with doing some physical exercise regularly [5].

Ayurvedic treatment for Greying of Hair

Greying of hair is a common problem along with increasing age, but greying of hair in your 20's and 30's is not good. The reason behind the same can be many including sinus, tension, anxiety and washing hair with hot water. You can try the Bhringraj ayurvedic oil which is said to make your hair healthy and prevent greying. Also, you should sleep properly, worry less and wash your hair with cold water to reduce the problem [6].

Ayurvedic treatment for Menopausal Problem

The same medicine, sundari kalp forte is good for menopause as well. This medicine helps to ease the transition to menopause. It cleanses your blood and is highly recommended for the menopausal syndrome. Women should have foods that are rich in calcium as calcium deficiency is common during this time. Eating a balanced diet, practicing yoga and staying active also helps to ease the problem [7].

DELICIOUS HERBS WITH POWERFUL HEALTH BENEFITS

The use of herbs and spices has been incredibly important throughout history. Many were celebrated for their medicinal properties, well before culinary use. Modern science has now shown that many of them do indeed carry remarkable health benefits. Here are 10 of the world's healthiest herbs and spices, supported by research [8].

Cinnamon

Cinnamon Lowers Blood Sugar Levels and Has a Powerful Anti-Diabetic Effect.

Cinnamon has numerous health benefits, and is particularly effective at lowering blood sugar levels [9].

Sage

Sage Can Improve Brain Function and Memory. Sage gets its name from the Latin word *Salvere*, which means "to save." There is promising evidence that sage extract can improve brain and memory function, especially in individuals with Alzheimer's disease [10].

Peppermint

Peppermint relieves IBS Pain and Reduce Nausea and also useful for bloating and gas. Peppermint has a long history of use in folk medicine and aromatherapy. As is the case with many herbs, it is the oily component that contains the agents responsible for the health effects. The natural oil in peppermint provides pain relief for those with IBS. It also has potent anti-nausea effects when used in aromatherapy. Similar to ginger, peppermint is also an anti-spasmodic and intestinal relaxant. It's also good for nausea and vomiting. Peppermint works by allowing food, swallowed air, or built up gas to pass through the intestines more easily—relieving you of painful bloating and gas faster than if left alone [11].

Turmeric

Turmeric Contains Curcumin, a Substance with Powerful Anti-Inflammatory Effects. Turmeric is the spice that gives curry its yellow color. It contains several compounds with medicinal properties, the most important of which is curcumin. Curcumin is a remarkably powerful antioxidant, helping to fight oxidative damage and boosting the body's own antioxidant enzymes. This is important, because oxidative damage is believed to be one of the key mechanisms behind ageing and many diseases. Curcumin is also strongly anti-inflammatory, to the point

where it matches the effectiveness of some anti-inflammatory drugs. Given that long-term, low-level inflammation plays a major role in almost every chronic Western disease, it is not surprising to see that curcumin is linked to a variety of health benefits. Studies suggest that it can improve brain function, fight Alzheimer's, reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer, and relieve arthritis, to name a few. Curcumin, the active ingredient in the spice turmeric, has major benefits for many aspects of health [11].

Holy Basil

Holy Basil Helps Fight Infections and Boosts Immunity. Studies show that holy basil can inhibit the growth of a range of bacteria, yeasts and molds. Bottom Line: Holy basil appears to improve immune function and inhibit the growth of bacteria, yeasts and molds [12].

Cayenne Pepper

Cayenne Pepper Contains Capsaicin, Which Helps Reduce Appetite and May Have Anti-Cancer Properties Cayenne pepper is a type of chili pepper used to prepare spicy dishes. The active ingredient in it is called capsaicin, which has been shown to reduce appetite and increase fat burning in many studies. Cayenne pepper is very rich in a substance called capsaicin, which reduces appetite and boosts fat burning. It has also shown anti-cancer potential in animal studies [11,12].

Ginger

Ginger Can Treat Nausea and Has Anti-Inflammatory Properties. Ginger is a popular spice used in several forms of alternative medicine. This includes nausea caused by morning sickness, chemotherapy and sea sickness. Ginger also appears to have strong anti-inflammatory properties, and can help with pain management. Bottom Line: 1 gram of ginger appears to be an effective treatment

for many types of nausea. It is also anti-inflammatory, and can help reduce pain [13].

Fenugreek

Fenugreek Improves Blood Sugar Control. Fenugreek was commonly used in Ayurveda, particularly to enhance libido and masculinity. While its effects on testosterone levels are inconclusive, fenugreek does seem to have beneficial effects on blood sugar. It contains the plant protein 4-hydroxyisoleucine, which can improve the function of the hormone insulin. Many human studies have shown that at least 1 gram of fenugreek extract per day can lower blood sugar levels, particularly in diabetics. Fenugreek has been shown to improve the function of insulin, leading to significant reductions in blood sugar levels. It also supports the optimal production of breast milk. Fenugreek seeds support the optimal production of breast milk, and they are also used to help maintain healthy blood sugar metabolism. The seeds smell faintly of maple syrup, and they are often used in maple-flavored foods. A plant that's indigenous to the Mediterranean, Fenugreek's seeds are nutritious sources of B vitamins, vitamin C and beta carotene. The Latin name (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) for Fenugreek means Greek hay, as it is frequently used to add nutrition to cattle feed [13].

Rosemary

Rosemary Can Help Prevent Allergies and Nasal Congestion. The active ingredient in rosemary is called rosmarinic acid. This substance has been shown to suppress allergic responses and nasal congestion. The number of immune cells in nasal mucus also decreased, with reduced congestion. Rosmarinic acid has anti-inflammatory effects that appear to suppress allergy symptoms and reduce nasal congestion [14].

Red Raspberry Leaf

Useful for preventing menstrual cramps and heavy periods. Red Raspberry leaf is a longtime friend of females and the uterus. It contains an alkaloid called fragrine that relaxes and tones the uterus, causing cramps to hurt less. It also contains tannins which strengthen the uterus, and help to stop any heavy or irregular bleeding [14].

Garlic

Garlic Can Combat Sickness and Improve Heart Health. Throughout ancient history, the main use of garlic was for its medicinal properties. Most of these health effects are due to a compound called allicin, which is also responsible for garlic's distinct smell. Garlic supplementation is well known for combating sickness, including the common cold. Adding more garlic to your diet could be incredibly helpful. There is also convincing evidence for beneficial effects on heart health. For those with high cholesterol, garlic supplementation appears to reduce total and/or LDL cholesterol by about 10-15%. Human studies have also found garlic supplementation to cause significant reductions in blood pressure in people with high blood [15].

Vitex

Vitex is useful before menstruation or in the luteal phase – including premenstrual syndrome (PMS), acne that is worse before a period, spotting, bloating and tender breasts. It is a wonderful regulator of the hypothalamic pituitary ovarian (HPO) axis which helps to regulate ovulation, correct irregular bleeding and amenorrhoea. Supports female hormone production and balance, especially during the transitions of life. Healthy hormone levels are necessary for physical and emotional wellbeing. Vitex has been used since the time of Hippocrates to support gynecological health, particularly for the changing seasons and cycles of life. It has

traditionally been used to support hormone production and balance. This herb's berries promote a healthy mind and body throughout the menstrual cycle and during the transition into menopause. Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus*) is also called Chaste Tree [15].

Paeonia

This herb is one the most versatile herbal medicines for women's health. It is also a regulatory of the HPO axis as it helps to regulate menstrual irregularities. As a spasmolytic it is great to add into an herbal for spasmodic dysmenorrhea. It is a key herb to think about for PCOS, especially in combination with licorice, as this combination helps to reduce androgen excess by up-regulating the conversion of testosterone to oestrogen [16].

Dong Quai

This herb is a primary herb to think about in the treatment of painful periods as it is a uterine tonic, meaning it helps to regulate the contraction and relaxation of the uterine muscle. It also works to reduce inflammatory prostaglandins that are associated with period pain. It is a warming herb that improves blood flow to the uterus [16].

Shatavari

“Shatavari” means a woman with one thousand husbands and is traditionally an Ayurvedic herbal medicine. It is a versatile herb used for tonifying and nourishing female reproductive functions. It increases libido (hence the name's meaning), is a tonic to the ovaries, enhances folliculogenesis and ovulation, supports healthy mucus production, can help prevent miscarriages and can also be used post-partum to support healthy lactation. An added benefit is that it is also an adaptogen, which means it aids the body's resilience to stressors. It can be used in

young women with menstrual issues, right up to post-menopausal women [13, 14].

Black Cohosh

This herb is primarily used in menopausal women for menopausal symptoms. This is largely due to its oestrogen modulating effects. It is beneficial for hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, mood issues and arthritic aches and pains. It is also thought to have its effects due to its effect on regulating serotonin in the body, which is involved in mood regulation and temperature regulation in the body. It can be used alongside or when weaning off Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), under direction of a qualified herbalist. It can also be considered for PCOS and other cycle irregularities in younger women, not just exclusively for pre or post-menopausal women [12].

False Unicorn Root

This beautiful herb unfortunately is endangered and so its use can be controversial and should be limited. However, it is useful in fertility contexts due to its ovarian and uterine tonic effects and can be beneficial to support ovulation, regulate cycles and prevent miscarriages [15].

Ladies Mantle

Ladies mantle is a great herb to use for complaints of heavy menstrual bleeding or bleeding outside of the normal period (Metrorrhagia), due to its astringent properties. This makes it a great herb for both young women and perimenopausal with heavy bleeding. Of course, in these cases, underlying issues should first be investigated as to why the bleeding is heavy or abnormal in the first place. It is magical what can occur when you correctly select and formulate herbal medicine for women's health or a hormonal health issue. A woman can be experiencing an issue for months or years

and, once starting their herbs, they can see amazing changes either immediately or progressively cycle by cycle. Herbs are particularly amazing because they often work to modulate the body's natural hormone production and reproductive functions, not to the point where women will need to take them for the rest of their life, but rather they bring them to a natural homeostasis where the body relearns to function optimally with and after the herbs [11].

Cranberry

Useful for preventing frequent UTI's (urinary tract infections). Cranberry changes the way that bacteria "sticks" to your urinary tract, which is a part of what causes a UTI [11].

Maca

Supports a healthy libido and normal fertility. Maca is knobby root vegetable that resembles a turnip, which is a relative of this native Peruvian plant. Maca grows best in the harsh environment of the high Andes, where the Inca warriors used it as a caffeine-free performance enhancer. Maca root (*Lepidium meyenii*) is still used to support healthy energy and stamina, and it is also used to support a healthy libido in women (and men). Recent research has shown that it can support natural fertility by helping to maintain normal reproductive hormone levels. It has a delicious, somewhat nutty taste, and the powdered form of this herb can be added to smoothies, juice or oatmeal [13].

Red Clover

A rich source of naturally occurring phytoestrogens. Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*) has long been used to support women's health. A rich source of naturally occurring phytoestrogens, it encourages healthy detoxification and promotes healthy skin through its support for the body's lymphatic functions. Red Clover is

a highly nutritive plant, and it supports the body during menopause. This herb, which is often used as food for grazing livestock, grows from North America across Europe into the Far East; as such, it has a rich history of use in Russian and Chinese herbalism [17].

CONCLUSION

Whatever the situation, women must always take into consideration their constitutional needs regarding diet, lifestyle and rest. As a sister science to Ayurveda, Yoga offers many wonderful tools for balancing the doshas as well as addressing specific female health conditions. In addition, meditation, pranayama, chanting and asana are important elements in any "healthy woman" regime! For thousands of years, Ayurveda has provided a respectful and supportive approach for women in every stage of life for restoring and maintaining balance of vata, pitta, and kapha. It is said that when we restore balance, we are happy in our minds, healthy in our bodies and satisfied in our lives!

REFERENCES

- 1) Trickey, R. (2011). *Women, Hormones & The Menstrual Cycle* (3rd ed.). Fairfield: Trickey Enterprises Pty Limited.
- 2) Bone, K. (2007). *The Ultimate Herbal Compendium*. Warick: Phytotherapy Press.
- 3) Sher KS, Mayberry JF. Female fertility, obstetric and gynecological history in coeliac disease. A case control study. *Digestion*. 1994;55(4):Pages: 243-246. Dutta D.C. *Text book of Gynaecology*. 4th edition. Culcutta: New central book Agency LTD; p. 421. (431, 523, 549, 558).
- 4) Tewari P.V. *Ayurveda Prasuti Tantra Evam Stri Roga, Stri Roga*, Chaukambha Orientale. Varanasi: 1996. p. 169. (192). Part-II.
- 5) Srikantha Mruthi K.R. *Sushruta Samhita (English Translation)* Chaukambha Orientale. Varanasi: 2001. pp. 170-173.
- 6) *Ayurveda Pharmacopoeia Vol I part I*. Department of Ayurveda. 1985:173. *Ibid* (2), part III. (82, 110, 177, 235, 269, 305, 313, 321, 344, 358):.25.
- 7) 2007. Dec 14th, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycystic_ovary_syndrome.
- 8) *Handbook of Gynaecology and Obstetrics* by Jeanette S. Brown and William R. Crombleholme published by Appleton & Lange: Pages- 100-106
- 9) *Textbooks of Obstetrics* by D.C. Dutta published by JAYPEE Brothers Medical Publishers Pvt.Ltd : Pages: 90-94
- 10) *Davidson's Principles & Practice of Medicine* Edited by Brian R. Walker Etal :Pages: 390-396
- 11) *Textbooks of Obstetrics* by D.C. Dutta published by Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers Pvt.Ltd :Pages:500-504,210-214
- 12) *Shaw's Textbook of Gynaecology* by VG Padubidri and SN Daftary, 16th edition: Pages 100-102
- 13) *A Guide to Medical Health & Psychiatric Nursing* by R. Sreevani.: Pages :91-93,312-315
- 14) *Master Pass in Obstetrics & Gynaecology* by Hiralal Konar published by Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers Pvt.Ltd.:Pages:210-213
- 15) David Frawley, *Yoga and Ayurveda*, (Lotus Press, Twin Lakes, Wisconsin, 2000): Pages: 112-115.
- 16) Jayaweera D.M.A. *Medicinal plants (Indigenous and Exotic) used in Ceylon*. The National Science Council of Sri Lanka. 1981 Part-I, 9, 11pgs, Part-V, pg. 149, Part-IV, pg. 81.
- 17) Sharma P.V. *Charaka Samhita (English Translation)* Chaukambha Orientalia. Varanasi: 1981.