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## Vital Medicinal Herbs for Women's Health

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### ABSTRACT

*These days, most women in industrialized countries turn to allopathic medicine and pharmaceuticals for treating and balancing reproductive health care issues. While conventional medicine is important, and has its place, oftentimes nature has remedies that work in a more gentle and harmonious way. Herbalism is an integral piece of most, if not all, traditional forms of medicine. It works on the understanding that humans are one with nature, and that we often have the answers to our ailments in our own backyards. The plant world is the gateway to the world of self-healing and autonomy over our bodies, and can even be more accessible than other forms of medicine. Learning to use herbalism to care for women's health issues can seem daunting at first, especially if this is new to you, but it's important to let your intuition guide you. It may take some patience to find what works for you, but there are plenty of tried-and-true remedies that have worked time and time again.*

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda, Medicinal and herbal treatment, women health.*

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### INTRODUCTION

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.

Ayurveda is a traditional Indian system of medicine. It aims to preserve health and wellness by keeping the mind, body, and spirit in balance and preventing disease rather than treating it. Ayurvedic herbs and spices are also an important component of this approach. They're thought to protect your body from disease and offer a variety of health benefits, including improved digestion and mental health

Here are some of the most commonly used herbal medicine for women's health.

#### **Vitex**

**Common name:** Also known as chaste tree

**Botanical name:** *Vitex angus-castus*

Vitex for pretty much any complaint that is worse 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.

**Caution:** vitex as amazing for many things, BUT, if you have PCOS, vitex may not be the right herb for you. This is because it can raise luteinising hormone (LH) levels which in many women with PCOS is already too high, thus it can worsen cycle regularity if this is the case for you.

## **Paeonia**

### **Botanical name:** *Paeonia lactiflora*

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 a 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.

## **Dong Quai**

### **Botanical name:** *Angelica sinensis*

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.

## **Shatavari**

### **Botanical name:** *Asparagus racemosus*

“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.

## **Black Cohosh**

### **Botanical name:** *Cimicifuga racemosa*

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.

## **False Unicorn Root**

### **Botanical name:** *Chamaelirium luteum*

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.

## **Ladies Mantle**

### **Botanical name:** *Alchemilla vulgaris*

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.

## **AYURVEDIC HERBS AND SPICES**

- 1) **Ashwagandha:** Ashwagandha is Ayurvedic spices that may help your body manage stress more effectively. It may also lower your blood sugar levels and improve sleep, memory, muscle growth, and male fertility.
- 2) **Boswellia:** Boswellia is an Ayurvedic spice with anti-inflammatory properties. It may reduce joint pain, enhance oral health, and improve digestion, as well as increase breathing capacity in people with chronic asthma.
- 3) **Triphala:** Triphala is an Ayurvedic remedy consisting of three Ayurvedic spices — amla, bibhitaki, and haritaki. It may help reduce joint inflammation, improve digestion, and promote oral health.
- 4) **Brahmi:** Brahmi is an Ayurvedic herb believed to lower inflammation, improve brain function, and reduce symptoms of ADHD. It may also increase your body's ability to deal with stress, though more research is needed.
- 5) **Cumin :** umin is an Ayurvedic spice commonly used to add flavor to meals. It may decrease symptoms of IBS, improve risk factors for type 2 diabetes and heart disease, and perhaps even offer some protection against foodborne infection.
- 6) **Turmeric:** Turmeric is the Ayurvedic spice that gives curry its yellow color. Curcumin, its main compound, may help reduce inflammation and improve heart and brain health. However, large amounts are likely needed to attain these benefits.
- 7) **Licorice root:** Licorice root is an Ayurvedic spice that may help reduce inflammation and protect against various infections. It may also treat digestive problems and relieve skin irritations.
- 8) **Gotu kola:** Gotu kola is an Ayurvedic herb that may help boost memory and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as improve a variety of skin conditions.
- 9) **Bitter melon:** Bitter melon is an Ayurvedic spice that may help lower blood sugar levels and boost insulin secretion. It may also reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, though more research is needed before strong conclusions can be made.
- 10) **Cardamom:** Cardamom is an Ayurvedic spice that may lower blood pressure, improve breathing, and potentially help stomach ulcers heal. However, more research is necessary.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ayurvedic herbs and spices are generally safe in small amounts. Supplements containing large doses of these herbs and spices, as well as Ayurvedic preparations that have mixed them with other minerals, metals, or gems may be harmful.

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