

## **HERBAL STRATEGIES FOR THE PRE- AND POST- OP BODY**

Herbs help the body heal faster, minimize scarring, maximize sensation, and lessen nerve damage to surgically altered bodies. Lay out a timeline for when to begin preparing for optimal healing post-surgically. We will discuss herb and drug interactions, including hormones and anesthesia. This class is also geared toward western practitioners who want an integrative model to give their clients more.

**SURGERY-** is a major stress on the whole person

- nervous system toxicity due to anesthesia drugs
- liver stress due to drugs
- adrenal stress
- gastrointestinal tract- slows due to drugs, physical trauma, antibiotic dysbiosis
- physical trauma to nerves, muscles, blood vessels, skin
- risk of infection and hematoma
- emotional stress- anxiety and loss of body part- unknown outcome

**PRE-OP**

*Start* herbal regime up to 1 month before surgery

Stop most herbs 2-3 days before surgery to insure no interactions with drugs  
(mostly to appease your physician/surgeon, since they most likely know little about herbs)

*Stop* herbs and supplements with *salicylates* that effect platelet function (blood thinning) 1 week before through 2 days after surgery to avoid increased risk of bleeding; these include-

- Aspirin
- Alcohol
- Vitamin E oil
- Evening Primrose oil
- Red Clover
- Hawthorn
- Garlic
- Ginkgo
- Feverfew
- Willow
- Meadowsweet
- St. John's Wort
- \* not an exhaustive list

**COUNTER INDICATIONS WITH ANAESTHESIA AND HORMONES**

Specifics- *St. John's Wort* and *Ginkgo*- are incompatible with most drugs including hormones and anaesthesia. The liver detoxifies/breaks-down hormones and drugs in the body through the production of *enzymes*. These herbs specifically induce the liver to create more P450 enzyme which changes the half life and thus reduces the effectiveness of the drugs. They also inhibit other enzymes which may allow toxic drugs to circulate in the system longer.

Note- St. John's Wort is an amazing herb that clinical studies and experiential data show destroys the HIV virus and helps uplift depression. Unfortunately we do not know enough about its effects in conjunction with pharmaceuticals for safe use with most drugs.

#### NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT-

- 1) eat a clean, simple, whole foods diet, preferably organic
- 2) Avoid Alcohol-at least one week prior- inhibits tissue regrowth and may cause extended bleeding
- 3) Increase B vitamins- help deal with stress
- 4) AntiOxidants- support the immune system, decrease inflammation, and speed healing- antioxidants are found in the rainbow of fruits and vegetables with red, blue, yellow, purple, and orange pigments.
- 5) Vitamin C- (ascorbic acid) assists the body in the production of collagen, a basic component of connective tissues that aids wound healing and bruising. It also helps the body's immune system and is thought to be the safest anti-viral. It is used intravenously during surgery in Europe.  
DOSE: 1000-2000mg 3-6x/day week before and week after surgery to BOWEL TOLERANCE. Third week titrate to 500mg 3x/day. Best buffered or time-released.
- 6) Probiotics- if antibiotics taken to replenish gut bacteria and flora; may halt yeast infections and bowel irritability- *acidophilus and bifidus, yogurt*
- 7) Hydrate- increase water intake to heal faster and aid elimination of toxins.  
Your doctor may ask you to keep a log of your I&O (input and output).

HERBS- internally and topically

TONICS- tonics are usually foods *and* medicine. They strengthen the entire system by boosting immunity and nutrient content of the blood.

*Mushrooms, Seaweeds, and Miso* are SUPER-FOODS packed with micro-nutrients. Mushrooms have been proven to boost immunity and fight cancers. Seaweeds contain iodine which connects to receptors in the body that keep toxic ionizing radiation from taking hold, from x-rays, electronics, uv-rays, airplanes, and other environmental exposure. Miso and other nutrient-rich broths are great post-op to rebuild the vitality of the system and allow the body to recuperate by focusing on healing and not on digesting.

#### STRESS/ANXIETY-

- 1) Nervine Tonics-strengthen the nervous system- *Wild Oats/Avena, St. John's Wort/Hypericum*
- 2) Nervine Relaxants-relaxing herbs to deal with anxiety- *Scullcap/Scutellaria, Passionflower, Valerian, Kava Kava/Piper methisticum, Lemon Balm/Melissa, Chamomile/Matricaria etc*
- 3) Adrenal Tonics- support the adrenal glands which produce stress hormones- *Licorice Root/Glycyrrhiza glabra* (may increase blood pressure), *Schizandra berries, Foti/Polygonum multiflorum*
- 4) Adaptogens- help the body deal with stress- *Siberian Ginseng/Eleutherococcus senticosis, Echinacea, Rose root/Rhodiola, Aralia*

- 5) Flower Essences- *Rescue Remedy*, *Blackberry*-for grief and loss,

#### MITIGATING DRUG EFFECTS-

- 1) Hepatics- for liver toxicity and regeneration- *Milk Thistle seeds/Silybum marianum*, *Turmeric root/Curcuma longa*
- 2) Alteratives- cleanse and increase the bloods capacity to carry toxins out of the system- *Dandelion root/Taraxacum*, *Red Clover/Trifolium*, *Yellow Dock/Rumex crispus*, *Oregon Grape Root/Mahonia*, *Burdock root/Arctium*
- 3) Lymphotics- clear toxins, increase white blood cell count- *Red Root/Ceanothus*, *Cleavers/Galium aparine*

#### BRUISING AND HEALING- start pre-op

- 1) Immune System Modulators- best used over a period of time to increase deep immunity at the level of the bone marrow- *Astragalus*, *Ashwaganda/Withania*, most mushrooms including *Reishi/Ganoderma lucidum*, *Maitake*, *Shitake*, *Turkey Tales*, *Lion's Mane*
- 2) Surface Immune Tonics- increase immunity and white blood cell proliferation quickly for the onset of colds etc- *Echinacea*, *Yarrow/Achillea millefolium*
- 3) Vulneraries- usually applied externally to heal cuts and wounds - *Comfrey/Symphytum*, *St. John's Wort/Hypericum perforatum*, *Calendula*, *Plantain/Plantago*, *Lavender essential oil*, *Chickweed/Stellaria media*, *Mullein/Verbascum thapsis*, *Yarrow/Achillea millefolium*, *Horsetail/Equisetum*, *Gotu Kola/Centella asiatica*
- 4) Bruises- *Arnica homeopathic* tablets and salve(never on open wounds), or 2-3 drops tincture internally
- 5) Anti-Microbials- in case of infection or preventatively- *Yarrow/Achillea millefolium*, *Echinacea*, *Myrrh/Commifera myrrha*, *Thyme*, *Rosemary*, *Garlic*, *Calendula*, *Lavender and Tea Tree essential oils*

#### POST-OP

##### PAIN AND INFLAMMATION-

- 1) Hot and Cold- *hydrotherapy*- ice packs for the first 24-48 hours, then alternate with hot packs. Sitz baths for delicate parts- add tea to bath or a bucket and sit
- 2) Nerve Regenerators- *St. John's Wort/Hypericum*, *Wild Oats/Avena*
- 3) Anti-Inflammatories- *Turmeric/Curcuma longa*, *Bromelain plus Quercetin* (supplement taken away from food), *Black Cohosh/Cimicifuga racemosa*, *Lobelia inflata* (at high dose is an emetic- causes vomiting), *Evening Primrose Oil*-1500mg every 3 hours, *Willow bark*, *Meadowsweet*, *Cayenne/Capsicum marianum*- depletes Substance P- a neurotransmitter- cuts the nerve firing response to pain, *Chamomile/Matricaria or Anthemis nobilis*, *Calendula*, *Violets/Viola odorata*, *Indaian Warrior/Pedicularis spp.*
- 4) Rubifaciants- increases circulation to the area for faster healing- *Cayenne pepper/Capsicum marianum*, *Ginger/Zinziberis* (fresh not as hot as dry), *Cinnamon*, *Prickly Ash Bark/Zanthoxylum*, *Peppermint*, *Rosemary*, *Horseradish*, *Mustard*- internally as food or tincture, or in oil- spread over thin cloth

- 5) Demulcents/Emollients- moisturizing herbs with mucilage for soothing inflamed tissue- *Marshmallow root/Althea, Slippery Elm Bark/Ulmus fulva, California Slippery Elm/Fremontia californica, Flax seeds*

SCARS- *Gotu Kola/Centella asiatica, Vitamin E oil, Castor Oil*- rub in forcefully to break up scar tissue

BOWEL IRRITABILITY-drugs may cause constipation

- 1) Bitters- increase the flow of bile and hydro-chloric acid to aid digestion; mild laxative effect- *Dandelion root/Taraxacum, Yellow Dock/Rumex crispus, Burdock root/Arctium lappa*
- 2) Carminatives- decrease gas- *Cinnamon, Peppermint, Chamomile, Ginger, Fennel, Anise*
- 3) Laxatives- should only be used for a short period of time as a last resort- *Senna, Cascara Sagrada/Rhamnus persiana, Turkey Rhubarb/Rheum palmatum*
- 4) Bulk fiber- *flax, psyllium*

EXAMPLE OF AN HERBAL REGIME-

Beginning one month before surgery, and continuing through healing stages after-

- Eat shitake mushrooms and seaweed 2x per week
  - 1 Tbs. ground Milk Thistle seeds 1x daily
  - Vitamin C- TITRATE TO BOWEL TOLERANCE 1000-2000 mg
  - Homeopathic Arnica tablets 3x/day
  - Increase water intake to 6-8 cups daily; avoid alcohol
  - Bromelain plus Quercetin- supplement taken away from food
  - Evening Primrose Oil- 1500mg 3-6 x daily (stop one week before, continue 2-5 days after surgery)
  - Tea or tincture of
    - 1 part Turmeric/Curcuma longa
    - 1 part St. John's Wort/Hypericum (unless on hormones)
    - 2 parts Wild Oats/Avena sativa
    - 2 parts Siberian Ginseng/Eleutherococcus senticosus
    - 1 part Echinacea purpurea or angustifolia
    - 1 part Red Root/Ceanothus spp.
    - \_ part Yarrow/Achillea millefolium
    - \_ part Licorice root/Glycyrrhiza (may raise blood pressure)
    - \_ part Cayenne pepper/Capsicum
- Tea- drink 2-4 cups daily; Tincture- 30 drops 3x per day.

After Surgery add-

- eat only broths for first 3-5 days, such as Miso soup
- Hydrotherapy- cold for first 24-48 hours, then alternative with Hot
- Salves and Sitz baths with vulneraries for topical healing
- Pro-biotics if antibiotics taken

## RESOURCES-

“Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster” by Peggy Huddleston

Hospital advocate- interface with Dr., bring you food, give supplements etc

[www.transster.com](http://www.transster.com)

keyhole vs. periaereolar vs. double incision

Dr. Brownstein- best at double mastectomy

Dr. Fischer- best at keyhole

Booklet by Kaiser CEO- Cheryl?

Me- [www.sfherbalist.com](http://www.sfherbalist.com)

Local herb stores?

## SURGERIES-

Orchiectomy-testes

Penectomy

Vaginoplasty

Chest-

Keyhole

Periaereolar

Double incision