

**Natural Remedies to Support Parkinson's**  
a Talk for Parkinson's Edinburgh Group  
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**What is Herbal Medicine?**

Traditional Herbal Medicine has been used to promote health and well being all over the world, both in ancient times and today. It is a form of natural medicine that uses plant preparations to bring physiological and psychological balance using various applications both internally and externally, alongside nutritional and lifestyle adjustments.

Since the development of modern pharmaceutical medicine, herbal medicine has lost popularity, but herbal medicine is increasingly turned to by people looking for alternative methods of health care, who have reached the end of the line with their medical care, looking for support for side effects of prescribed medications, or for people seeking a more integrative approach.

The World Health Organisation estimate that a majority of the world's population still rely on traditional herbal medicine for their primary health care needs.

**What is a Herbalist?**

Modern day herbalists in the UK and in many parts of the world are trained to university level and registered with professional bodies to ensure a high standard of practice.

The National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH) is one of the oldest organisations in the UK, established in 1864. Members have to complete 3-4 year courses, requiring the study of modules such as clinical medicine & diagnostic techniques, pathophysiology, biochemistry, and herbal materia medica.

Medical Herbalists require a minimum of 500 hours clinical practice before being able to start their own practice. A final clinical exam is observed and approved by medical professionals. To ensure ongoing learning, evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is submitted every year.

Often people associate traditional herbalists in other countries as superstitious and uneducated. While there are natural healers of all sorts existing around the world, even in many developing countries today there are recommended standards of practice that local qualified herbalists are required to follow to ensure a safe practice.

## Natural Remedies for Parkinson's

Herbal remedies can be applied in many ways. They may be taken internally, infused or boiled with water as **teas**, or bought as **tinctures**, a concentrated liquid extract of herbs' active constituents in a water & alcohol solutions.

With any prescribed medications or complex chronic health issues and for best results, monitoring by a qualified medical herbalist is recommended with permission from your GP and other medical consultants. Be aware there is always a possibility of allergy or sensitivity when trying something new.

Whether it's for symptoms of Parkinson's, side effects of medications, or psychological, here are some common complaints among people living with Parkinson's and some simple suggestions.

For external use, herb **infused oils**, **ointments** or **creams** may be applied to affected areas.

**Muscle spasm & discomfort** - Arnica oil/ointment/cream on affected areas or added to bath, Epsom salts baths, Skullcap (high in muscle relaxant magnesium) tea/tincture

**Poor circulation** - Ginkgo (boosts circulation to peripheral vascular system/brain), Ginger (warming anti-inflammatory), Warming hand salves, Herbal footbaths

**Tissue wasting** - Ashwaganda (anti-inflammatory herb, builds muscles strength, energy boosting herb)

**Saliva control** - Sage as mouth wash (astringent, dries secretions)

**Sleep difficulties & insomnia** - Skullcap, Passionflower, Lime flowers, Valerian (sedative & relaxant) teas, tinctures. Frankincense & Lavender essential oil & dried herb sleep pillows.

**Mood, stress & anxiety** - Lemon Balm, Oats, Chamomile & Rose (calming & uplifting). Teas, aromatherapy, massage, herbal baths. Flower remedies.

### Neuroprotective benefits of herbs –

Gotu Kola (adapts to stress, promotes tissue repair, focus concentration)

Skullcap spp. active constituent 'baicalein', research shows repair of nerve damage and deterioration (Magnesium rich & relaxing)

**Focus & Concentration** - Rosemary & Peppermint teas, essential oil aroma steams.

### Side effects of Meds:

**Constipation** - Psyllium Husks/Slippery Elm - 1 tsp with cup warm water before bed

Dandelion Root, Yellow Dock, Burdock - Bitter liver stimulating herbs

Aloe vera juice. Increase water intake.

**Digestive discomfort** - Peppermint, Chamomile, Meadowsweet tea infusions may aid gut spasm, over-acidity. Fennel teas help to ease wind and bloating.

A wide range of herbs may be personalised for individual ailments following a consultation by a herbalist. Stronger Schedule 20 Herbs may be prescribed by herbalist only. eg. Hyoscyamus - tremor reduction, Belladonna - spasm reduction, Stamonium - minimise drooling

### **Dietary Support:**

The following may be helpful to supplement a regular balanced healthy diet.

Organic Berries - ½ - 1 cup daily, high antioxidant flavonoids, fiber helpful for constipation

Bilberries - microcapillary support, benefits for eye health

Goji Berries - Nourishes blood, high Vit C

Cranberries - Urinary tract infection

Cherries - boost melatonin, helpful for insomnia & joint pain

### **Essential Fatty Acids:**

Anti-inflammatory, promote tissue repair, brain health

Omega 3-6-9 blends, Hemp Seed Oil, Fish Oil Supplements (take capsules or oil added to food or smoothies)

**Iron** - co-factor to promote dopamine production which often low in Parkinson's

Dark leafy veg & Nettles are a rich source. Grow, forage or visit herbalists or health food shops for these. Some supplements can be constipating, more easily absorbed natural options are available at health food shops.

**Trace Minerals** - Seaweed (flakes sprinkled in food, japanese Furikake combines green nori & red shiso seaweeds with white & black sesame seeds)

### **Resources:**

#### **Herbal Dispensaries in Edinburgh:**

Neal's Yard Remedies, 102 Hanover St, EH2 1DR Tel. 0131 226 3223

Napiers Herbalists, 18 Bristo Place, EH1 1HA Tel. 0131 225 5542

#### **Health Foods Shops in Edinburgh:**

Natural Foods Etc., 55 Clerk St, EH8 9JQ

Hanover Health Foods, Hanover St, EH2 2DR

Real Foods - Broughton St, New Town & Brougham St, Toll Cross

US based herbalist diagnosed with Parkinson's, Karen Vaughn has some helpful natural health articles on her website: <http://www.naturalhealthbykaren.com>

Find a qualified herbalist - National Institute of Medical Herbalists [www.nimh.org.uk](http://www.nimh.org.uk)

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