

Nature's Field

An Electronic Journal for NSP Distributors

Cat's Claw

Uncaria tomentosa

By Steven H. Horne

When NSP first came out with their Uña de Gato Combination, it was difficult for me to locate credible information on the main ingredient, uña de gato. Today, I have a lot more useful information, and I was even able to talk to one of the herbalists who helped introduce uña de gato into the United States, a chiropractor named Brent W. Davis. Dr. Davis attended a plant conference in Lima, Peru in 1988 where he learned about this woody vine, and subsequently wrote an article on the plant which was picked up by numerous sources.

Translated from the Spanish, uña de gato means “claws of the cat,” which is where the plant gets its more common trade name—Cat's Claw. The name comes because the vine bears sharp, curved thorns. Cat's claw has been used traditionally in Peruvian medicine for cancer, arthritis, gastrointestinal problems, diabetes, menstrual irregularities, rheumatism, lyme disease, acne, depression, wounds, fistulas and hemorrhoids. It has also been used in large doses as a contraceptive.

Research has shown the plant contains immune stimulating alkaloids, which also enhance the parasympathetic nervous system. The alkaloids also inhibit striated muscle contraction, reduce blood pressure, stimulate the uterus and have a diuretic action. One of the alkaloids in cat's claw, hirsutine, helps lower blood pressure and has an anesthetic property on the bladder.

Italian researchers found the steroidal fraction to be anti-inflammatory. German and Austrian researchers found quinovic acid, glycosides and triterpenes that have anti-viral and anti-inflammatory action. The plant also has some effect on the mood-elevating neurotransmitters, dopamine and serotonin.

The plant also shows promise as an anticancer agent. It has been documented to induce apoptosis (programmed cell death) in leukemic cancer cells. Cat's claw reduces the side effects of



Photo by Stephen Foster

chemotherapy and AZT therapy for HIV, and is used in Europe for these purposes.

Through clinical work, and applied kinesiology, Dr. Davis found that one of the major actions of cat's claw was to restore the integrity of intestinal membranes, balance intestinal flora and repair leaky gut. He believes this effect is part of the reason why cat's claw is useful for cancer. In other words, a toxic bowel will create a compromised immune system which will lead to cancer. Therefore, cat's claw is working on the abnormal biological terrain that creates cancer. It's anti-depressive effects also appear to be linked to its positive effects on the bowel, another example of how altering biological terrain has wide-reaching effects.

In an article written in 1992, Dr. Davis says “in my experience on approximately 150 patients during the last four years...I have seen *Uncaria tomentosa* break through severe intestinal derangements that no other available products can touch... Herbalist David Winston, who is very conservative in his claims for medicinal actions in plants, considers cat's claw a very good herb for strengthening the integrity of the gastrointestinal system. He lists it as being good for conditions like gastritis, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel, inflammatory bowel diseases and leaky gut.

Some of the conditions Dr. Davis says cat's claw may benefit include: skin disorders, allergies, rheumatism, chronic inflammation, viral diseases (especially herpes zoster) and cancer. He indicates that certain types of chemotherapy and radiation

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therapy in cancer are more effective when cat's claw is used at the same time. Considering the damage some of these therapies do to the intestinal membranes, it seems reasonable to assume that cat's claw would reduce some of these negative effects.

Cat's claw has a beneficial effect on the intestinal micro flora and may help the body get rid of both yeast and parasites, or at least, help the intestines heal once the parasites have been eliminated. Many times NSP Managers understand the need to "cleanse" the colon to remove wastes, yeast and parasites, but fail to realize that once the colon has been cleansed, it also needs to be repaired. Cat's claw is one of the remedies that can be used to stimulate this repair.

The doses used by Dr. Davis, David Winston and other herbalists are quite high. Dr. Davis recommends 3-5 grams (a capsule is usually 400-500 milligrams, so 1 gram is about 2 capsules). Winston recommends up to 9 capsules per day. The plant also works well when taken as a decoction.

NSP's Uña de Gato Combination combines cat's claw with astragalus, echinacea and vitamin C. This blend is useful for rebuilding the immune system in chronic viral infections, cancer and other disorders. It will also have benefits in rebuilding the intestinal mucosa in leaky gut.

There are some cautions for using cat's claw as a single herb, which may or may not be applicable to NSP's combination. Since cat's claw is a contraceptive in high doses, it may be wise to avoid this blend in pregnancy, although small doses are not likely to be a problem, especially when used as part of a formula.

Some books recommend avoiding cat's claw during lactation, but cat's claw was used in Peruvian medicine for recovery after childbirth, so this concern does not seem warranted. Large doses of cat's claw sometimes cause diarrhea, but again, this is unlikely to occur with NSP's formula. So, in general, Uña De Gato Combination is a very safe blend.

I do have one final comment, however. One of Dr. Davis' big concerns about cat's claw is the amount that is being harvested from the wild without being replanted. This is the "dark side" of the herb industry. When an herb becomes popular, like echinacea or goldenseal, it can nearly be driven to extinction through overharvesting.

Native people never took every plant when they were harvesting medicinal herbs—they always left some plants to proliferate in the environment. Many modern wild crafters take every plant, leaving none to reproduce. This short-sightedness does not work in our favor when it comes to healing. A wise

native Indian elder in Peru told Dr. Davis that even though cat's claw is powerful, "it is nevertheless very sensitive, and that if it is utilized with a lack of good motivation, it will lose much of its wide healing ability and will become only a 'chemical shadow' of its real self."

It's a reminder to us all that healing isn't just about plant chemistry. Healing is about becoming "whole," and part of that wholeness needs to be a profound respect for other living things on this planet. Our culture needs to stop acting like a cancer. We consume, consume and consume so we can grow carelessly, and in our wake, we pollute the environment and deplete the earth's resources. This is what cancer cells do in the body. They grow out of control, consuming resources and polluting the ecosystem that sustains them.

So, I don't think we'll ever solve the problem of cancer in our society until we return to a reverence for the earth. The native healer who spoke to Dr. Davis cautioned that "perhaps more than any other herb, uña de gato has to be treated with reverence." If we want the plants to assist our healing, we must treat them with respect. Unfortunately, modern commercial herbalism often fails in this regard.

Selected References

- A "New" World Class Herb for A.K. Practice: Uncaria tomentosa - a.k.a. Uña de Gato (UDG)*
by Brent W. Davis, copyright 1992.
Herbal Therapy and Supplements by Merrily A. Kuhn and David Winston
PDR for Herbal Medicines by Medical Economics Press
The Essential Guide to Herb Safety by Simon Mills and Kerry Bone

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Herbal “Plumbing Repair” for the Leaky Gut

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

Contrary to what you might think at first glance, this article isn't about “colon cleansing.” Not that I'm opposed to colon cleansing, mind you, but “cleansing” the colon isn't all one needs to do to have a healthy gastrointestinal tract. One also has to reduce intestinal inflammation and repair the integrity of the intestinal membranes.

Colon cleansing has always made sense to me and even more so after becoming a parent. If you've ever noticed what happens to a baby's bottom if you don't change the diaper quickly enough, you'll understand what I'm talking about. That waste material from the colon will turn that nice pink bottom lobster red if it sits there long enough.

The redness, of course, is inflammation. All tissues respond to damage through the process of inflammation. It's part of our immune system. So, if the material from the colon will inflame the skin if left there too long, don't you think it will do the same thing to the inside of the colon if left there too long?

It's a pretty common-sense conclusion that if we aren't eliminating waste rapidly enough, it's going to continually irritate and inflame the intestines. Of course, some people have so much “schooling” that they don't believe in common sense anymore, such as the doctors who tell people that a bowel movement once per week is OK. On the other hand, just about everyone in Nature's Sunshine (NSP) knows that improving colon transit time so that toxins and irritants are removed from the GI tract in a more timely manner is a good thing to do. This helps explain why stimulant laxatives (like LBS II and Cascara Sagrada) have been top selling products at NSP for a long time,

A cleanse will get that irritating waste material moving through quicker, so it will cause less irritation. But, that's just like being more careful to change the baby's diaper faster. If the babies bottom is red, you'd put something on it to soothe it, wouldn't you? We need to do a similar thing when working with the intestines. We need to reduce the inflammation and promote healing, which is the focus of this article.

Of course, fiber and water will also decrease colon transit time and at the same time have the added benefit of binding toxins in the gut to reduce inflammation and prevent damage to intestinal mucosa. In fact, the most important thing that most people can do to improve the health of their colon is to increase fiber and water intake.

Another thing most NSP people readily understand is the need to remove parasites, yeast and other harmful microbes from the intestines. They also understand the need to create a healthy balance of friendly bacteria in the intestines using probiotic supplements like acidophilus and bifidophilus.

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Health Problems Associated with Leaky Gut Syndrome

- Abdominal discomfort
- ADHD
- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Autism
- Autoimmune diseases
- Bloating
- Candida
- Celiac disease
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Depression
- Dermatitis
- Diarrhea
- Eczema
- Environmental illness
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Food allergy
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Memory problems
- Multiple chemical sensitivity
- Pancreatic insufficiency
- Psoriasis
- Sinus Problems
- Skin rashes
- Toxic feelings

In Chinese medicine, the intestines are called the “sifters and sorters.” Their job is to selectively absorb nutrients that the body needs, and to reject materials that shouldn’t be absorbed. Inflammation causes fluid and protein to seep into tissue spaces, creating swelling of the tissues. In the intestines, this makes them more porous, and over time, causes them to lose structural integrity or tone.

The result is that the intestines permit large substances that shouldn’t be absorbed, including allergens, microbes and toxins to be absorbed into the blood and lymph. This compromises the integrity of the immune system, reduces our energy level, overburdens and stresses the liver and even affects our mood. This leakage in the gut is part of the biological terrain that contributes to a wide variety of problems. A list of health problems associated with leaky gut is found on the previous page. And, by the way, if you can’t seem to “go” without the aid of stimulant laxatives, intestinal inflammation and leaky gut can cause both diarrhea and constipation, so healing the intestinal membranes should help restore normal bowel function.



Herbal Remedies to Repair Leaky Gut

Fortunately, there are some great herbs and formulas available that can help to fix this problem. There are three herbal blends, and several single herbs and nutrients, which can be very helpful in healing the inflammation and repair-

ing the intestinal leakage. The three herbal blends are Intestinal Soothe and Build, Uña de Gato Combination and Kudzu/St. John’s wort. Single herbs and nutrients that may also be helpful include l-glutamine, glucosamine, bioflavonoids, vitamin C, yarrow, wild yam, sarsaparilla, chamomile and licorice. Another product that may be helpful here is Cellular Build, but let’s look at the three formulas first.

Intestinal Soothe and Build

The first of these products for intestinal inflammation and leaky gut is Intestinal Soothe and Build. Formulated by Herbalist Jeanne Burgess, this blend was originally called UC3-J, which stood for ulcers (U) and Crohn’s, Colitis and Celiac’s (the 3-Cs). Jeanne created this blend to deal with common conditions resulting from intestinal inflammation and it has also proven beneficial for IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), leaky gut syndrome, diverticulitis, hemorrhoids and anal fistula.

The herbs in Intestinal Soothe & Build have vulnerary (tissue healing) and anti-inflammatory effects. Slippery elm, plantain and marshmallow absorb irritating substances, cooling and soothing damaged tissues. Chamomile and rosehips reduce

inflammation, while plantain, rosehips and bugleweed all help to strengthen the structural integrity of inflamed tissues. Here is a brief description of the benefits of each herb.

Jeanne Burgess used this formula in conjunction with Stress-J for intestinal problems, a fact many of us forget. Although people usually think of Stress-J as being “only for stress,” the blend contains several herbs that have beneficial effects on digestion. It contains chamomile, which reduces intestinal inflammation and stimulates digestion, fennel, another great carminative and digestive herb, and marshmallow. There is also a strong link between stress and digestive problems; taking the two together helps both formulas be more effective.

Uña de Gato (Cat’s Claw) Combination

Uña De Gato Combination is our second blend for repairing intestinal membranes. Our feature herb this month, cat’s claw, is the principle herb in this blend and is one of the top-rated remedies for healing leaky gut and inflammatory intestinal disorders of all kinds. You can read all about it in the article on page one.

Kudzu/St. John’s Wort

The third formula we’ve had great success with is Kudzu/St. John’s Wort. Kudzu is very helpful for repairing gut leakiness, while St. John’s wort aids the nerves that regulate the digestive process. Kudzu is the key herb here. Like cat’s claw, it is helpful for healing intestinal mucosa. It has a toning (astringent) action and relaxes muscle spasms at the same time. Kudzu is used in Chinese medicine to relieve headaches, stiff neck and muscle pain and to treat diarrhea.

The St. John’s wort in this blend is usually thought of as an anti-depressant, but it is so much more than that. In *The Book of Herbal Wisdom*, Matthew Wood explains that St. John’s wort soothes the solar plexus and stomach and harmonizes the action of the digestive organs so they work together better. It reduces tension in the liver and treats emotional issues that affect digestion. St. John’s wort has also been traditionally used as a wound healer, so it has vulnerary properties, too.

Other Supplements

Okay, that covers our three main formulas for dealing with leaky gut, but let’s also consider briefly some of the single remedies, too. For starters, l-glutamine is a major nutrient that intestinal cells require for maintenance. This amino acid plays a role in protecting against viral, bacterial and food antigen invaders.

Glutamine is a major nutrient needed by intestinal cells for maintenance and repair. It reinforces this first line of the immune system. There is considerable evidence that glutamine

can aid the gut in its role of protecting against viral, bacterial, and food antigen invaders.

Citrus Bioflavonoids (vitamin C) strengthen connective tissue and also aid in repairs. Many of the single herbs we mentioned will not only reduce inflammation, they will also help to repair the integrity of intestinal membranes. Also, don't forget that anti-inflammatories like Thai-Go and IF Relief may also be helpful.

Keeping the Colon Healthy

And, while we're on the subject of supplements, let's not forget the three important supplements we need to keep the colon healthy once it has healed. These are fiber, enzymes and probiotics.

Fiber provides numerous benefits for the colon. First of all, it binds irritating substances, reducing intestinal inflammation. It also improves colon transit time when taken with adequate amounts of water. Fiber absorbs materials released through the bile, including cholesterol, and binds them for elimination. It also acts as food for and encourages the growth of the friendly flora in the intestinal tract

When taking fiber, it is best to start with small amounts (1/2 teaspoon) of a fiber supplement, like Nature's Three or Psyllium Hulls Combo, mixed with water or juice, followed by a large glass of water (8-12 ounces). Gradually increase the amount of fiber over a period of a couple of weeks.

Fermented foods are also really good for the intestines. According to Sally Fallon in *Nourishing Traditions*, nearly all traditional cultures used some kind of fermented foods in their diet. These foods and beverages (which include fermented vegetables like sauerkraut and kim chi, fermented dairy products like yogurt and kiefer, and natural beers made from herbs) all contain both enzymes and lactobacteria.

In modern diets, just about everything has been cooked, heated to high temperatures to sterilize it, and/or treated with preservatives (which often act as enzyme inhibitors). This results in a diet very low in both enzymes and probiotics. Lack of digestive enzymes can cause leaky gut and a lack of probiotics makes one more prone to infection by other, less friendly, microbes.

For modern people who are unwilling to add traditionally fermented foods to their diets, enzyme and probiotic supplements are important to help normalize intestinal function. Proactazyme, for example, can be taken with the morning or evening fiber drink to help reduce intestinal inflammation and improve elimination.

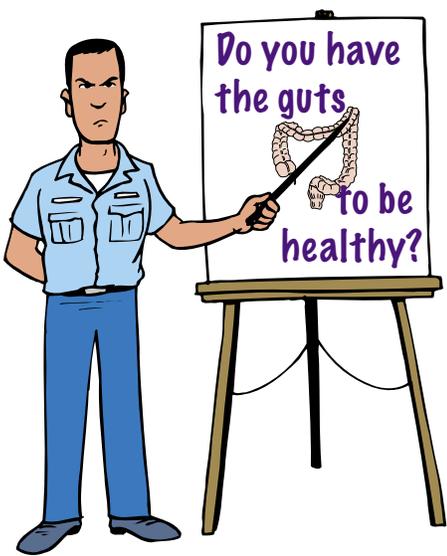
There is some debate as to the best time of day to take probiotics, such as Acidophilus or Bifidophilus Flora Force, but it is generally agreed they should be taken before or between

meals on an empty stomach. They can be taken with the fiber drink, too.

Maintaining a healthy intestinal tract is very important to overall health. It is possible to fix the "leaks" in our intestinal plumbing, with a few supplements and some dietary improvements. For more information, check out this month's Herbal Hour video, *It Takes Guts to be Healthy* (see below) or consult some of the following resources.

Resources and Suggested Further Reading

- Colon Cleansing: The Best-Kept Secret* by Jennifer Weiss and Vena Burnett, 1989
- Diet and Nutrition: A Holistic Approach* by Rudolph Ballentine, M.D., Himalayan International Institute, 1982
- Dr. Christopher's Three Day Cleansing Program and Mucousless Diet* by John R. Christopher, 1976.
- Enzyme Nutrition* by Edward Howell, Avery Publishing Group, 1985
- Food Enzymes* by Humbart Santillo, Holm Press, 1987
- Food is Your Best Medicine* by Henry Bieler, Random House, 1965
- Foundations of Health: The Liver and Digestive Herbal* by Christopher Hobbs, Botanical Press, 1992.
- Natural Detoxification* by Jacqueline Krohn, MD and Frances Taylor, MA, Hartley and Marks, 2000.
- Natural Remedies for Common Ailments* by Hugo Rodier, M.D., 2002
- The Colon Health Handbook* by Robert Gray
- The New Detox Diet* by Elson M. Haas, M.D., Celestial Arts, 2004.



This month's Herbal Hour, *It Takes Guts to Be Healthy*, will show you why intestinal health is so critical to overall health and how to heal damaged intestinal membranes to improve overall health.

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Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

High and Low Blood Pressure, Blood Type Diet and More...

High Blood Pressure

My daughter is working on someone who is on three blood pressure medications, Lotrel, Toprolxl and Drovran. Her blood pressure is not coming down and the doctor can't figure it out. So perhaps I can win her over to natural methods if I can help her.

This person is under extreme pressure and takes AnateX if needed. She is also on Vitrotrin and doesn't want anyone to know about it. My daughter wanted to know if our Blood Pressure X could possibly help. I know we have excellent products for anxiety and stress, but am not sure if any will interfere with the medications.

Jeannette

In this case, the Blood Pressure X is just going to work on symptoms much like the medications that aren't getting results. You need to go to the root cause of the blood pressure problem. My first place to start would be the kidneys. I would look at BUN, and Creatinine levels to see how her kidney is functioning, along with Sodium, Potassium, Chlorine and Alkaline Phosphatase. These will tell you how energy is being conducted and if there is stagnation driving up the blood pressure. I would consider using L-arginine with her in doses of three grams, along with KB-C to strengthen the kidneys.

I would also look for a possible problem with the heart, such as an underlying chronic infection. Look at blood markers such as CBC to determine if there is an infection. You could also try muscle testing.

Stress can contribute to the blood pressure problems, too. The key is to first look for and identify the root causes, then you can determine what supplements will really help.

Low Blood Pressure

I am working with a woman in her thirties who gets really dizzy when she stands up. It doesn't matter how long she's been sitting in a chair or lying down, she still gets dizzy when she stands up. If she lies on her side, or sits in a chair too long body parts start going numb from lack of circulation. Her blood pressure numbers range in the 80's for systolic to the upper 50's for diastolic. Is this a circulatory issue, or related to some other organ or process? She is a blood type O and normal weight.

Allison

Her blood pressure is too low. This is often a thyroid or an adrenal issue. Supplements for the thyroid like Thyroid

Support or iodine may help. It may also help to strengthen the adrenals with Adrenal Support, licorice or ginseng.

Don't Understand the Blood Type Diet

Who devised the blood type diet? It doesn't make sense to me. For instance, what research has been done to say O blood types can eat walnuts and almonds, but no other nuts? Isn't a nut, a nut?

Darcy

The blood type diet was developed by Peter D'Adamo, M.D. and his father. It is based on antigen structures in the blood cells and the antigen structure of foods. It is done by serum testing and determining how the antigen structures of these foods affected the blood. These antigen structures are part of how the body recognizes what is compatible with self and what is not compatible. When certain foods don't agree with the antigen structure, the body perceives them as an invader and seeks to flush the irritant by creating lectins to surround the irritant to protect the cells. This also creates agglutination in the blood, which "thickens" the blood so it carries less oxygen.

For example, an O blood type only has a fucose stump and the foods that agree with this wouldn't create a situation in the body that the body would perceive it as an invader and "flush" the irritant by creating lectins and agglutination in the blood to surround the irritant to protect the cells.

An A blood type would have n-acetyl-galactosamine antigens added to the fucose stump. B types have d-galactosamine antigens on the fucose stump. AB blood types have both antigens. These antigens are long-chain polysaccharides that are identifiers and create a match or irritant situation in the immune response.

Simply put, this means that if the building blocks of the food don't match the building blocks of the blood cell, then the blood gets sticky. When the blood is sticky, this reduces oxygen transportation and increases inflammation.

Finally, all nuts are not the same. Foods are very complex mixtures of substances and can be very different. This applies to grains, meats, beans, vegetables and every other food we eat.

HistaBlock and Inflammation

Why would HistaBlock stop pain and inflammation? I get so confused because we have this for inflammation and that for inflammation and now we have what I would consider a "cold

remedy” for inflammation. I can’t make the connection looking at the ingredients.

Marie

HistaBlock blocks allergic reactions and allergic reactions are a form of inflammation. Histamine is a chemical messenger released during allergic reactions and is one of the chemicals that initiates the inflammatory reaction. HistaBlock has a natural histamine-blocking reaction.

It also works because histamines are controlled by the adrenal medulla, which produces corticosteroids that have an anti-inflammatory action. Stinging nettle, one of the herbs in HistaBlock, is high in minerals that nourish the adrenals. Stinging nettle and other ingredients in HistaBlock stabilize special immune cells called mast cells, which keeps them from bursting and releasing histamine to initiate inflammation.

Teenager with Seizures

Is there anything that can be done for a 13 year old boy who is having seizures?

Donna

I find that if I increase essential fatty acids and add iodine the seizures are controlled. I have had two kids who have been on Depakote and they are both off this medication and seizure free thanks to essential fatty acids and iodine supplements.

Antidepressant Remedies

Please refresh my memory, other than Mood Elevator, what type of herbs can be taken in conjunction with SSRI anti-depressants as an aid to getting off of them? Also, what herbs, other than St. Johns Wort, act in a similar fashion? The person is an A blood type.

Desiree

Sam-e with folic acid can be helpful for depression. Also pantothenic acid and black walnut are sometimes helpful. There are many causes of depression. Low thyroid is one, in which case the black walnut or other sources of iodine may help. Another is low hormonal levels associated with PMS, post partum depression or menopause. Black cohosh has been known to be helpful in these cases. Other herbs or formulas with anti-depressant effects include damiana, ginseng and Suma Combination.

Lung Problems and Essential Oils

I’m working with an 87-year-old dear lady who has had lung problems for years, which I believe is due to a long-standing, deeply-rooted *H. pylori* infestation. We are alternating using Gastro Health and supporting the lungs while attempting to clear the lungs. The problem is that she can feel the “stuff” moving around in her lungs, but she can’t seem to expel it.

I was wondering if there might be an essential oil single or blend that we could rub on her chest that would help expel this mucous. The Combination Four has been great at helping with the heavy, wet feel in her chest. I now have her on N-Acetyl Cysteine and Chinese Lung Support, since attending the respiratory talk at convention. She’s also on all the basics (probiotics, ThaiGo, enzymes, all the foundational stuff). I haven’t tried Lobelia with her. Any thoughts?

Carol

I know these are oils that aren’t common but I have such great success with this formula with any chest congestion that I wanted to share it. I use 2 parts Amni Visnaga, 1 part Elemi and 1 part Ravensara. It has cleared up pneumonia and many other lung issues that I haven’t had success with in just using things internally.

Hepatitis C

Do you have a program for hepatitis C, and does your program work if the person has had the Hep C for many years and has had way too much prednisone?

Barbara

A couple of years ago, I had 17 Hepatitis C cases all at the same time. The best protocol I found that was consistent was the Milk Thistle Combo, VS-C, SAM-e, Alpha Lipoic Acid, Organic Germanium and then Helichrysum topically. Some other things I used were a high potency Uña de Gato, raw liver glandular complex, and sometimes Lymphatic Drainage or Chinese Blood Build.

Cloudy Urine

Does cloudy urine mean anything else besides lack of water?

Tonja

It could be from high oxalate foods like spinach, shellfish and such. It can also be heat exposure, strenuous physical exertion or emotional stress.

Kimberly Balas is a board certified naturopath and clinical nutritionist. She is currently head of the research department and a certified instructor for all Tree of Light courses. She is available for consultations by phone or at her Wyoming office. For more information on scheduling a consult please phone 307-277-2466.





Parting Thoughts from “The Herb Guy”

Relax, There Isn't Any Rubbery “Gunk” Stuck to Your Colon!

Recently, on our NSPAdvisor forum at yahoogroups.com, someone posted a link to a website showing pictures of this black, rubbery, gooey material people had passed on cleanses. I've seen these kinds of photos before. They're supposed to be depicting the crud that's been stuck to the lining of your colon for years and will only come out when you do the cleanse.

I used to believe this, because I've passed some of that “gunk” on a cleanse, myself. However, as I've learned more, I've come to understand that this rubbery stuff is created by the materials you're taking on the cleanse. Specifically, it is formed from the mucilaginous fiber in psyllium hulls and related herbs.

It was Mark Peterson, who formulated Nutri-Calm, Mega-Chel, MasterGland and many other top NSP formulas who helped me understand this. Mark was investigating a problem some people had taking Comfrey and Pepsin (reformulated now as marshmallow and pepsin and renamed Small Intestine Detox). It seemed that some people taking this product were passing the capsules whole. (Mark called this torpedoing.) Essentially, the capsule was dissolving, but the contents were simply swelling to a larger capsule shape (absorbing water as mucilaginous herbs are prone to do) and passing in the stool as little torpedoes.

Mark discovered it had something to do with digestive secretions. He found that dissolving the psyllium in certain substances would recreate the torpedoes. He also found that you could make the stringy stuff that people pass on cleanses by mixing certain substances with psyllium hulls. We surmised that this material people pass on cleanses is actually created by the interaction of the mucilage with certain substances the liver is dumping into the bile. (Realize that people never pass this stuff if they aren't taking psyllium, comfrey root or some other highly mucilaginous herb.)

Based on what I learned from Mark, and my subsequent personal experience, here's what I think is happening. On the typical cleanse, the liver is encouraged to make more bile, which helps the liver clear large amounts of toxins from the body. This “toxic bile” is absorbed by the mucilaginous fiber to form the nasty, rubbery stuff people pass on cleanses. The fact that it is usually black (and foul) makes me think of the concept of “black bile.” Traditional Western medicine says that an excess of “black bile” was the cause of problems like depression, constipation,

stiffness (arthritis) and other diseases modern research has linked with intestinal inflammation and leaky gut. Perhaps what we're really talking about is a toxic condition of the liver.

My experience is that after two to three weeks of taking fiber, a person typically stops passing this material. Most people think that this is because they've cleared the encrusted lining off the colon. I think it's because the liver has stopped dumping toxins from the tissues and the bile is now healthy. Remember that bile is the primary pigment for the stool. Healthy bile is a golden yellow color. According to Bieler in *Food is Your Best Medicine*, bile becomes increasingly dark and greenish the more toxic (or acid) it is. When the body is toxic the stool is darker.

So, as the liver is cleansed and the bile is cleaner, the stool becomes lighter in color. It also becomes softer and easier to eliminate. At that point, the person will usually feel “lighter,” have less digestive discomfort, and often report improvement in many other health problems.

So, the fiber is cleansing the gastrointestinal tract, it's just not sloughing off some crusty lining on the colon. I've talked to numerous professionals who have all told me that the stuff just doesn't exist. In fact, since the colon is an organ of assimilation, if the colon lining was encrusted like some people claim it is, it would kill you. The real problem isn't the colon becoming hard and encrusted, it's having the colon become inflamed and “leaky.” That's what the “cleanse” needs to fix.

Often our therapies work, but our explanation of how they work is totally inaccurate. I still believe in cleansing, I just don't explain it the way I used to. And, I think it is important for all of us to not get so “stuck” on what we teach that we aren't open to changing our mind when new (and hopefully more accurate) information comes along.

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