



## History of Herbs

*Mankind has always been dependant on plants. Since the earliest times they have been used in a variety of ways, for food, shelter, as colouring agents and fragrances.*

*Plant medicine is considered the oldest and most traditional form of medicine in the world. Herbalism has been used by most world cultures at one time or another throughout history over thousands of years.*



*Traditional Chinese medicine and Indian Ayurvedic medicine are two surviving forms of ancient herbalism still in practice today.*

*Physiomedicalism, developed in the 19th century was a blend of American Indian and European herbal practice, emphasizing the role of herbs in treating the vitality, balancing bodily functions and influencing circulation and removal of wastes.*

## About Herbal Medicine

Herbal medicine has its origins in ancient cultures including those of the Egyptians, American Indians and Chinese. It involves the medicinal use of plants to treat disease and enhance general health and wellbeing.

Herbal medicine aims to return the body to a state of natural balance, so that it can start healing itself. Different herbs act on different systems of the body. Some of the herbs have been scientifically studied and found to be both effective and safe.

In recent years, interest in herbal medicine has skyrocketed, leading to a greater scientific interest in the medicinal use of plants. Many international studies have shown that plants are capable of treating disease and significantly improving health.

Herbal medicines are used to treat a wide range of disorders, including:

- Anxiety/Depression
- Arthritis
- High blood pressure
- Hormonal imbalances, such as premenstrual tension
- Insomnia
- Migraines
- Nausea
- Skin problems, such as eczema

### Herbs may be given and used in many forms

For example as a foodstuff, Oats are of value for restoring and maintaining the nervous system during times of nervous depletion or when there is debility over long periods of stress or illness. They are useful for depression, anxiety and convalescence because they are nutrient rich especially in B vitamins, calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron and zinc. Locally, a paste made from soaking the rolled oats, has an emollient and cleansing action when applied on the skin and is used to treat a range of skin conditions ranging from acne to eczema.

Oats are eaten as a porridge or drunk as a tea made from the dried plant. It is used in creams and salves or directly applied to the affected part. Medicinally Oats are used in powder or tablet forms, or when larger quantities are called for, given in liquid tincture concentrations.

The liquid forms of herbs afford the most versatility, allowing easy formulation using any number of herbs depending on the signs and symptoms of the patient's complaints. This can be a simple infusion as is the case when preparing a tea from the fresh or dried plant, or by preparing a tincture of the plant preserved in an alcohol base.