

David Frawley

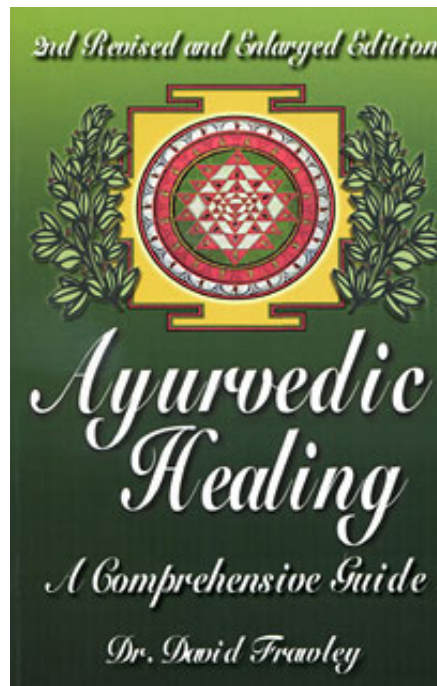
Ayurvedic Healing - A Comprehensive Guide

Reading excerpt

[Ayurvedic Healing - A Comprehensive Guide](#)

of [David Frawley](#)

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III.1

HERB USAGE

DOSAGE

The sections on diseases in the book list individual herbs for different conditions. These herbs can be taken as single remedies, usually one ounce of the herb per pint of boiling water, taken daily in two or three portions. If the herbs are very pungent or very bitter, like cayenne or goldenseal, lower dosages are better, one-quarter to one-half the amount.

Herbs can be taken as powders, 1-4 grams (four grams is one teaspoon or a little more for most powdered herbs), two or three times daily. Again the lower dosage is for the stronger tasting herbs. The appropriate vehicles (anupanas) like honey for Kapha, ghee for Pitta or warm milk for Vata, should be used.

The same dosages and manner of taking can be used for those who wish to prepare for themselves the formulas listed in the text. For the premade medicines listed in this section the dosages are included.

PRINCIPLES FORMULA DEVELOPMENT

To devise Ayurvedic herbal formulas, we must first comprehend the main principles of formula development. We can build on classical Ayurvedic formulas or combinations (Trikatu, for instance), or use similar ideas to make our own base formulas. We can use Western or Chinese herbs and combinations once we understand their energetics. Devising our own formulas and using raw herbs, rather than premade pills and tablets, we can make stronger preparations and have greater variability in our treatment approach. It also allows us to make a remedy when the appropriate Ayurvedic herbs or premade formulas are not available. However, it is less convenient and requires a certain skill and familiarity with herbs that can take some time to acquire.

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There is no great mystery about formula development. There are a few major principles with adaptations according to conditions. Yet certain combinations, theoretically no better than others, are found to work especially well.

A good starting principle is to use two to four herbs that most typify the action one wishes to achieve, like the famous three pungent herbs, the Trikatu formula of Ayurveda, just mentioned. Imagine that we want a formula with primarily bitter taste, which can treat a large variety of Pitta and Kapha conditions. We can make a simple formula with three common bitters like gentian, barberry and goldenseal.

To such a base formula we add supplementary herbs to adjust or modify its effects in various directions. We can add herbs to strengthen its action or balancing agents to prevent its action from being too extreme.

Diuretics would aid in its cleansing properties; uva ursi or pipsissewa, also mainly bitter, would strengthen its antibiotic properties against bladder infections.

We could add alteratives like dandelion or isatis to aid in its blood-cleansing action for dealing with boils or severe infections.

Purgatives to aid in its bile cleansing action could be rhubarb root and aloe powder, also bitter.

To increase its weight-reducing action and to prevent these bitter herbs from weakening the digestive fire, we could add spices like dry ginger. This would be especially good for Kapha types.

As it is a fairly reducing formula, we might want to add some tonifying herbs to balance it out. Licorice, marshmallow or shatavari would do this, giving it some nourishing properties but retaining its anti-Pitta action. Moreover, the demulcent property of these tonics, combined with the bitter, makes a good combination for ulcers and hyperacidity, adding a soothing action to the mucus membranes.

As all disease involves stress, tension and disturbed mental or emotional states, we might want to add a nervine or antispasmodic herb. Gotu kola or bhringaraj would be good; they aid in

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the basic liver-cleansing action of the three bitters. Such a combination would help deal with alcohol and other substances that make the liver toxic.

Disease is commonly based on a stagnation of energy or blockage of the channels. We might want to add some turmeric for opening up the liver and pancreas and relieving any blockage in their systems.

Putting these principles together for a liver-cleansing formula for a strong Kapha type who has eaten too much meat, sugar and fats, we might use gentian, goldenseal and barberry, along with dry ginger, turmeric and gotu kola, taken with honey.

For a weak Pitta type suffering from chronic hepatitis, we might use the three bitters with shatavari, licorice, turmeric and gotu kola, taken with ghee. We might even take out one of the bitters, like goldenseal, to prevent the formula from being too reducing.

With the appropriate strategy, avoiding any excessive or one-sided action, we have much latitude in combining herbs to treat conditions. Yet, whatever the condition, we must take care to treat the underlying dosha and not just proceed symptomatically. Then we must adjust the formula based upon the experience of the patient. In this process we can learn to make our effective combinations.

Herbs, whether classically formed and commercially made or formulas made by ourselves, do not always have the expected result, even if all factors appear correct. Experience must always be our final teacher. Using these Ayurvedic herbs and formulas, we may find that their effectiveness varies according to time, place and culture, requiring some adaptation and adjustment.

POTENTIZATION OF HERBS

Not only must we have the right diagnosis and right prescription to adequately treat a condition, the herbs must have the right potency. Many old or commercially prepared herbs may lack this.

Potentization of herbs is not just a physical or chemical matter. It requires strengthening the prana or life-force of the herbs,

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which in turn requires an act of consciousness. It cannot be done by mechanical methods alone. A physically oriented medicine must fail because it cannot serve as a vehicle for the life-force.

In some respects it is misleading to speak of the general properties of an herb. These vary, particularly by degree, according to how the herb is grown, prepared and combined. They are general guidelines, not rigid rules. Miraculous powers can be found in very ordinary herbs when they are specially grown and prepared. All herbs are vehicles of prana or cosmic healing power. As such, they all possess a certain neutrality and can be made into vehicles for that power on different levels.

SPECIALLY POWERFUL HERBS

Some herbs, like ginseng or ashwagandha, are endowed with special power. They tend to retain this power even when other supporting factors are lacking. Generally roots hold their power longer than other plant parts, then barks and fruit; leaves and flowers deteriorate first.

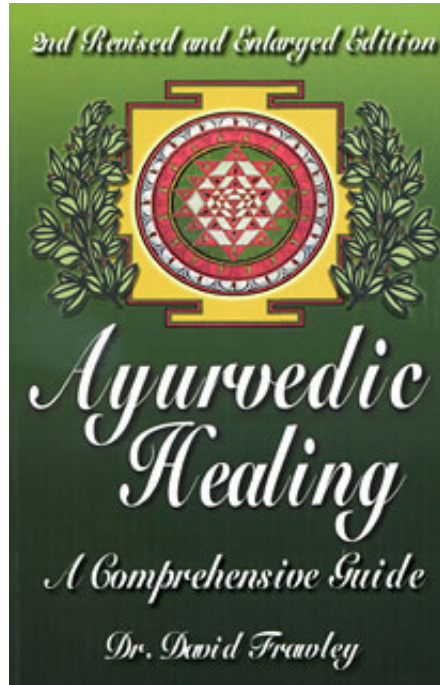
SPECIALLY GROWN HERBS

Fresh herbs maintain a special power, having more prana or chi than dry ones. Their juice is particularly strong. Fresh herbs, even singly or in small dosages, can affect the body and mind directly, and have better healing power, than large amounts of old herbs. Homegrown herbs, grown with love and attention, possess a more gentle, yet consistent, healing power.

How an herb is grown is as important a factor in healing as what the herb is. A few well grown or prepared herbs can cure diseases that many herbs otherwise cannot touch. Some herbalists, therefore, choose to use a few herbs, perhaps very common ones, grown and prepared with care. This is not a lack of sophistication but sophistication of a different nature.

WILD HERBS

Wild herbs possess the strongest prana. Handpick your own with care, love and respect. They transmit the force of Nature



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