



How to Use Herbal Teas to Decrease Inflammation

Expert
Reviewed

Three Parts: [Choosing Anti-Inflammatory Herbs](#) [Brewing Anti-Inflammatory Tea](#) [Protecting Yourself](#)

Herbs have long been used to treat diseases and promote overall health. Some herbal teas may even help to fight inflammation. To use herbal teas for inflammation, you will need to know what herbs work best for different conditions and learn how to brew a good cup of herbal tea. Keep in mind that some herbs may cause allergies and other side effects, so you may want to check with your doctor before incorporating herbal teas into your daily health regimen.

Part
1

Choosing Anti-Inflammatory Herbs

1 Try one of the most effective anti-inflammatory herbs. There are many herbs that have anti-inflammatory properties. Anti-inflammatory effects seem to be the result of plant bioflavonoids, phenolic substances, and other substances that function as antioxidants. Some of the most effective anti-inflammatory herbs include:^[1]

- Cayenne pepper (fruit)
- Chamomile (flowers)
- Licorice (root)
- Turmeric (root)
- Willow bark (bark)
- Yarrow (flowers, leaves)

2 Consider digestive anti-inflammatory herbs. Herbal teas may also help with some types of digestive inflammation such as cramping, nausea, and diarrhea. If you want to use herbs to treat digestive inflammation, then you may want to try an herb that targets the digestive system. The digestive anti-inflammatory herbs include:^{[2][3]}

- goldenseal root
- licorice root^[4]
- chamomile^[5]
- calendula^[6]

3 Use licorice or mullein for respiratory inflammation. For an anti-inflammatory herb that targets the respiratory system try making a tea from licorice root or mullein leaves.^{[7][8]} For example, if you have a cold or bronchitis, then you may find it helpful to drink a tea made from licorice root or mullein leaves. A tea made from one of these herbs may help to ease some of the inflammation in your throat, nasal passages, and lungs.

4 Prepare a corn silk tea for bladder inflammation. For bladder inflammations (cystitis, urethritis), you can try drinking a tea made from corn silk.^{[9][10]} Corn silk has been used as a folk remedy in different parts of the world and it has been found to be effective as an anti-inflammatory agent.^[11]

- To make corn silk tea, you can just use some of the corn silk from a fresh cob of corn. The silk is the white thread that is between the corn and the husk.

5 Apply an herbal tea compress to reduce skin inflammation. For skin conditions with an inflammatory component, you can apply a tea compress made from calendula, goldenseal, or myrrh.^{[12][13]} Applying the tea directly to your skin will produce the best benefit.

- To make a tea compress, brew a cup of tea using one of the herbs and then let it cool until it is lukewarm. You may also chill the tea to increase the anti-inflammatory effects, since cold can help to reduce swelling and inflammation.
- After the tea has cooled, soak a clean washcloth in the tea and wring out the excess.
- Then, apply the washcloth to the part of your skin that is inflamed.

- Do not apply a tea compress to skin that is broken or that seems infected. See a doctor for help.

**Part
2****Brewing Anti-Inflammatory Tea**

1 Measure your herbs. For dry herb teas, you will need to use one teaspoon of the herb you have selected. If you are using fresh herbs, then you will need about three tablespoons of the herb. Fresh herbs still have water in them so they are larger than dried herbs.

- If you are using willow bark, add three to four one inch pieces to boiling water. Then, cover and boil the tea for 15 to 25 minutes.

2 Place your herbs into a tea infuser. Place your herbs into your tea infuser and then place the infuser into a mug. If you do not have a tea infuser, then you can just place your herbs in a mug and strain them out after steeping the tea.

3 Pour boiling water over the herbs. Pour one cup of boiled water over your herbs and then allow the tea to steep for 10 to 15 minutes. After time is up, remove the tea strainer or pour the tea through a fine sieve to remove the herbs.

- It is best to make teas fresh, but you can store in the refrigerator for one to three days. One serving contains about six to eight ounces of liquid.

4 Drink three to four cups per day. You can drink three to four cups of herbal tea every day. Don't go over four cups per day without speaking to your physician, naturopath, or herbalist first. You can also add a little honey or lemon to your tea if desired.

**Part
3****Protecting Yourself**

1 Buy the best herbs available for your tea. High-quality herbs will provide more anti-inflammatory benefits, so make sure that you choose your herbs carefully. Some good things to consider when purchasing herbs for teas include:

- *Growing practices.* Choose organically grown herbs over herbs that were grown using pesticides. You may also want to look for herbs that were grown using sustainable growing practices or that were sourced in the wild. These herbs may be more potent than herbs that were produced in mass quantities.
- *Use of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).* GMP is a set of rules and regulations that was developed by the FDA for dietary supplements. If you are buying a pre-packaged herbal tea that is also labeled as a supplement, then make sure that the manufacturer adheres to these guidelines. This information should be listed on the package.
- *Appearance and smell of the herbs.* Before you decide to purchase loose herbs, consider the color, smell and taste of the herbs. Greener herbs are fresher than brown colored herbs. The herbs should also have an aromatic smell.^[14]

2 Avoid certain herbs if you have a known allergy. If you know that you are allergic to a certain herb, then you should avoid that plant and all plants in its family. If you have a plant allergy, then check with your doctor or allergist if you are unsure about what plant families you are allergic to. Some of the different plant families include:

- Aster Family: Chamomile, Yarrow
- Buttercup Family: Goldenseal
- Legume Family: Licorice
- Ginger Family: Turmeric
- Willow Family: Willow Bark
- Nightshade Family: Cayenne
- Figwort Family: Mullein
- Poaceae Family: Corn silk
- Burseraceae Family: Myrrh

3 Watch for minor side effects. Herbs do not often cause major side effects, but some people do experience side effects from herbal teas. When side effects occur, they tend to be minor ones such as stomach upset, burping, and mild nausea. If you notice that a specific herb is causing side effects for you, then you may want to stop taking it.

4 Talk to your physician if you are pregnant or nursing. Many herbs are safe for pregnant women, but some are not. To be safe, you should always talk to your doctor before taking any medicinal herbs, but it is even more important to do this when you are pregnant or nursing. If you are pregnant or nursing, make sure that you speak to your physician before taking any herbs for inflammation.

Tips

- Try blending two or more herbs together to experiment with different flavors and increase the anti-inflammatory effects of your teas.

Warnings

- Do not use licorice if you have high blood pressure or are taking a diuretic (water pill).^[15]
- Turmeric may interact with some prescription medications, such as blood thinners and diabetes medications. Check with your physician to see if any of your medications may interact with turmeric.^[16]
- Do not use willow bark if you have a sensitivity to aspirin. You should also avoid alcohol, barbiturates and sedatives when drinking willow bark tea.^[17]
- Avoid goldenseal if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.^[18]

Sources and Citations

1. DeGrandpre, Z, (2010), *Botanical Therapeutics: Actions, Interactions and Indications*, ISBN 978-0557271078
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3. Tilgner, S, (2009), *Herbal Medicine From the Heart of the Earth*, ISBN 978-1881517030

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