

# Arthriti

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### Rheumatoid Arthritis

#### Herbal Medicine

Many herbs possess significant anti-inflammatory action and are appropriate in the treatment of RA.

**Birch leaf juice** acts as a diuretic without irritating the kidney. Take 1 tbsp three times daily.

**Blueberries, cherries and hawthorn berries** These berries are rich sources of flavonoid molecules, particularly proanthocyanidins. These flavonoids exhibit membrane and collagen stabilizing, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory actions as well as many other actions that are very beneficial in the treatment of RA.

**Boswellia** Boswellia, an Ayurvedic medicine, has been investigated for its effects on arthritis. A double blind study using boswellia found a beneficial effect on pain and stiffness, as well as improved joint function. It showed no negative effects in this study. The herb has a unique anti-inflammatory action, much like the conventional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). But unlike NSAIDs, long-term use of boswellia is generally considered safe and does not lead to irritation or ulceration of the stomach. Dosage: Take 400-800 mg of extract in capsules or tablets three times per day.

**Celery seeds** help clear uric acid from the joints of gout and arthritis sufferers. Boil 1 tsp. of seeds in 1 cup of water for fifteen minutes, strain and sip.

**Chinese skullcap** (*Scutellaria baicalensis*) Chinese skullcap has confirmed anti-arthritic and anti-inflammatory actions, similar in effect to the prescription drugs phenyl- butazone and indomethacin. Unlike these drugs that are associated with toxicity and adverse effects, Chinese skullcap does not appear to have any adverse effects at therapeutic levels. Its therapeutic action appears to be related to its high content of flavonoid molecules. These flavonoids are extremely potent antioxidants and free-radical scavenging compounds.

**Chinese thoroughwax** (*Bupleuri falcatum*) **Bupleuri** root is an important component in various prescriptions in Chinese traditional medicine, particularly in remedies for inflammatory conditions. Bupleuri has been shown to enhance the activity of glucocorticoids.

**Dandelion** dispels uric acid. Take 3 capsules daily, 1 tbsp. juice or 1 cup tea, twice daily for four to six weeks to reduce the frequency and intensity of pain, and to strengthen the connective tissue.

**Devil's claw root** is effective in reducing the inflammation of connective tissues, as it dispels uric acid.

**Dong quai** is good for relieving fleeting muscle and joint pains, especially if they are worse in damp conditions. Take 1 tbsp. of dried root juice three times daily.

**Feverfew** Feverfew has a long folk history in the treatment of fever, arthritis and migraine. Extracts of feverfew have shown greater activity in inhibiting inflammation and fever than aspirin in experimental studies. Feverfew extracts inhibit the synthesis of many pro-inflammatory compounds at their initial stage of synthesis. Feverfew also decreases the secretion of inflammatory particles from platelets and white blood cells.

**Ginger** In one study, Indian researchers gave three to seven grams of ginger a day to 28 people with rheumatoid arthritis. More than 75 percent of those participating in the study reported at least some relief from pain and swelling. Even after more than two years of taking these high doses of ginger, none of the people reported side effects. Many people drink ginger tea for arthritis. A ginger compress is also beneficial for arthritis. Dosage: 6-50 grams of fresh or powdered ginger per day.

**Licorice acts** in the body like cortisone, without the harmful side-effects. L

**Parsley juice** is effective in combating and flushing out uric acid from the tissue, which eases painful limbs and joints. Take 1 tsp. of parsley juice three times daily for six weeks. Wait three weeks before taking again.

**Sarsaparilla** has anti-inflammatory properties that may be helpful for people with rheumatoid arthritis.

**Turmeric (Curcumin, Curcuma longa)** Curcumin, the yellow pigment of turmeric, has significant anti-inflammatory action. Curcumin has been shown to be as effective as cortisone or phenylbutazone in certain models of inflammation. Curcumin also exhibits many beneficial effects on liver functions. The typical dosage of curcumin is 400 to 600 mg 3 times daily. Curcumin is sometimes given in combination with an equal dose of an extract of the pineapple plant called bromelain, which appears to possess anti-inflammatory properties of its own.

Curcumin is thought to be quite safe. Side effects are rare and are generally limited to occasional allergic reactions and mild stomach upset. However, safety in very young

children, pregnant or nursing women, and those with severe liver or kidney disease has not been established. **Herbal Combinations**

Make an infusion

Dilute 10 drops of St. John's wort oil in 1 tbsp. of almond or olive oil and massage painful joints with a brush. Rest afterwards for one hour in bed.