

● herbs

Your local supermarket or the corner café can provide you with many cheap, natural remedies: familiar herbs and spices. Some of these old kitchen favourites have active ingredients as powerful as the drugs that doctors use to treat asthma, heart conditions, diabetes and bacterial infections. **Let's begin to learn how to use these traditional remedies** for our common ailments by using them in the medicine chest.

by Sue Visser (Nature Fresh customer services : www.naturefresh.co.za)

THE TOP 10

Herbal remedies for you and your family



PARSLEY

A bunch of fresh parsley costs less than R3. By eating a few twigs daily you can help to cure anaemia, bad breath, water retention, kidney disorders, arthritis, gall stones, poor circulation and menstrual problems. Parsley is rich in Iron, Chlorophyll, Vitamins A, B, B2 and C as well as Potassium. It assists in flushing out all toxins in the digestive and urinary system and cleanses the blood whilst it combats body odour. It restores your energy, vitality and iron levels after just a few days, but you have to eat at least a bunch a week to really feel the effect. To get used to the taste, you can dip the parsley in molasses, a natural sugar that is also rich in iron. Women who have menstrual problems can benefit and get relief by eating parsley regularly.



SAGE

Sage is a powerful antiseptic for wounds. Make a strong tea from the leaves, either fresh or from the spice bottle to use on cuts and grazes. Gargle

this tea with salt for sore throats or use as a mouthwash after surgery or for mouth ulcers. Sage is used for fevers or for menopausal hot flushes. This herb is a form of HRT as it has the ability to enhance the natural production of estrogen in the body. At the same time it cleanses and stimulates the liver and improves digestion, especially of fats. No braai or roast dinner should be eaten without a little sage. Sage is associated with wisdom, because it helps to increase the circulation of blood to the brain. However, pregnant women and high blood pressure and epilepsy patients should not take large amounts of sage at one time.



ROSEMARY

The herb of remembrance also enhances blood circulation to the brain – however, use it in small amounts if you have a medical complaint. It can be grown from the smallest twig into a beautiful bush or pot plant. Use rosemary twigs as a pastry brush in the kitchen or to flavour meats and casseroles, particularly lamb – it helps with the digestion of fats. Try sprinkling one or two leaves under a pot on the stove or hold a leaf over a candle – a natural version of incense. Rosemary oil can be used as a fragrant chest or cellulite rub or in the bath to pep you up. Wrap fresh leaves in a cloth and bruise it with a

hammer to make your own free rosemary rub. Make an infusion with the leaves by pouring hot water on it. Rosemary remedies have been used effectively to treat flatulence, coughs, dizziness, colds, nervousness, cramps, poor circulation, sore throats, headaches, nausea, gout and especially hangovers!



THYME

Thyme is associated with courage. It is a bold and powerful healer of many ailments including asthma, headaches, high cholesterol, fatigue, nasal and chest congestion, aches and pains, poor circulation, depression and weakened immunity.

It's one of the best known herbs in the kitchen for its delicious aroma when added to omelettes, salads, fish and stews. This herb was even used by the Egyptians for embalming as it is a powerful antiseptic and helps to keep parasites away. Rinsing your hair in a strong thyme infusion can help to control head lice and it is also good for keeping fleas away from animals. The strong vapours from fresh thyme sprigs in a bowl of boiling water or a hot bath can ease congested sinuses, sore chests and headaches. It is also excellent for toning and purifying the skin, but rinse the skin with clean cold water afterwards. Thyme has a mild sedative action and is good for babies with constant runny noses and chest coughs. Add a few sprigs of thyme to their bath water at night.