

Glossary of Herbal Preparations

Balm: see salves

Baths: water based infusion designed to achieve herbal therapy through immersion/osmosis

Capsules: inclusion of dried, powdered herbs in gelatin, primarily to hide their taste

Cold Compresses: used to prevent swelling and reduce fevers. An infusion or decoction which is chilled, soaked into a cloth and externally applied

Creams: herbs captured in a fatty or oily base with a light, airy texture which is easily spread on skin for healing or moisturizing effect

Decoctions: roots, barks, seeds and other dense plant parts gently simmered for extended periods to dissolve water soluble constituents

Douches: an infusion or decoction administered vaginally to cleanse, disinfect and soothe

Elixirs: thin, syrupy liquid carrier used to make herbs more palatable;

Enemas: infusion or decoction rectally injected to relieve constipation, cleanse and soothe the large intestines

Eyewashes: infusion or decoction used to cleanse, disinfect and soothe ocular tissue

Fluid Extracts: the medicinal properties of herbs in a concentrated liquid form for internal consumption or external application

Fomentation: applied hot - an infusion or decoction of herbs soaked into a cloth for external application

Gargle: an infusion, decoction or diluted extract used to cleanse, disinfect and soothe the throat - normally not swallowed

Glycerities: the medicinal or nourishing constituents of herbs extracted into this highly sweet hydrolyzed vegetable fat - does not sufficiently extract full spectrum of available constituents

Granules: sugar pellets impregnated with medicinal matter which is applied in liquid form and absorbed by the pellets, then dried - usually a carrier for homeopathic remedies

Infusions: leaves, flowers and other tender parts of plants soaked in freshly boiled water to capture their water soluble constituents

Juices: see succus

Liniments: alcoholic or hydro-alcoholic solutions of medicinal constituents used for external applications

Lotions: oil/water based preparation, allowing healing benefits to be absorbed through the skin

Lozenges: small, sweetened, candy like disks or drops which are sucked to obtain medicinal benefits

Mucilages: fresh or dried herbs which become slick and slimy when mixed with water - used internally and externally to soothe and heal irritated tissue

Ointments: herbs mixed with lard, lanolin, petroleum or wax for external application to skin afflictions - gradually melts with skin heat and is absorbed

Pessaries: bullet sized, cocoa butter based pellet which carries herbs for vaginal absorption

Pills: masses of medicinal matter, round or oval in shape, designed for internal consumption - sometimes contain carrier material such as gelatin or milk sugar

Plasters: medicinal herbs stirred into a sticky base which is then spread on skin, silk, cotton cloth or paper - solidifies into hard mass which mechanically supports the injured area while the medicinal constituents are absorbed

Poultices: fresh or dried herbs mixed with enough liquid to make a thick, pasty consistency for external application to skin and muscular injuries

Powders: dried herbs ground into smaller particles for encapsulation or extraction

Salves: oil and beeswax preparation useful for external skin application to promote healing of injured skin

Sinus snuff: a powdered herb mixture designed for nasal inhalation - produces copious discharge, aiding decongestion of sinuses

Spray: herbal extracts, teas or diluted essential oils in spray bottles for internal or external use

Stears: infusion or decoction of herbs or small amounts of essential oils in hot water which rises up and surrounds the affected area for detoxifying or decongesting effect

Succus: freshly expressed herbal juice, sometimes preserved with grain alcohol

Suppositories: bullet shaped pellets of powdered herbs in a cocoa butter base designed for rectal absorption

Syrups: sweet, thick carrier for herbal medicine - base usually consists of honey, glycerin, maple syrup, rice syrup, etc.

Tablets: dry or moistened powdered herbs compressed into a variety of swallowable shapes - sometimes contain carrier material such as starch, gelatin or milk sugar

Tinctures: herbal constituents extracted into a standard weight/volume ratio of 1 part herb to 5 parts solvent

Vinegars: herbal constituents dissolved into vinegar for internal ingestion should be raw apple cider vinegar