Herbal Medicine Approach to Urinary and Renal System Dysfunction

(Part V in a series on Herbal Medicine) - (Adapted from The College of Integrative Medicine Module 30 – Clinical Botanical Medicine)

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In general, herbal medicine can be used for the treatment and management of the following urinary and renal conditions:

- Urinary tract infections; functional disturbances of micturition; interstitial cystitis, urinary stones, edema with renal involvement, benign prostatic hypertrophy, and moderate autoimmune kidney disease.

- The primary precautions to prescribing herbal involve cases of renal failure, urinary obstruction and severe glomerulonephritis.

**Urinary Antiseptics**

**Indications**

Urinary infections, urinary stones, prostatitis, interstitial cystitis

**Contraindications**

Kidney disease, renal failure, pregnancy

**Applications**

Best taken before or with meals; short to medium term

Liver

Gallbladder

Kidneys

Intestines
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Primary Herbal Medicine(s)
- Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Bearberry)
- Barosma betulina (Buchu)
- Juniperus communis (Juniper)
- Berberis vulgaris (Barberry)
- Hydrastis canadensis (Goldenseal)
- Piper cubeda (Cubeb)

Adult Dosage Consideration
- Bearberry > 30 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 1.5 to 2.0 g/day (Tablet)
- Barberry > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid)
- Buchu > 15 to 30 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 36 to 48 mg/day (Essential oil)
- Juniper > 10 to 20 mL/week (1:2 liquid)

Primary Herbal Medicine(s)
- Agropyron repens (Couch grass)
- Alchelmilla vulgaris (Ladies mantle)
- Althea officinalis folia and radix (Marshmallow leaf and root)
- Zea mays (Corn silk)

Adult Dosage Consideration
- Corn silk > 15 to 40 mL/week (1:1 liquid)
- Couch grass 20 to 40 mL/week (1:1 liquid)
- Ladies mantle > 25 to 50 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 2.0 to 2.6 g/day (tablet)
- Marshmallow root > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:5 liquid)

Urinary Demulcents (Soothing Mucous Membranes of the Urinary Tract)

Indications
Urinary tract infection, urinary stones, prostatitis, interstitial cystitis

Contraindications
Renal failure; specific to herb

Applications
Best taken with meals

Urinary Tract Anti - Lithics

The rationale of using herbal remedies is based the alkalizing capacity and urinary antiseptic effects.

Indications
Kidney stones

Contraindications
Renal failure/disease; pregnancy; specific to herb

Applications
Best taken before or with meals; medium to long term use

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**Renal Tonics/Protectives (Supports Renal Tone and Function)**

**Primary Herbal Medicine(s)**
- Crataeva nurvala (Crataeva)
- Equisetum arvense (Horsetail)
- Hydrangea arborescens (Hydrangea)
- Eupatorium purpureum (Gravel root)

**Adult Dosage Consideration**
- Crataeva > 40 to 100 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 3 to 6 g/day (tablet)
- Gravel root > 15 to 30 mL/week (1:2 liquid)
- Hydrangea > 15 to 50 mL/week (1:2 liquid) horsetail > 15 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid)

**Indications**
Any condition affecting the renal system

**Contraindications**
Specific to herb; assess renal function prior to prescribing

**Applications**
Best taken with meals; long-term

**Primary Herbal Medicine(s)**
- Astragalus membranaceus (Astragalus)
- Bupleurum falcatum (Bupleurum)
- Rehmannia glutinosa (Rehmannia)
- Schisandra chinensis (Schisandra)

**Adult Dosage Consideration**
- Astragalus > 30 to 60 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 2.5 to 3.4 g/day (tablet)
- Bupleurum > 25 to 60 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 1.2 to 2.8 g/day (tablet)
- Rehmannia > 30 to 60 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 1.1 to 1.8 g/day (tablet)
- Schisandra > 25 to 60 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 3.0 to 5.0 g/day (tablet)
Urinary Tract Anti-inflammatory

**Indications**
Mild to moderate infection, inflammation or irritation of the urinary tract; prostatitis, cystitis

**Contraindications**
Renal failure/severe renal disease; pregnancy

**Applications**
Best taken before or with meals

**Primary Herbal Medicine(s)**
- Agropyron repens (Couch grass)
- Althaea officinalis (Marshmallow root and leaf)
- Crataeva nurvala (Crataeva)
- Plantago lanceolata (Ribwort)
- Solidago virgaurea (Goldenrod)
- Zea mays (Corn silk)

**Adult Dosage Consideration**
- Couch grass > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:1 liquid)
- Crataeva > 40 to 100 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 3 to 6 g/day (tablet)
- Golden rod > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:2 liquid) or 2.0 to 2.6 g/day (tablet)
- Marshmallow root > 20 to 40 mL/week (1:5 liquid)
- Corn silk > 15 to 40 mL/week (1:1 liquid)

**References**