

Natural Options For Lyme Treatment

Like syphilis, Lyme disease is caused by spirochetes, long and slender bacteria which are usually only a fraction of a micron in diameter but 5 to 250 microns long. They are tightly coiled, and so look like miniature springs or telephone cords. In The Book of Herbal Wisdom, Matthew Wood writes of Lyme disease, "After entering the body through a tick bite, the spirochetes burrow into the muscles where they settle down to live. Here they produce chronic inflammation and pain, with destruction of muscles and joints. People become like the broken-down 'tertiary syphilitics' described in old medical text books."

Other parasites can also produce toxins which trigger symptoms similar to Lyme disease. Helminth parasites are worm-like organisms that can be found in the lymph, organs, and the blood. Protozoa are smaller than helminth parasites and have names like babesia, malaria, amoebas, or protomyxzoa. They are capable of producing toxins which disrupt your immune system, making your body even more parasite-friendly and producing symptoms often misdiagnosed as Lyme disease.

Although Lyme Disease is relatively new over the last 30 years, Dr. Qingcai Zhang notes that effective TCM treatments exist for five other spirochetal diseases including syphilis and leptospirosis. The rhizomatic root of a Sarsparilla variety, **Smilax Glabrae** (SG), is the major ingredient of the herbal formulas used to treat syphilis and achieves a greater than 90 percent sero-convert rate back to negative. Even for the late stages of syphilis, the cure rate is above 50 percent.

In poor rural areas of China, barefoot farmers work in the rice fields and epidemics of the spirochete disease, Leptospirosis, which is transmitted through contaminated water, affected millions. Smilax Glabrae rhizome has also been studied as a statistically significant preventive treatment for leptospirosis.

Dr. Zhang notes that in recent years, other active ingredients listed below have been identified, and gone through both animal studies and human clinical trials. They were tested and found to kill the spirochetes in leptospirosis, and have been used clinically to treat leptospirosis in China:

- (1) *Allicin*, an active ingredient of RAW garlic;
- (2) *Decanoylacetaldhyde*, an active ingredient of Houத்துyniae Herba (HH);
- (3) *Coptin*, an active ingredient of Coptis chinensis Radix, Smilax glabrae Rhizoma and Scutellariae Radix.

Other practitioners indicate that inflammation in the GI tract may limit how

well nutrients and herbs can be absorbed. If so, try grapefruit seed extract for one to two weeks to see the response, while at the same time taking Pepto Bismol, since the Lyme spirochetes are very sensitive to bismuth. Tinctures of other herbs are usually recommended but, if you use whole herbs, they may be blended with sunflower lecithin and water in a food processor to make smaller particles that can be absorbed more easily. Here is a list of other treatments notable for success with Lyme:

- **Agrimony**, treats various parasitic infections and is used to relieve diarrhea and dysentery especially if there is pus, blood, white mucus; to treat fatigue, lightheadedness, dizziness, weak knees and weak lower back, especially in people with a normal appetite; and to stop gastrointestinal and other bleeding conditions. This herb also reduces swelling, eliminates breast abscesses, sores, hemorrhoids, nodules, and ulcerations. In some, this herb may cause palpitations and flushing.
- **Andrographis** helps break the encysted forms of the spirochete. Even if you tolerate it with no allergic reaction, there is no reason to use this herb long term. The red root should be taken as a tincture, not a pill. If you feel better, keep at it a while. If you experience digestive upset, take it with food.
- **Astragalus**, acts to enhance the immune function during early-stage Lyme disease. It works by enhancing Th1 immune response, producing higher levels of Th1 which lessens the chance that infections will occur, or results in more mild symptoms. However, later stages of Lyme disease are Th1 dominant, so the use of astragalus in the later stages of this disease has the potential to exacerbate the Th1 response and worsen the symptoms of the disease.
- **Cat's Claw Bark**, a standardized extract may eventually offer a reduction in the number of painful and swollen joints
- **Eleuthero (Siberian Ginseng)** is not necessarily Lyme-specific and is a completely different plant than ginseng. There are very interesting studies using relatively high doses of eleuthero which boost the adrenals, enhancing energy and mental clarity.
- **Japanese Knotweed (Resveratrol)**, an invasive member of the buckwheat family that can act as a broad-spectrum antibacterial, very effective against Lyme-related spirochetes including *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is used as an antiviral, immunomodulator, immunostimulant, with laxative, diuretic, and cough suppressant properties. It displays a capillary stimulant action of specific importance in Lyme treatment as it increases the blood flow to areas where the Lyme spirochete likes to live such as the eyes, skin, heart and joints, helping to carry the medicinal constituents of any treatments to those places.

- **Pau d'Arco**, anti-parasitic, anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory
- **Red Root Bark**, a strong blood coagulant specific for Babesiosis that also acts as lymphatic stimulant/tonic as an anti-inflammatory for the liver/spleen
- **Sarsaparilla Root** (specifically *Smilax Glabrae*), may also lessen the severity of Herxheimer symptoms by binding neurotoxins and helping the body flush them out more efficiently. Sarsaparilla was a popular remedy in the 1800s for syphilis, which is also a spirochete bacteria.
- **Stephania Root**, an immuno-modulator that is often used as an anti-arthritis, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antibacterial or anti-parasitic. Its effects can be specific to blurry vision, spasms, Lyme-related arthritis, brain fog, and late-stage infections of nervous system or the joints and skin.
- **St. John's Wort**, well known for its ability to reduce pain and inflammation and to repair nerve damage, a common symptom of Lyme that seems to get exponentially worse the longer an appropriate treatment protocol is delayed
- **Artemisia annua (Sweet Annie)**, an anti-parasitic specifically used in Babesiosis and Malaria which can also reduce the Herxheimer response
- **Teasel Root**, often the perfect partner for individuals or dogs with chronic Lyme disease and is often combined with prescribed antibiotics to treat the secondary infections. Teasel's anti-inflammatory effects work on the spirochete's damaging consequences, arresting the disease process. It is important to note that Teasel has also been successful in the treating of Fibromyalgia. The Chinese and Xu duan names, *Dipsacus japonica* and *Dipsacus asperoids*, mean "Restore What Is Broken," and truly sum up the valuable healing properties of this herb.
- **White Willow Bark**, an anti-inflammatory fever-reducer than may also restore collagen in joints and may be useful in managing nerve pain

Anti-spirochete and anti-Babesia treatments both induce the Herxheimer's reaction during the first three weeks of treatment. Herxheimer's reaction is caused by toxins released by the large number of dead spirochetes eliminated during the initial part of treatment. This means that symptoms will worsen temporarily. If the reaction becomes hard to tolerate, then the amount of herbal intake should be reduced to half or even less to build up tolerance gradually. After the reaction period is over, the patient will experience gradual and steady improvement.

Each herbalist has his or her own treatment combination for using these remedies, and though they vary, many seem to work. Remember, for each Lyme disease diagnosis there will be an equal number of unique results, so before starting a regime of any of these you might consult a qualified herbal practitioner for an individualized, appropriate treatment.

* Stephen H. Buhner's Recommended Dosages for Lyme Treatment *

Japanese Knotweed capsules (Resveratrol with 500mg *Polygonum cuspidatum* per tablet)

150 lb adult: 1-4 tablets 3-4x daily

100 lb adult: 10 tablets total daily split into three doses

60 lb child: 5 tablets daily split into three doses, tincture is probably better here

30 lb child: 3 tablets daily split into three doses, but would prefer tincture for child this small

Japanese Knotweed tincture

150 lb adult: 1 teaspoon 3x daily

100 lb adult: 2/3 teaspoon 3x daily

60 lb child: 1/3 teaspoon 3x daily

30 lb child: 1/5 teaspoon 3x daily

Cat's Claw capsule

150 lb adult: 1-4 tablets 3-4x daily

100 lb adult: 10 tablets total daily split into three doses

60 lb child: 5 tablets daily split into three doses, tincture is probably better here

30 lb child: 3 tablets daily split into three doses, but would prefer tincture for child this small

Cat's Claw tincture

150 lb adult: 1 teaspoon 3x daily

100 lb adult: 2/3 teaspoon 3x daily

60 lb child: 1/3 teaspoon 3x daily

30 lb child: 1/5 teaspoon 3x daily

***Eleutherococcus* tincture**

150 lb adult: 1/2 to 1 teaspoon upon rising and at lunch

100 lb adult: 1/2 to 1 teaspoon upon rising and at lunch

60 lb child: 1/2 to 1 teaspoon upon rising and at lunch

30 lb child: 1/2 to 1 teaspoon upon rising and at lunch

***Astragalus* capsule for new tick bites - not to be used in chronic lyme**

150 lb adult: 1,000 mg daily

100 lb adult: 1,000 mg daily

60 lb child: 1,000 mg daily

30 lb child: 1,000 mg daily

***Astragalus* tincture for new tick bites - not to be used in chronic lyme**

150 lb adult: 1 teaspoon 3x daily

100 lb adult: 1 teaspoon 3x daily

60 lb child: 1/2 teaspoon 3x daily

30 lb child: 1/3 teaspoon 3x daily