Cranberry and Buchu
Herbal formula for preventing frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs)

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are five times more common in women than they are in men. This is because bacteria have to travel up the urethra to enter the bladder. Since women have much shorter urethra than men, it is easier for bacteria to migrate up into the bladder.

Cranberry and Buchu is a simple combination of two herbs that can help to prevent frequent UTIs. It is not the best formula for treating an active UTI, but can be taken regularly to prevent them from occurring. Here are the two herbs that make this formula work.

Cranberry

Cranberry is an all-American fruit. Known by the white man since the earliest New England colonies, cranberries are said to have been on the menu of the first Thanksgiving meal. For a long time cranberries were used as nothing more than a food in the areas where they grew. As time went on, New England sailors found that cranberries prevented scurvy.

During the Thanksgiving of 1864 General Ulysses S. Grant ordered that it be served to the troops at the siege of Petersburg. General Grant considered cranberry sauce to be a necessary part of Thanksgiving; apparently his troops agreed. We have been eating them with our Thanksgiving turkeys ever since.

Except for scurvy prevention nothing was known about cranberry’s health benefits until the 1840s. German researchers discovered that the cranberry caused people to pass hippuric acid in their urine. Hippuric acid killed bacteria along the urinary tract.

Later, at the turn of the century, American researchers thought that the cranberry acidified the urine and might prevent UTIs. In the 1960’s they changed their minds and said that cranberries did not acidify the urine enough to make a difference. By then it was too late. Cranberries already worked their way into the American consciousness and were there to stay.

Fortunately naysayers of the past have not stopped research into cranberries. In fact, recently a study showed that most subjects showed significant improvement in urinary bacterial counts after drinking 300 ml of a cranberry juice cocktail a day. Unlike past researchers, the researchers in this study think that the benefits of the cranberry are caused by a compound with the ability to keep bacteria from sticking to the wall of the bladder. This inhibits bacteria from migrating up the urethra and colonizing the bladder.

Unsweetened cranberry juice is most effective as the sugar in sweetened cranberry juice makes the remedy less effective. Since cranberries are extremely tart, they can also be taken in an encapsulated product like this one.

Buchu

The second ingredient in this blend comes from the other side of the world, Africa. Buchu’s main use and glory is as a diuretic. The first Europeans that settled South Africa began to use it extensively. Because of its rue-like smell, the native Hottentots use buchu as a perfume.

Buchu has been traditionally used to treat cystitis, nephritis, urethritis and urinary tract infections. Taken regularly, it can help to prevent recurrent attacks of cystitis or urethritis. It can be used for prostatitis in men and leucorrea in women. It is helpful for chronic UTIs associated with yeast infections and may also be helpful for an irritable bladder when used with soothing herbs like cornsilk or marshmallow.

Suggested Use

To prevent recurring UTIs take 1-2 capsules of Cranberry and Buchu three times daily. Ideally, take the formula about a half hour before meals with one or two 8 ounce glasses of water. The water will help to flush toxins from the urinary passages and will also help prevent UTIs.

Cranberry and Buchu can also be taken if you have an active UTI or other urinary tract problem, but should probably be combined with uva ursi, goldenseal, Goldenseal and Echinacea or Silver Shield for best results. For cystitis, urethritis or burning and scalding urine, combine Cranberry and Buchu with cornsilk and marshmallow.

Selected References

"Reduction of Bacteriuria and Pyuria After Ingestion of Cranberry Juice" by Jerry Avorn, MD; Mark Monane, MD, MS; Jerry H. Gurwitz, MD; Robert J. Glynn, Ph.D.; Igor Choodnovskiy; Lewis A. Lipsitz, MD, Journal of the American Medical Association, (March 1994).
"Nutritional Herbology: A Reference Guide" by Mark Pedersen
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