

Herbal supplements for diabetes

Stay away from marshmallow root, gotu kola, ephedra, damiana, barberry, large doses of fennel seed,.

*Burdock (Arctium lappa)

Common Names: Greater burdock, edible burdock, lappa.

Location: This herb can be found in Europe, Asia and North America.

Description: Burdock looks similar to a sunflower plant, but has purple and red flower petals and thorns. The root of this herb is used medicinally.

Properties: This herb can be used as a cleanser for the respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic and urinary tract systems in the body. Use burdock to cleanse your body of bile and toxins.

Uses: Burdock can be used for soar throats, arthritis, gout, sciatica, dandruff, boils, eczema, **diabetes**, liver disease and cancer.

Doses: You can find this herb in cereal mixes, “goboshi” or “gobo” products in asian grocery stores and as oils, tinctures and teas. According to Phyllis Balch in Prescriptions for Herbal Healing (2002), “Traditional herbalists recommend 2 to 4 milliliters of burdock root tincture per day or 1 to 2 grams three times a day in capsule form.”

Warnings: Use burdock cautiously while pregnant.

MEDICINAL: Burdock Root is used to treat skin diseases, boils, fevers, inflammations, hepatitis, swollen glands, some cancers, and fluid retention. It is an excellent blood purifier. A tea made of the leaves of Burdock is also used for indigestion. Very useful for building the systems of young women. Helps clear persistent teenage acne if taken for three to four weeks. Used with dandelion root for a very effective liver cleanser and stimulator.

*Astragalus (Astragalus membranaceus)

Common Names: Milk vetch root, locoweed.

Description: Herbalists use the long, diagonal sections of the root of the herb in medicine. This herb should have a sweet taste.

Properties: This herb is known as a “body tonic,” and according to the Prescription for Herbal Healing Handbook

(2002) it can be used to “strengthen digestion, increase metabolic activity, and stimulate the immune system.” It is

known that this herb is useful in treating those who experience repeated infections.

Uses: Astragalus can be used to treat **diabetes**, HIV/AIDS, Lupus, myasthenia gravis and immune suppression.

This herb is good for fighting bladder infections, burns, cancer, colds, angina, atherosclerosis, congestive heart

failure, heart attacks, infertility, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Doses: Look for this herb in capsules, teas, tinctures and fluid extracts.

Warnings: Do not take astragalus while directly experiencing an infection because it is believed that it will make the virus stronger.

MEDICINAL: Astragalus strengthens metabolism and digestion, raises metabolism, aids in strengthening the immune system, and is used in the healing of wounds and injuries. It is often cooked with broths, rice, or beans for a boost to the healing energies during those illnesses that prevent one from eating normally.

*Wild Angelica (*Angelica dahurica*)

Common Names: Bai zhi, Chinese angelica root.

Location: Wild Angelica is a sturdy three-to-seven foot shrub topped with flowers similar to those found on Queen Anne's lace.

Description: It has a hollow stem and bears three-branched leaves. The herb is harvested between summer and fall, when the leaves turn yellow. Wild angelica is considered a warm herb, with a spicy flavor.

Properties: The root is cut lengthwise into thin slices for use in teas.

Uses: Wild angelica inhibits bacteria and viruses, reduces fever, and stimulates respiration. It acts as a

disinfectant against a number of infectious microorganisms, including *E. coli*, a common cause of diarrhea. It helps to open the coronary blood vessels and increase circulation to the heart. Benefits of wild angelica for specific health conditions include treatment of the following: **diabetes**, obesity and fractures.

Doses: Wild angelica is used in capsules and teas. The easiest way to get the herb is from practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). The Chinese term for the herb is bai zhi. It is also included in some formulas manufactured by Pacific BioLogic.

Warnings: This herb should not be used during pregnancy. Wild Angelica should not be put on open sores.

*St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

Common Names: Goatweed, hypericum.

Location: St. John's Wort is a perennial plant native to Great Britain, especially Wales, and to northern Europe. European settlers brought it to the United States in the 1700's.

Description: Growing to a height of thirty-two inches, it bears bright-yellow petals in flowering tops. Traditionally, its petals were gathered in midsummer for use in herbal medicine.

Properties: The entire plant is used. Oils and tinctures made from St. John's Wort have a dark-red color imparted by hypericin, one of the medically active components of the herb. In Middle English, the termwort referred to any plant or vegetable that was used medicinally. St. John's wort got its name because it bloomed on, or near, June 24, which was known as St. John's Day in the Church calendar. In medieval England, St. John's Wort was used to treat attacks of insanity attributed to the work of evil spirits or the devil.

Uses: St. John's Wort has antibacterial, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and pain-relieving properties. This herb's ability to fight depression also makes it useful in treating chronic fatigue syndrome and Lyme disease, and its ability to relieve pain makes it helpful for treating vocal pain and laryngitis associated with fibromyalgia. It can relieve headaches that occur with hay fever and stop the process within the brain that triggers nausea. Benefits of St. John's Wort for specific health conditions

include treatment of the following: breast cancer by providing the cancer fighting compound hypericin, burns and skin disorders, cancer, carpal tunnel syndrome, Crohn's disease, hemorrhoids, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), cuts, scrapes, abrasions. One of the plants most well known uses is for treating depression; wide-scale studies having shown its effectiveness. St. John's wort is also used for **diabetes**, ear infection, herpes virus infection, mastitis, headache, HIV/AIDS, insomnia, and vitiligo.

Doses: St. John's Wort is available in a variety of forms. For people with depression, St. John's Wort should be taken for no less than ten days to two weeks to determine if there is any improvement. If not, and especially if there is no benefit in four to six weeks, the herb should be discontinued. If the herb is helpful, however, there is no limitation on the length of time it can be taken.

Warnings: In some people, this herb may cause stomach upset, restlessness, mild allergic reactions, or fatigue. No medication, including St. John's Wort, is adequate treatment for people who experience a preoccupation with or repeated thoughts of death or suicide. If you do experience such thoughts, you should immediately seek professional help. Many science writers caution that hypericin can sensitize the skin to sunlight, causing a tendency to sunburn. To put this problem in perspective, over 60 million doses of St. John's Wort are dispensed every year in Germany alone, and only fewer than a dozen photosensitization reactions have ever been reported. The use of tanning beds or lamps is not recommended while taking this herb. If you are taking St. John's Wort as an antiviral aid, or to treat cancer or vitiligo, you need to expose your skin to sunlight to activate the herb's active constituents, so the preceding caution does not apply. However, you should note that over 85 percent of people with AIDS who take the herb for as long as six months experience at least one episode of severe sunburn. Also, people taking prescription medications that increase risk of sunburn, such as angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, commonly prescribed for high blood pressure, should also avoid St. John's Wort. Since the antiviral effects of St. John's Wort against HIV has not yet been verified and is still undergoing scientific study, people with AIDS should use this herb only under the supervision of a knowledgeable health-care provider. Some scientific articles maintain that St. John's Wort contains MAO inhibitors, which can cause sudden attacks of severe high blood pressure when combined with the protein tyramine, which is found in aged cheeses, chocolate, and red wine, among many other foods. The studies reporting to find MAO inhibitors in St. John's Wort have not been replicated, though, and there are no reports of people taking St. John's Wort having symptoms of this kind of drug interaction. However, if you are taking antidepressant drugs, whether MAO inhibitors, tricyclic antidepressants, or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as fluoxetine, or the painkiller tramadol (Ultram), or the migraine medication sumatriptan (Imitrex), you should not take St. John's Wort at the same time. Doing so can cause serotonin syndrome, which can be life threatening. If you are interested in switching from a prescription drug to St. John's Wort, you need to let the medication flush out of your system for several weeks (depending on the drug) before you start using the herb.

Other drugs also pose a risk of undesirable interactions. If you are taking digoxin (lanoxicaps, Lanoxin), cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune), protease inhibitors for HIV infection, birth control pills, amitriptyline (Elavil), warfarin (Coumadin), theophylline (Aerolate, Elixophyllin, Slo-Phyllin, and others), chemotherapy drugs, or antipsychotic medications, St. John's Wort might cause these drugs to be less effective. If you are taking medications that cause sun sensitivity, such as sulfa drugs, the anti-inflammatory medication piroxicam (Feldene), omeprazole (Prilosec), or lansoprazole (Prevacid), keep in mind that St. John's Wort might increase that effect. Similarly, you should not take it if you are planning to undergo any type of surgical procedure. This herb can intensify the effects of anesthesia, resulting in over-sedation.

*Scutellaria (*Scutellaria baicalensis*)

Common Names: Skullcap, scute, Chinese skullcap, Baikal skullcap.

Location: Scutellaria is a perennial herb native to the region of Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia and is also found in northern China. It thrives in open grasslands below an elevation of 2,000 feet.

Description: Scutellaria grows to a height of between one and four feet and bears lance-shaped leaves and purple flowers. It has been used in Asian medicine for at least 2,000 years, evidenced by an excavation that took place in northwestern China of a tomb built in the second century, in which ninety-two wooden tablets containing herbal formulas were found. Many listed scutellaria.

Properties: The root is used medicinally, and the plant is also used ornamentally.

Uses: Scutellaria kills bacteria and viruses, and also relieves allergies, asthma, anxiety, and atherosclerosis. It is used in traditional Chinese medicine formulas for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, as well as for fevers, colds, diphtheria, hepatitis, high blood pressure, and shingles. Benefits of Scutellaria for specific health conditions include treatment of allergies, asthma, pneumonia, anxiety, headache, stress, Atherosclerosis, **diabetes**, heart attack, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, attention deficit disorder (ADD), cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, mononucleosis, ear infection, gonorrhea, Lyme disease, infected nails, pelvic inflammatory disease, prostatitis, hangovers, influenza, viral infection, vomiting and periodontal disease.

Doses: Scutellaria is available in a wide variety of forms, frequently referred to as skullcap. This herb should not be confused with American Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*). The two herbs are not interchangeable. The Asian form may be harder to find, but should be obtainable in Chinese herb stores or the Internet.

Warnings: Cases of liver damage have been reported in association with excessive intake of scutellaria. It appears that some scutellaria products also contain germander, and herb known to cause liver damage. You should not use scutellaria if you have diarrhea.

*Psyllium (*Plantago afra*, *Plantago isaghula*, *Plantago ovata*)

Common Names: Blond psyllium husk, flea seed, Indian psyllium husk, ispaghula, plantago, plantain.

Location: Psyllium has been cultivated for thousands of years in Asia, Europe, and North Africa. It was one of the first medicinal plants brought to the Americas from Europe.

Description: Psyllium is a low growing annual that reaches the height of only 16 inches; psyllium bears narrow leaves and clusters of minute off-white flowers. Herbal medicine uses whole seeds and ground plantain seeds, gathered in summer and autumn when the seeds have ripened.

Properties: Psyllium is a source of soothing mucilages for the digestive and respiratory tracts.

Uses: For centuries, traditional Chinese and ayurvedic physicians have used psyllium to treat diarrhea,

constipation, hemorrhoids, and urinary problems. Psyllium mucilages are laxative and anti-diarrheal. Psyllium is known as one of the gentlest laxatives. It is a bulk-forming laxative that is safe for long-term use. This herb can lower blood levels of glucose and cholesterol by keeping the substances from being absorbed through the intestines. Eating soluble fiber from foods such as psyllium as part of the diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. Benefits of psyllium for specific health conditions include the treatment of bronchitis and pneumonia, constipation, Crohn's disease, diarrhea, hemorrhoids, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Doses: Psyllium is available as cereal, ground seeds, and powders.

Warnings: To avoid problems with the absorption of prescription drugs, do not use psyllium seed within one hour of taking such medications. Also, if you have **diabetes**, using large quantity of psyllium products may cause your absorbed-sugar levels to go down to the point that you may need to reduce your insulin dosage. Psyllium tea is a milder alternative to psyllium powders, which should be avoided by people who have tendencies toward low blood sugar and by people who take oral medications several times a day. When taking psyllium as a laxative, you must drink 8 to 10 glasses of water throughout the day to prevent blockage of the intestines. Start using this herb gradually, so the body can adjust to the increased level of fiber.

*Pau D'Arco (Tabebuia species)

Common Name: Lapacho.

Location: Amazon rain forest.

Description: Pau d'arco is a tropical tree that grows to a height of 100 feet. Although it is an evergreen in the Amazon rain forest, it is deciduous at higher and colder locations. The plants in the Tabebuia genus that include the various species of pau d'arco can flower in a number of colors, but theroxa (red-, magenta-, crimson-, and violet-flowering) varieties are used the most in herbal medicine. Medicinal preparations are made from the tree's dried inner bark, sustainably harvested from trees in the wild.

Properties: Pau d'arco extract is an immune stimulant and is effective against bacterial, fungal, viral, parasitic, and yeast infections. It is also considered to be an anti-inflammatory agent.

Uses: The inner lining of the bark of either the red or the purple pau d'arco tree has been used for centuries as treatment for cancer, lupus, infectious diseases, wounds, and many other health conditions. Pau d'arco tea has beneficial effects on disorders as varied as arthritis, athlete's foot, the common cold, leukemia, pain, and yeast and other fungal infections. The herb is currently being investigated for effects on cancer and candida. Traditional herbalists agree that it strengthens and balances the immune system. Benefits of pau d'arco for specific health conditions include treatment of boils, ringworm, and yeast infection, cancer, **diabetes**, gastritis and peptic ulcer; parasitic infection.

Doses: Pau d'arco is available in ointments or lotions for external use, and as teas or tinctures for internal use. Pau d'arco products frequently combine the herb with other herbs used to treat infection and/or inflammation such as garlic and goldenseal. Be sure to read labels carefully if you are sensitive to these herbs.

Warnings: High doses of pau d' arco can cause uncontrolled bleeding, nausea, and vomiting. It is much safer to use the whole bark than to take isolated lapachol. Unfortunately, inferior products containing only the outer bark and the wood are sometimes misrepresented as genuine inner bark pau d' arco. Because the pau d'arco constituent lapachol is somewhat toxic, the herb is not recommended for women who are pregnant or nursing. As of yet, there is no good evidence that pau d'arco is an effective cancer treatment, and it may interfere with the action of prescription anti-cancer drugs. You should not add it to a conventional chemotherapy regime without consulting with your physician.

*Oregon Grape Root (Mahonia aquifolium, Mahonia repens)

Common Name: Alegria, California barberry, japonica, mahonia, mountain grape, mountain holly, pepperidge, sourberry, sowberry, yellow root.

Location: M. repens is found in dry places such as Ponderosa pine ecosystems; M. Nervosa is 1 to 2 feet

tall with holly, found in lower elevations in coastal forests and interior cedar-hemlock ecosystems; *M. aquifolium*, known as Oregon grape, is three to five feet tall.

Description: All have very beautiful flowers and green berries that ripen to a blue-purple color. The name Oregon grape comes from its use as a medicine and food along the Oregon Trail. Its popularity as a food and medicine nearly led to its extinction in the late 19th century. Both the leaves and root bark are used medicinally.

Properties: The best known of the herb's active constituents is berberine, a chemical that Oregon grape root shares with barberry, coptis, and goldenseal.

Uses: Oregon grape root is a bacterial infection fighter. Used both internally and externally, it is healing to the skin, eyes, and the mucous membranes. It is excellent for skin problems, helps to purify the blood and deliver oxygen, and stimulates the functioning of the gallbladder and liver. It stimulates and improves digestive function. Benefits of Oregon grape root for specific health conditions include treatment of acne, allergic rashes, eczema, and psoriasis, diarrhea and gastritis.

Doses: Oregon grape root is available in capsules, ointments, tablets, and tinctures.

Warnings: Oregon grape root is mildly sedating. You should use it with caution if you are taking an anti-anxiety drug. It may also lower blood sugar, so you should use it with caution if you have **diabetes** and have not used the herb before. Oregon grape should be avoided during pregnancy.

*Oligomeric Proanthocyanidins(OPCs) Grape seed extract

Common Name: Grapeseed extract, pine-bark extract.

Location: Oligomeric proanthocyanidins are usually derived from grapeseed or pine bark.

Description: Oligomeric proanthocyanidins better known by the abbreviation (OPCs), are classified with flavinoids and are usually derived from grapeseeds or pine bark. They are also present in red wine, hops, and various flowers, leaves, fruits, berries, nuts, and beans, usually with high concentrations in skins, barks, and seeds. The way in which these versatile healing compounds are distinct from flavinoids is their simple chemical structure, which allows them to be readily absorbed into the bloodstream.

Properties: OPCs are very powerful antioxidants. Vitamin E defends against fat-soluble oxidants, and vitamin C neutralizes water-soluble ones, but OPCs are active against those types. They also help stabilize the walls of blood vessels, reduce inflammation, and generally support tissues containing collagen and elastin, and proteins found in cartilage, tendons, blood vessels, skin, and muscle.

Uses: Of all the herbs and herbal supplements, OPCs are the most useful in supporting vascular health. The beneficial effects of OPCs on capillary health results in relief of many neurological diseases and can prevent swelling and inflammation caused by allergic reactions. OPCs are popular for preventing heart disease, revitalizing aging skin, and reducing a tendency to bruise easily. OPCs stop histamine from causing swelling, inflammation, and pain in the soft tissues. Many allergy sufferers find that OPCs eliminate all noticeable symptoms of allergies, even in the middle of the allergy season. OPCs help to prevent blood vessel changes in the brain that can complicate Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Attention deficit disorder and chronic fatigue syndrome studies suggest that OPCs help the brain to regulate its use of its excitatory neurotransmitters. This allows OPCs to act as antidepressants for people with ADD and also those with chronic fatigue syndrome without affecting their function in the rest of the body. OPCs are also known to be potent antioxidants. They interrupt the formation of oxygen free radicals and prevent damage to cell membranes. OPCs help

deliver to the brain nutrients that are helpful for people with ADD, such as zinc, manganese, millennium, and copper. OPCs also relieve neurological symptoms by acting as antihistamines, thereby reducing the burden on the brain. OPC may be the ideal medicine for macular degeneration and or **diabetic** retinopathy. Grapeseed OPC's increase cracked capillary resistance in people with **diabetes** and/or high blood pressure. This also helps with swollen ankles, cuts and scrapes, lymphedema, nosebleed, tendonitis, and varicose veins. The antioxidant effects of OPC's have the ability to inhibit the initiation, promotion, and progression of cancer. Flavinoids and oligomeric proanthocyanidins are now known to be essential to health.

Doses: Pycnogenol, a pine bark extract can be taken in a dosage of 1 mg per day for each pound of body weight. If you experienced any signs of detoxification, such as congestion, fever, rash, diarrhea, headaches, irritability, or fatigue, you should increase the dosage more slowly.

Warnings: Grapeseed extracts are high in tannin and may interfere with iron absorption. You should not take these if you have anemia. If you're taking blood-thinning medication high doses of OPC's may pose a risk of excessive bleeding.

*Milk Thistle (*Carduus marianus*)

Common Name: Mary thistle.

Location: This herb originates in Europe.

Description: The seeds of milk thistle are used medicinally.

Properties: Milk thistle is well known for its use in treating a multitude of ailments.

Uses: Use milk thistle to treat acne, Crohn's disease, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), alcoholism, hepatitis, cirrhosis, gallstones, atherosclerosis, high cholesterol, too much iron collection, cancer, **diabetes**, seizure disorders, ovarian cysts, psoriasis, and Parkinson's disease.

Doses: This herb can be found as silmarin-gel capsules, seeds, tinctures and teas.

Warnings: Some side effects of milk thistle include diarrhea. If you are taking contraceptives while using milk thistle, the contraceptives may become less effective at preventing pregnancy.

*Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)

Description: Licorice is one of the most commonly used forms of herbal medicine. The roots of licorice are used medicinally.

Properties: Licorice is used to manage stress levels, and to treat a multitude of ailments.

Uses: Use licorice to treat asthma, Meniere's disease, vitiligo, lupus, Bell's Palsy, Lyme disease, cancer, Celiac disease, Crohn's disease, gastritis, peptic ulcer, cancer sores, diaper rash, psoriasis, eczema, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), **diabetes**, hepatitis, influenza, herpes, measles and HIV/AIDS.

Doses: According to the author of *Prescriptions for Herbal Healing* (2002), "There are two types of licorice commonly available: standardized licorice and deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL). Each type is best used for certain conditions. For respiratory infections, chronic fatigue syndrome, or topical use for herpes virus infections, standard licorice containing glycyrrizin should be used... DGL is used for potential safety problems and is used for conditions of the digestive tract, such as ulcers."

Warnings: Do not consume licorice in mass amounts. Some side effects of licorice overdose are vision problems and high blood pressure. Do not take licorice if you have fibrocystic breasts, uterine cancer, breast cancer or erectile dysfunction disorder.

*Green Tea (Camellia sinensis)

Location: This herb can be found in Asia. It is also grown around the world in places like Burma, India, Japan, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Malawi, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Argentina and Africa.

Description: The leaf buds and young leaves are used medicinally as a tea.

Properties: According to the author of Prescriptions for Herbal Healing, “Green tea is both a stimulant and an antioxidant with a diversity of healing applications. The polyphenols in green tea are potent antioxidants. Researchers have found that one of the polyphenols, designated epigallocatechin gallate(EGCG), is over 200 times more powerful than the renowned antioxidant vitamin E in neutralizing free radicals.”

Uses: This herb can be used to increase energy, treat asthma, atherosclerosis, high cholesterol, breast cancer, endometriosis, fibrocystic breasts, ovarian cancer, cancer, liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, **diabetes**, colorectal cancer, food poisoning, eczema, ear infections, periodontal disease, herpes virus infection, wrinkles and influenza.

Doses: According to studies three cups a day is enough to help fight cancer. Some researchers believe that ten cups is necessary to fight such illnesses. This herb can also be made into a cream or compress for use.

Warnings: Do not take green tea if you are currently taking ginseng. Limit the amount of green tea you drink while pregnant or nursing. If you are taking blood thinners like warfarin do not drink green tea.

*Ginseng (Panax ginseng)

Common Names: Ginseng root, Chinese ginseng, red ginseng and Korean ginseng.

Location: This herb can be found in Siberia, North Korea and China.

Description: The root of the ginseng herb is used medicinally.

Properties: Ginseng is one of the most well known herbs used for healing. According to Phyllis Balch in Prescriptions for Herbal Healing (2002), “Ginseng has been a part of Chinese medicine for over 2,000 years. It was traditionally used to curb emotions, stop agitation, brighten eyes, enlighten the mind and increase wisdom.”

Uses: This herb can be used to treat cancer, anxiety, Lyme disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, cognitive ability, hangover, **diabetes**, high blood pressure, heart attack, infertility, impotence, diminished sex drive, stress and menopause related ailments.

Doses: This herb can be found as a tea, tincture or capsule.

Warnings: Ginseng can occasionally cause breast tenderness and menstrual abnormalities for women. People have reported experiencing insomnia or over stimulation after taking ginseng. Some side effects of a ginseng overdose include dizziness, headache, fever and hemorrhage. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should not take ginseng. Avoid ginseng two weeks prior to undergoing surgery.

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 1 to 3 grams a day in capsule or tablet form, or 3 to 5 milliliters of tincture three times a day.

Known for its immune-boosting and disease-fighting benefits, this Chinese herb has several positive diabetes studies behind it. Researchers have found that ginseng slows carbohydrate absorption; increases cells’ ability to use glucose; and increases insulin secretion from the pancreas. A team from the University of Toronto has repeatedly demonstrated that ginseng capsules lower blood glucose 15 to 20 percent compared to placebo pills.

Asian ginseng is commonly used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat diabetes. It has been shown to enhance the release of insulin from the pancreas and to increase the number of insulin receptors. It also has a direct blood sugar-lowering effect.

Besides reducing fasting blood sugar levels and body weight, can elevate mood and improve psychophysiological performance. Therapeutic dosage is 100-200 mg daily.

*Ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba)

Description: The leaves of this herb are used medicinally.

Properties: This herb is well known to be a treatment for memory loss disorders. According to Prescription for Herbal Healing (2002), "Ginkgo increases the body's production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), a compound that is the main source of energy on a cellular level."

Uses: Use ginkgo to treat impotence, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, memory loss, anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD), cataracts, cancer, floaters, glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, **diabetes**, diminished sexual desire, heart attack, stroke, tinnitus and intermittent claudication.

Doses: This herb can be commonly found in capsule form and also as teas.

Warnings: Use of this herb can result in a mild headache or upset stomach. Consult your doctor about any current medications you are taking before using this herb.

Long used in traditional Chinese medicine, a species that has survived in China for more than 200 million years and now grows throughout the world. This popular herbal medicine is extracted from the fan-shaped leaves of the ancient ginkgo biloba tree. The extract may prove useful for prevention and treatment of early-stage diabetic neuropathy.

Ginkgo biloba extract improves blood flow in the peripheral tissues of the nerves in the arms, legs, hands, and feet and is therefore an important medicine in the treatment of peripheral vascular disease. It has also been shown to prevent diabetic retinopathy. Dosage of the extract standardised to contain 24% ginkgo flavoglycosides is 40-80 mg three times per day.

*Garlic (Allium sativa)

Common Names: Garlic bulb, garlic clove.

Location: This herb's origin is in Asia.

Description: According to the author of Prescriptions for Herbal Healing (2002), "Over 1800 scientific studies support the use of garlic in lowering cholesterol levels and blood sugar, preventing heart attack and stroke, treating infections and cancer. Garlic may be able to reduce the risk of blood clots and inhibit tumors."

Uses: Use garlic to treat high cholesterol, bladder infection, strep throat, vaginosis, yeast infection, atherosclerosis, **diabetes**, cancer, ear infection, peptic ulcer, parasitic and miscellaneous infection.

Doses: This herb can be taken in clove form, oil form, or as enteric-coated tablets.

Warnings: Be cautious when taking this herb while nursing because it can result in colic baby syndrome

*Fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum)

Common Names: Greek hayseed, bird's foot.

Location: This herb can be found in the Mediterranean, China, India, Morocco and Turkey.

Description: The seeds of this herb are used medicinally.

Properties: Fenugreek can be used to help the liver and pancreas.

Uses: This herb can be used to enlarge breasts, treat **diabetes**, digestive tract disorders and mastitis.

Doses: Fenugreek can be found in seed form, teas and capsules.

Warnings: Do not take this herb if you are pregnant. If you wish to take this herb in combination with other medications or for the purpose of treating diabetes consult your doctor first.

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 5 to 30 grams with each meal or 15 to 90 grams with one meal per day.

These seeds, used in Indian cooking, have been found to lower blood sugar, increase insulin sensitivity, and reduce high cholesterol, according to several animal and human studies. The effect may be partly due to the seeds' high fiber content. The seeds also contain an amino acid that appears to boost the release of insulin. In one of the largest studies on fenugreek, 60 people who took 25 grams daily showed significant improvements in blood sugar control and post-meal spikes.

Fenugreek or *foenum-graecum*, is a crop plant grown as a potherb and for the spice made from its seeds. The fenugreek plant grows wild from the eastern Mediterranean area to China; it is cultivated worldwide. Fenugreek is used both as a herb (the leaves) and as a spice (the seed).

Pre-clinical and clinical studies have demonstrated the antidiabetic properties of fenugreek seeds. The fiber-rich fraction of fenugreek seeds can lowered blood sugar levels in people with diabetes, and to a lesser extent, for lowering blood cholesterol. Additionally, the soluble fiber content of fenugreek may play a role in aiding weight control.

A typical dose range is 5 to 30 g three times per day with meals. Known side effects of high doses include mild digestive distress. Fenugreek should not be used by pregnant or nursing women.

*Wild yam (*Dioscorea opposita*)

Common Names: Medicinal yam, Mexican yam, Chinese yam, tokoro or *Dioscorea*.

Location: This herb is located in tropical regions around the world.

Description: The rhizome of the herb is used medicinally.

Properties: *Dioscorea* is known for having antiarthritic, analgesic, antiasthmatic, antitussive, antidiabetic effects.

Uses: This herb can be used to treat **diabetes**, high cholesterol and female reproductive tract disorders.

Doses: *Dioscorea* can be found in tea, cream, capsule and tincture form.

Warnings: Do not use this herb while pregnant or nursing.

*Chiretta (*Swertia chirayita*)

Common Names: Indian balmony, Indian gentian, chirayata, and swertia.

Location: This herb can be found in India and Nepal.

Properties: Chiretta can be used to ease digestion, improve blood sugar levels and treat leishmaniasis.

Uses: Use this herb to treat **diabetes**, leishmaniasis and nausea.

Doses: This herb is available as a tea or tincture.

Warnings: Do not take chiretta if you suffer from gastric or duodenal ulcers.

*Chanca Piedra (*Phyllanthus niruri*)

Common Names: Quebra pedra, phyllanthus.

Location: This herb is native to South America.

Description: The tops of the plants are all used medicinally.

Properties: This herb is used to release kidney stones.

Uses: You can use chanca piedra to treat **diabetes**, high blood pressure and kidney stones.

Doses: Chanca piedra can be found in tincture and tablet form.

*Cayenne(Capsicum)

CommonNames: Chili pepper, chili, red pepper.

Location: This herb can be found naturally in Central America.

Description: The fruits, commonly known as chili peppers, are used medicinally.

Properties: This herb can be used as an anti-inflammant and to help digestion. Cayenne also gets rid of gas and increases metabolism and the production of gastric juices.

Uses: Cayenne can be used to treat heat stress, food poisoning, arthritis, psoriasis, sore muscles, **diabetes**, herpes- related nerve damage, lung cancer, obesity and migraine headaches.

Doses: According to Phyllis Balch in Prescription for Herbal Healing (2002), "For external application, use cayenne in the form of capsaicin cream; for internal applications, use cayenne powder, mixed with starchy food."

Warnings: Do not place cayenne on the eye area, mouth area or on pieces of broken skin.

*Cajueiro (Anacardium occidentale)

Common Names: Jambu and cashew nut shells.

Location: This herb can be found in Brazil and other tropical locations around the world.

Description: The nuts, bark, root and resin of the tree are all used medicinally.

Properties: This herb contains analogs of the drug used to cure diabetes, which is called pioglitazone and roislitazone.

Uses: Cajueiro can be used to treat **diabetes** and fight off parasitic infections.

Doses: This herb can be found in tincture form.

Warnings: Do not eat Cajueiro nuts raw, they must be cooked first.

*Bromelain(Ananas comosus)

Description: This herb is a digestive enzyme, taken from the pineapple plant's stem and fruit. It can also be removed from pineapple juice.

Properties: This herb is used to help in the process of digestion, and is known to get rid of inflammation. Bromelain can be used to stop blood clotting and clear veins.

Uses: Bromelain can be used to treat bronchitis, sinusitis, cuts and scrapes, bruises, bursitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, gout, HIV/AIDS, crohn's disease, **diabetes**, gastric ulcers, parasitic infections, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), rheumatoid arthritis, and warts.

Doses: You can find bromelain in tablets.

Warnings: Don't take this herb for more than ten days at a time. This herb may cause side effects like nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and excessive menstrual bleeding. Consult a doctor before using bromelain if you are pregnant, experience hypertension, or have a history of liver or kidney disease.

*Bitter Melon (*Momordica charantia*)

Common Names: Bitter gourd, cerasee, karela, momordica and balsam pear.

Location: This herb can be found in Asia.

Description: The leaves, seeds and vines are all used medicinally, but the fruit is the prized portion of the herb.

Properties: This herb is widely known for its uses in treating **diabetes** and improving blood sugar and glucose tolerance.

Uses: Bitter Melon can be used to help treat **diabetes**, herpes and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Doses: Bitter Melon can be eaten, as well as taken in tinctures, extracts or juices.

Warnings: High amounts of bitter melon consumption can result in stomach pain and diarrhea. Bitter Melon should not be taken by those who are pregnant or those who experience hypoglycemia.

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 50 to 100 milliliters (approximately 3 to 6 tablespoons) of the juice daily.

The aptly named bitter melon is thought to help cells use glucose more effectively and block sugar absorption in the intestine. When Philippine researchers had men and women take bitter melon in capsule form for three months, they had slight, but consistently, lower blood sugar than those taking a placebo. Gastrointestinal problems are possible side effects.

Bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*)

Also known as balsam pear, bitter gourd, bitter cucumber, karela, and charantin. Is a tropical vegetable widely cultivated in Asia, East Africa and South America, and has been used extensively in folk medicine as a remedy for diabetes. Studies suggested that Asian Bitter Melon may lower blood glucose concentrations. Several compounds have been isolated from bitter melon that are believed to be responsible for its blood-sugar-lowering properties. These include charantin and an insulin-like protein referred to as polypeptide-P, or plant insulin. It is believed that bitter melon acts on both the pancreas and in nonpancreatic cells, such as muscle cells. The oral administration of 50–60 ml of the juice has shown good results in clinical trials.

Caution : Excessively high doses of bitter melon juice can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Small children or anyone with hypoglycemia should not take bitter melon, since this herb could theoretically trigger or worsen low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia. Furthermore, diabetics taking hypoglycemic drugs (such as chlorpropamide, glyburide, or phenformin) or insulin should use bitter melon with caution, as it may potentiate the effectiveness of the drugs, leading to severe hypoglycemia.

*Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)

Common Names: Huckleberry, blueberry.

Location: North America and Europe.

Description: The leaf of the bilberry bush is the portion used medicinally.

Uses: This herb can be used for an upset stomach, high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, **diabetes**, diarrhea, eye disorders, gout, inflammatory joint disease, rheumatoid arthritis, prostatitis, and peptic ulcers.

Doses: Bilberry is available in tablets and in dried form for use in teas.

Warnings: Do not use high doses of bilberry. Do not take bilberry while pregnant. If you are **diabetic**, monitor your sugars while taking bilberry

Main use: Protecting the eyes and nerves **Typical dosage:** 80 to 120 milligrams two times per day of

standardized bilberry extract.

This relative of the blueberry contains powerful antioxidants in its fruit and leaves. These antioxidants, called anthocyanidins, seem to help prevent damage to tiny blood vessels that can result in nerve pain and retinopathy (damage to the eye's retina). Animal studies have also suggested that bilberry may lower blood sugar.

***Alpha-Lipoic Acid**

Main uses: Easing nerve pain, lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 600 to 800 milligrams a day.

Called ALA for short, this vitamin-like substance neutralizes many types of free radicals. A build-up of free radicals, caused in part by high blood sugar, can lead to nerve damage and other problems. ALA may also help muscle cells take up blood sugar. In a German study, a team of scientists had 40 adults take either an ALA supplement or a placebo. At the end of the four-week study, the ALA group had improved their insulin sensitivity 27 percent. The placebo group showed no improvement. Other studies have shown a decrease in nerve pain, numbness, and burning.

***Chromium**

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 200 micrograms once daily.

This trace mineral is thought to enhance the action of insulin as well as being involved in carbohydrate, fat, and protein metabolism. Some research shows that it helps normalize blood sugar — but only in people who are deficient in chromium.

***Gamma-Linolenic Acid**

Main use: Easing nerve pain **Typical dosage:** 270 to 540 milligrams once a day.

Gamma-linolenic acid, or GLA, is a fatty acid found in evening primrose oil. Some research suggests that people with diabetes have lower than optimal levels of GLA, and studies have found that the supplement can reduce and prevent nerve pain associated with diabetes.

***Prickly Pear Cactus**

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** If you eat it as a food, aim for ½ cup of cooked cactus fruit a day. Otherwise, follow label directions.

The ripe fruit of this cactus has been shown in some small studies to lower blood sugar levels. You may be able to find the fruit in your grocery store, but if not, look for it as a juice or powder at health food stores. Researchers speculate that the fruit may possibly lower blood sugar because it contains components that work similarly to insulin. The fruit is also high in fiber.

***Magnesium**

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 250 to 350 milligrams once a day.

Magnesium deficiency is not uncommon in people with diabetes, and it can worsen high blood sugar and insulin resistance. Some studies suggest that supplementing with magnesium may improve insulin function and lower blood sugar levels, but other studies have shown no benefit. Have your doctor check you for deficiency before supplementing with magnesium.

***Gymnema Sylvestre**

Main use: Lowering blood sugar **Typical dosage:** 200 to 250 milligrams twice daily.

This plant's Hindi name translates as "sugar destroyer," and the plant is said to reduce the ability to detect sweetness. It's regarded as one of the most powerful herbs for blood-sugar control. It may work by boosting the activity of enzymes that help cells use glucose or by stimulating the production of insulin. Though it hasn't been studied extensively, it's not known to cause serious side effects.

Native to the tropical forests of India, also known as the "sugar destroyer". To treat diabetes, dried leaves are pounded together with Coriander fruit (*Coriandrum sativum* L.), juice is extracted and given orally. These remedy has been used in India for treating diabetes for about 2000 years. Today in India it is being used to treat primarily type II diabetes and type I as well. Gymnema also improves the ability of insulin to lower blood sugar in both type I and type II diabetes. This herb is showing up in more and more over the counter weight loss products and blood sugar balancing formulas.

***Cinnamon**

Cinnamon is the inner bark of a tropical evergreen tree native to India and Sri Lanka. It has insulin-like properties, which able to decrease blood glucose levels as well as triglycerides and cholesterol, all of which are important especially for type 2 diabetes patients. Just half a teaspoon of cinnamon into the daily diet of a diabetics can significantly reduce blood glucose levels. Cinnamon can be easily bought at any food shop in a convenient powdered form. Just add cinnamon to what ever you would eat normally.

***Onion**

Onion is a member of the lily family (Liliaceae). It is native to Eurasia but now grows all over the world, due mostly to people bringing it with them as a staple food wherever they migrated. Experimental and clinical evidence suggests that onion consists of an active ingredient called APDS (allyl propyl disulphide). APDS has been shown to block the breakdown of insulin by the liver and possibly to stimulate insulin production by the pancreas, thus increasing the amount of insulin and reducing sugar levels in the blood.

APDS administered in doses of 125 mg/ kg to fasting humans was found to cause a marked fall in blood glucose levels and an increase in serum insulin. The effect improved as the dosage was increased; however, beneficial effects were observed even for low levels that used in the diet (eg., 25 to 200 grams). The effects were similar in both raw and boiled onion extracts.

The additional benefit of the use of garlic is it beneficial cardiovascular effects. It is found to lower lipid levels, inhibit platelet aggregation and are antihypertensive. So, liberal use of onion is recommended for diabetes patients.

***Blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)**

Closely related to the European bilberry, there are several species of blueberries exist—including *V. pallidum* and *V. corymbosum*—and grow throughout the United States. It leaves are the primary part of the plant used medicinally.

Blueberry is a natural method of controlling or lowering blood sugar levels when they are slightly elevated - Sugar Diabetes. Results have shown the leaves have an active ingredient with a remarkable ability to get rid the body of excessive sugar in the blood. It is a good astringent and helps relieve inflammation of the kidney, bladder and prostate.

To use, steep two to three handfuls of leaves in 4 cups hot water for half an hour. Drink three cups a day

http://www.diabetes-diabetic-diet.com/herbs_for_diabetes.htm

http://www.holisticonline.com/remedies/diabetes/diabetes_herbs.htm

<http://www.rd.com/health/the-best-herbs-and-supplements-for-diabetes/>