Helpful Herbal Medicine for Liver Cancer Patients

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Herbs for Liver Cancer

If you have liver cancer, you're likely receiving a cocktail of different chemotherapy medications.

Perhaps you're being zapped with radiation daily, as well as having surgery to remove a tumor. You may be taking a handful of medications that are meant to reduce your pain, control your nausea, decrease inflammation, and raise your blood count levels – amongst other things.

You may be wondering, "Is there anything *natural* I can be doing to treat my liver cancer, like maybe herbs or supplements?"

There are a variety of supplements and herbs that *may* help.

This guide is designed to give you a little bit of information so that you can discuss this information with your oncologist. From there, you can mutually discuss if these herbs for liver cancer are right for you; this guide is not meant to replace any treatments you are currently receiving.

It's important to know that herbal medicine for liver cancer does not cure your condition, nor does it cure cancers that have metastasized from a primary site to the liver.

Astragalus

Astragalus has been studied extensively and has been found to be a valuable complementary therapy when used in conjunction with modern cancer therapies. It can help your body to withstand treatment with chemotherapy, surgery, or radiation better. It also reduces fatigue and promotes healthy blood cell counts.

Some people who have liver disease suffer from fluid accumulation and poor function of the heart. Astragalus can improve cardiac function and relieve cardiac chest pain.

The best form of astragalus is a specially prepared dried root. The root is flattened and prepared with honey. This process is believed to make the active ingredients in astragalus more usable by your body. If you choose to take astragalus as an independent herb, most herbalists recommend that 2.4 to 4 grams be consumed daily.

An economical way to prepare astragalus root is to make an herbal decoction of the dried root. Here is how to do it:

Place 10-15 grams of the dried root in a heavy saucepan. Cover the herb with one liter of water and slowly simmer the tea for several hours. The tea is done when approximately half a liter of liquid remains. Strain off the used herb and discard or compost it.

Drink 125 ml of the tea daily. Store leftover tea in a covered container in the refrigerator. The tea should be consumed hot.

Mushrooms

Medicinal mushrooms interfere with cancer's ability to reproduce. They can help your body become more resistant to infections that may arise as a result of having a compromised immune system.

Medicinal mushrooms also help your body to cope with conventional treatments for liver cancer. They can help to relieve side effects that occur as a result of chemotherapy and radiation treatments, reducing nausea, stimulating appetite and helping to improve blood cell counts.

By using medicinal mushrooms, you may be able to preserve muscle mass.

Many people who have liver cancer lose weight due to a loss of muscle mass. Mushrooms can help prevent the undesirable weight loss that often occurs with advanced cancer, and prevents toxins from damaging your liver further.

Herbalists classify mushrooms as adaptogenic herbs. Adaptogenic herbs are gentle yet powerful. Adaptogens, including medicinal fungi, may be taken for long periods of time to boost stamina, relieve fatigue, and promote wellness throughout your entire body.

They help your body to withstand the stress of all kinds. This includes physical and mental stress. Shitake, maitake, and reishi mushrooms are three of the best herbal adaptogens.

Shitake mushrooms are tasty and powerful, and are excellent for people who have liver cancer. Your liver manufactures cholesterol. Shitake mushrooms reduce levels of unhealthy LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, which helps to decrease the likelihood of heart and circulatory complications that may arise due to liver disease.

Next page: Benefits of milk thistle herb, dandelion root, and more herbal remedies for liver cancer.

Milk Thistle Herb

If you do a Google search for “liver cancer herbs” or “liver cancer supplements,” the chances are good that several of the pings that you’ll find have to do with milk thistle. And for good reason!

Several studies have reported its benefit for overall liver health. Many websites even report that milk thistle is the “#1 recommended natural herb” for the liver.

So what exactly is milk thistle do supposed to do?

Milk thistle contains flavonoid-lignan – specifically silymarin and silybin – in the seed shell. Silymarin is an antioxidant, and is supposedly protectant of the liver and has regenerative properties.

Research has been done on silybin’s effects on cancer, as well.

For example, it may repair liver tissue, block the growth of tumors, slow the growth of tumors, help some chemotherapy medications work more effectively, and may reduce the side effects of some chemotherapy medications.

According to *Cancer Research UK*, “The effects of silymarin in some early studies suggest that it might be helpful in preventing liver inflammation or liver cancer. No published clinical trials have looked at silymarin for preventing or treating cancer in humans.”

It should be noted that because milk thistle has antioxidant properties, it is generally contraindicated during chemotherapy. Antioxidants can block some of the cancer killing properties of chemotherapy. Discuss the use of milk thistle with your physician if you are undergoing chemotherapy.

Dandelion Root Extract

Another herb that supposedly has anticancer effects is dandelion root extract. It has been used for many years to treat cancer, as well as jaundice and other liver diseases, although clinical studies are lacking to support the effect in humans.

It should, however, be used with caution in certain patients. Dandelion root extract has estrogenic activity – meaning that it "may increase the proliferation of hormone-sensitive breast cancer cells." What this boils down to is that it can increase the risk of breast cancer.

Dandelion root extract can also cause allergic reactions, as well as cause reactions with other prescription medications. It also as diuretic properties, meaning that people taking it may urinate more frequently.

Artichoke

Another powerful supplement is artichoke extract. The extract comes from the food – and all of the components – the stem, leaf, and root – are rich in cynarins. Cynarins help to detoxify the body and improve the health of the liver.

Remember silymarin, which was found in milk thistle? It is also found in artichokes, and subsequently artichoke extract.

According to *Natural News Blog,* the combination of cynarin and silymarin "may improve the overall health of the liver by reducing the presence of toxins and helping their removal from the liver and the body."

Also, it has been found in various studies that artichokes increase bile production and lower lipids.

Artichoke extract even has other benefits aside from liver protection:

- Stimulates production of probiotics in the bowels.
- Improved symptoms of bloating.
- Reduced irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms.

Artichoke extract should not be taken in people with jaundice. Also, it does have diuretic properties so anyone taking it should be aware of this side effect.

Turmeric

It is highly likely that you've heard the word "turmeric" lately. And not just used as a spice in cooking.

Perhaps you've scrolled through Instagram and saw a friend posted a picture of the turmeric latte they are guzzling as a "preventive beverage."

Or you've overheard someone at the coffee shop saying that their physician asked them to start taking turmeric supplement to treat their aches and pains – with astounding results.

And why?

Well, turmeric is quickly becoming the darling of both the cooking and the natural medicine world. It is a superfood that is thought to have anticancer and anti-inflammatory benefits – and that is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Cancer Research UK notes that currently, there is no evidence that turmeric can prevent or treat cancer. However, early clinical trials may change that in the very near future.

Natural News noted that a study published in *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* found that “a dose-dependent administration of curcumin [turmeric] effectively activated apoptosis of liver cancer cells, meaning it prompted these harmful cells to die... the researchers involved with this study declared curcumin to be a ‘promising phytomedicine in cancer therapy.’”

So, what’s the best way to add turmeric to your regimen? Well, if you love the taste, you can start incorporating it into your diet.

It may be hard to get the “right” amount, though – although research indicates that countries, where people eat 100mg to 200mg daily, have lower rates of cancer. However, there hasn’t been established dosage – but studies have shown that human patients with cancer benefited with doses of 3,600mg.

Typically, turmeric is safe. Consuming it as a spice in cooking is generally regarded as safe unless there is an allergy. Supplements may cause skin reactions or stomach pain if taken for long periods of time.

The Bottom Line...

While these herbs for liver cancer are not a cure, it can improve the quality of your life, prevent complications and enhance your general level of wellness as you live with liver cancer.

If you have liver cancer or metastases of cancer to your liver, seek professional assistance and guidance from qualified medical professionals before beginning to take herbal supplements.