

Factsheet

Introduction

Luzia Barclay is a registered medical herbalist (DBTh MIRCH), based in Turnworth near Blandford, Dorset.

As well as appearing on BBC Radio Solent as a 'resident herbalist', Luzia is a regular tutor at Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester and Dorset Adult Education.

Her website: www.herbsforhealing.org.uk is a fast growing resource for those interested in the benefits of herbs and herbal medicine.

On the site you can: ● Sign-up for a workshop/course; ● Shop for organic herbal products; ● Arrange a consultation; or ● Read news and articles about herbs.

The aim of a herbalist is always to find the root cause of symptoms and to help the body to heal itself. Herbs have been used for centuries to enable this.

"By running these courses, and doing BBC radio phone-ins, I hope to ensure that the knowledge isn't lost," says Luzia. "We have become so used to quick fixes for everyday ailments. Sadly, these often weaken our immune systems; but there are some really effective natural alternatives."

Half-day courses and workshops are booking up fast this year. Why not find out more? Visit www.herbsforhealing.org.uk/courses for details and to sign up.



About M.R.S.A and avoiding antibiotics

1. Can I avoid MRSA when I have to go to hospital?

- Concentrate on stimulating and strengthening your immune system with natural remedies before going in. A strong immune system is better able to fight bacterial and viral infection.
- Check out the levels of hygiene in the hospital. Talk to staff about it.
- Make sure that you, your visitors and staff always wash their hands with the anti-bacterial soap provided, especially after touching anyone. People who do not suffer symptoms can still be carriers. Hygiene is of utmost importance.

2. How can I boost my immune system?

- The bee product Propolis destroys bacteria and

viruses and also strengthens the immune system by increasing the number of white blood cells in the blood stream.

- Nature provides us with a range of immune stimulating remedies:

- Garlic
- Astragalus
- Myrrh
- Thyme
- Siberian Ginseng
- propolis
- foods containing vitamin C
- foods containing Zinc.

.... to name just a few.

- A healthy diet and sufficient rest are also essential for a well functioning defense system.

- Propolis is a powerful natural antibiotic remedy. It is produced by bees in order to keep the hive free from harmful bacteria. Dissolved in alcohol it can be used to prevent and treat infections in humans. It does not lead to the development of resistant bacteria because it is a very complex substance. Propolis is used

About M.R.S.A and avoiding antibiotics

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extensively in many countries on the continent. For a leaflet about propolis call 01258 456223.

3. Where can I find these remedies? Is there any danger in taking them?

- Herbal medicine works with nature, not against it. It is safe in the right hands. It is safe in the right doses, prescribed by a qualified practitioner.
- Over-the-counter herbal products are fine if you want to boost your immune system, but if you are in any doubt, or if there is an underlying condition or you are taking any other medication, then seeing a qualified herbalist is highly advisable.
- www.herbsforhealing.org.uk has a range of organic natural remedies available. The site also contains information about the remedies. Luzia Barclay the registered herbalist is always on hand to give advice.

4. Why do bacteria develop resistance to pharmaceutical antibiotics?

- Antibiotics have been effective at killing some bacteria, but resistant ones survive and multiply and spread. This leads to the development of superbugs like MRSA.
- Antibiotics should only be used when absolutely necessary. They **should not be used** for **viral conditions** like **coughs** and **colds** and **flu**. The fewer antibiotics we use the slower the development of these superbugs.

5. Is M.R.S.A new?

- MRSA is just one class of superbugs, many more



exist and are continuously developing.

A very insidious one is CA-MRSA (community-acquired MRSA), which threatens young and healthy people by destroying the white blood cells as soon as it enters the bloodstream.

- It is not a new 'killer', it is a mutated form of bacterium which has always existed.

6. Do bacteria develop resistance to natural remedies?

- Very rarely – if at all - do bacteria develop resistance to natural remedies. The reason is that their chemical structures are so much more complex than those of pharmaceutical antibiotics.

The bee product **propolis**, for example, which is a natural anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-biotic, contains more than 160 compounds.

- More research urgently needs to be done to find out how natural remedies like Echinacea or propolis help to prevent or even treat MRSA.

7. What role does agriculture play?

- Until 2006 antibiotics were given to livestock as growth promoters, to prevent and treat infections.
- According to Soil Association the number of antibiotics for agricultural use has increased by 11%. This encourages the development of superbugs in agriculture and affects humans too.
- More than half of all antibiotics are still used in agriculture.

About M.R.S.A and avoiding antibiotics

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8. What about antiseptic cleaning agents?

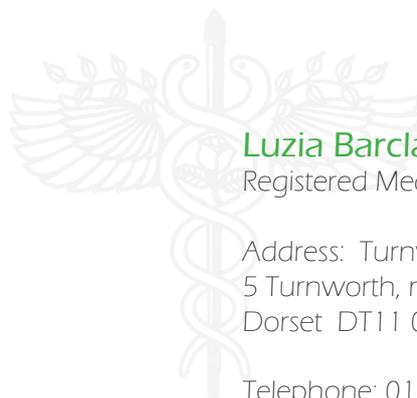
- Antibiotic soaps, hand cleansers and detergents have been shown to promote the growth of antibiotic resistant bacteria.
- The widespread use of antibacterial substances encourages the development of superbugs.
- Although these must be used in hospitals, for home use soap and water are sufficient: even preferable.

9. Is there a link between antibiotics and the rise in allergies?

- Antibiotics upset the normal balance of gut microbes. This seems to interfere with the immune system's ability to distinguish between beneficial and harmful bacteria and other substances in the gut and in the respiratory system.
- Repeated use of antibiotics throws this balance out of sink: the immune system begins to over-react to common substances, such as dust, pollen and pets.

Conclusion

- The overuse of antibiotics is the main cause of 'superbugs' such as M.R.S.A.
 - Natural alternatives exist for fighting infection, and which do not damage our own defenses.
 - Eating a varied and healthy diet high in vitamins reduces your chances of catching infections.
 - Numerous natural remedies are very effective at boosting our immune systems: our first line of defense.
- For more information about any of the points made in this factsheet, or to sign up for a half-day course or workshop please visit www.herbsforhealing.org.uk, or call Luzia Barclay, registered medical herbalist, on 01258 456223.



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