



Herbs For Healing Newsletter



Oats - Food for the nerves

The Romans brought the oat cereal to Britain. It settled particularly well in Scotland where it became a mainstay of the Scottish diet: in the form of porridge oats, oatcakes, oatmeal and oat biscuits.

The oat feels at home in cool, moderate and wet conditions: so could there be a better place for oats than Great Britain?

There is more to the oat than meets the eye. Some people claim it to be a 'natural viagra', increasing sexual desire and performance but there is little evidence for that.



Fact is, however, that oats are an excellent food for the nerves and the brain.

Oat contains B vitamins (thiamine and riboflavin), B6 and folate, as well as vitamin E.

It is also low in sodium but contains iron, potassium, silica and zinc.

Thomas Bartram suggests oat as a remedy to help with Benzodiazepam, Valium or other drug addiction; or with withdrawal symptoms in case of alcoholism and for "nerve and physical exhaustion with depression and anxiety" (Encyclopedia of herbal medicine p314).

Regulates blood sugars and helps lowers high cholesterol

Good news for people with blood sugar problems: oats are a low GI (glycemic index) food. Once oats are in the digestive tract, they are broken down into gel-like substances which have a soothing and mucous-restoring effect in case of irritable bowel-type symptoms and the feeling of soreness in the gut.

This gel-like layer on the gut lining slows down the absorption of glucose into the blood stream keeping the blood sugar fluctuations on a healthy level.

Apart from blood sugar health, oat is also a great food for a healthy cholesterol level.

New studies show that oat can be as effective in lowering high cholesterol as pharmaceutical statins – but without their harmful side effects.

(see www.heilpflanzen-welt.de/2006-01-Wen-der-Hafer-sticht/).

Some of the cholesterol binds with this soluble fibre and is eliminated with bowel movement instead of being absorbed in the digestive tract.

Studies have shown that oat saponins even bind with cholesterol in the blood stream and help to reduce the blood lipid levels. This makes oat an effective food for preventing arteriosclerosis and heart problems.

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Oatstraw Tea

Oatstraw can be prepared as an infusion and drunk as herbal tea. Too much uric acid in the blood can lead to inflammatory joint problems like gout.

Silica compounds in oat bind with the uric acid and are being eliminated via the kidneys. It is suggested to drink daily 3 mugs of oatstraw tea for 4 weeks.

Russian scientists at the State University of Moscow discovered that oatstraw also helps to eliminate heavy metals like lead, cadmium and chromium from the blood stream.

Externally, oatstraw and oatmeal mixed in bath water helps to ease inflammatory and itchy skin problems.

To do this boil 100g oatstraw for 20 minutes in 3 litres water, strain through a sieve and add the decoction to the bath water.

Do not stay in the bath longer than 15 minutes and take an oat bath not more that twice a week.

Or, put some oatstraw into a muslin bag, tie it together and hang it into the bath water, this will act as water softener.



Porridge Oats

Oat as breakfast cereal or porridge is best prepared the evening before.

Oats and most other grains contain phytic acid in the outer layer.

This can combine with precious and essential minerals like calcium, iron and zinc and leave the body with the normal waste products. This will multiply the oats' nutritional value.

"Soaking allows enzyme, lactobacilli and other helpful organisms to break down and neutralise a large portion of phytic acid in grains"

(www.highonhealth.org)



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