

11 Secret Questions For Your Naturopath, Nutritionist or Health Supplier.

**How to Maximize the Results
of Your Health By Making
Sure You Survive The Latest
Trends in The Health Market**

-  **Stop throwing money down the toilet, literally, and learn how to get every nutrient into your body**
-  **Discover how the vitamin industry has been ripping you off and how to take back your health and wealth.**
-  **Add years to your life by knowing the insider secrets to what really works and what really harms.**

11 Essential Questions to Ask Your Supplement Provider

Something is seriously wrong. As a society, we are spending more and more money on alternative health care, indicating our collective disillusionment with mainstream medicine. Yet despite this, it seems like we are getting sicker and sicker. On the one hand, we are taking more time to reflect upon our health, and trying to take control of it ourselves, yet on the other hand more and more of us are succumbing to disease and illness than ever before. Something is just not right with this picture. If you want to know what, read on.



Nearly a quarter of Australian adults who suffer from chronic health conditions report that they regularly use complementary medicines.ⁱ In 2014, the complementary medicine industry made a staggering \$3.5 billion in revenue, with that number expected to grow to \$4.6 billion in 2018.ⁱⁱ

With that, naturally, comes the rise in vitamin and dietary supplement sales, which are growing in popularity to the extent that they are predicted to overtake the sales of over-the-counter medicines in the very near future.ⁱⁱⁱ

You would think that with these sorts of figures, we would all be in good health, and free from chronic illness. Yet, the unfortunate fact is that this is far from the truth.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), each year there are around 14 million new cases of cancer diagnosed each year, and 8.2 million cancer deaths. The number of new cancer cases is predicted to rise by a staggering 70% in the next 20 years^{iv}, and along with it, the number of deaths. Global cancer spending on the medical industry's solutions have reached a staggering \$100 billion according to the Global Oncology Trends Report in 2015.^v

Looking specifically at Australia, it is predicted that in 2015, close to 130,000 new cases of cancer will have been diagnosed, with over 46,000 cancer deaths in the same year.^{vi} It is also estimated this year that one in two Australians will have been diagnosed with cancer by the time they reach their 85th birthday.^{vii}

However, cancer is not the only cause of concern. Among the leading causes of death in Australia are coronary heart disease, dementia and Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.^{viii}

It is undeniably evident that society is becoming increasingly sicker, and spending more and more time in hospitals, DESPITE spending more and more money on vitamins, supplements and complementary medicines.

Could it be that there is something wrong with the supplement industry? Could the products that so many of us turn to in order to avoid harmful pharmaceutical drugs doing nothing to help our health? Or, even worse, could they be harming us?

Reading this report will arm you with knowledge that is vital for your health. By the end, you will know exactly what you should be looking for to make sure that the product you are

intending to purchase is going to help your health like it should, or whether it will be an utter waste of money.

You will know exactly what questions to ask your supplement provider or local health food shop to determine whether the products they are selling you are going to lead you towards wellness, or steer you away from it.

With so much misinformation and hype out there in the vitamin and supplement industry, it is essential that you know what to look for, to not only save your money, but to save your health as well.

“Most people make the mistake of thinking just because a vitamin or a mineral supplement is sold in a health food shop, it must be good for us.”

When walking into your local chemist or supermarket such as Woolies or Coles, you will see a big aisle full of supplements. Whatever you do, don't stop—just keep on walking straight to the produce section. Every one of these products is junk. If you are relying on these for your dietary supplements, this is exactly why you are not feeling any results.

Keep walking right past the bottles of Vitamin D, C or E and by no means stop at the vitamin C bottle. Those colorful multi-vitamins are just as bad.

Ok, so now, you are in a health food shop and you see many more supplements filling up even more aisles. How are you to know which of these, if any, are any good?

Most people make the mistake of thinking just because a vitamin or a mineral supplement is sold in a **health food** shop, it must be good for us. I will tell you now, that is far from being true!

It can be nearly impossible to know which products are value for money and can help you find your way to wellness, and which are better off being flushed down the toilet...UNTIL NOW!!

We have put together a list of 11 questions that you can ask next time you are purchasing a herbal product, to take the worry and stress out of your purchase, and let you get on with the business of getting well.

1. Are your herbs made from plant-based or synthetic materials?

Health food shops—particularly discount mainstream, chain stores, whether online or a physical store, sell many products that are made of synthetic vitamins. This means that the nutrition in the product is not derived from a plant-based source, but that a synthetic, man-made, chemical form of the vitamin or mineral has been used.

And contrary to what we are told, our bodies are smarter than they are given credit for—they know the difference between a natural, food-based dietary supplement and a fake, man-made, synthetic one.



This is a dark secret that the supplement industry tries to hide from its customers. You have to look hard and be prepared to do your research if you really want to know what is in your vitamin supplement.

Some of the less-harmful ingredients that many big brand supplements contain include **starch, cellulose, soy, lactose and wheat.**

“It is estimated that your body is only able to absorb less than 1% of these non-plant based, inorganic vitamins and minerals.”

Some of the more worrying ingredients these products contain include **coal tar, petroleum by-products, ground up rocks, stones, shells and metals, and even animal by-products.** These are the very same things that many pharmaceutical drugs are made from, despite the fact that many regular consumers of these supplements take them precisely BECAUSE they want an alternative to these products!

Here is a very disturbing list common sources for some of the most popular vitamin supplements:

Vitamin:	Source:
A	· The juices of fish livers, which are filled with mercury and other toxic substances.
B12	· Ground up cow livers , which are filled with pesticides, antibiotics and other toxins consumed by the cow. · Cyanide used in the formation of this vitamin · Produced from petrochemicals—known to be carcinogenic
Other B vitamins	· Contain ingredients such as petrochemicals, ammonia, hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde and sulphuric acid
Ascorbic Acid	· Note: I write ‘Ascorbic Acid’, as, contrary to popular belief, this substance is not the same as Vitamin C, but rather, an artificially-reduced form of Vitamin C. · Contains acetone, hydrochloric acid, and cornstarch which is usually genetically-modified.
D	· Irradiated oils , usually sourced from animal fats or cattle brains
E	· Trimethylhydroquinone with isophytol , and refined oils
K	· Contains petrochemicals . The Vitamin K shot given to newborns at birth also contains aluminium as a preservative.

Here is a similar list of the sources used for some of the most popular mineral supplements on the market:

Mineral:	Uses of the synthetic form:
Calcium Carbonate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Comes from the rock called malachite.· Used in the manufacture of paint, plastics, rubbers, insecticides and inks.
Copper Sulphate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Used as a drain cleaner.
Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Comes from the rock called melanterite.· Used as a fertiliser, weed-killer and pesticide
Magnesium Chloride	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Used as an additive in glue and an ingredient in cement
Zinc Oxide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Comes from the rock called zincite.· Used as a pigment in white paints, as well as in rapid-set concrete.

If you think that you would be mad to sit down and eat a rock, then you should not be taking these supplements, because that is basically what you are doing when you consume them!

Aside from this, it is estimated that your body is only able to absorb less than 1% of these non-plant based, inorganic vitamins and minerals, which is a complete waste of your money!

“Women who took synthetic vitamins containing ground-up rock minerals were more likely to die sooner.”

So what happens to the remaining 99% that your body cannot make use of? Well some of it gets excreted as waste, of course. The rest? Well the body doesn't know what to do with it—after all, it's not food! It puts it in the 'too hard' basket and stores it away to deal with later. Over time, this can lead to biochemical imbalances, as well as calcifications in the body, and even damage to your organs.

Taking many of these big brand supplements can be doing more harm than good, both to your hip pocket and to your health. If you don't believe me, you may like to know that a study of 38,772 women from the USA demonstrated that women who took synthetic vitamins containing ground-up rock minerals were more likely to die sooner than those who did not supplement their diet with them!^{ix}

In order to ensure that the products that you are using are actually going to help you, rather than taking a toll on your health, be sure to ask whether the vitamin source is actually a plant-based one. There is a big difference between the vitamin C that you get from an orange, and the man-

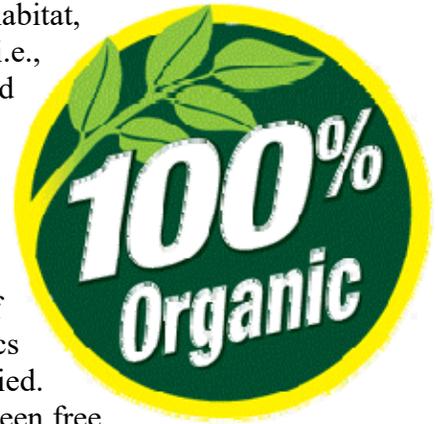


made ascorbic acid. One is the vitamin in its whole, complete form, the other is one small part of the vitamin, in an isolated, chemical, highly-processed form.

2. Are your products made from certified organic or wild crafted herbal ingredients?

Herbs that are wild crafted are grown in their natural, or wild, habitat, and picked sustainably from that area. They are grown naturally—i.e., without the use of synthetic substances. Likewise, wild crafted herbs are not grown in any areas that could potentially cause the contamination of the plant—this includes areas such as along the side of a highway, where petrol fumes may affect the plant; near landfills; or in close proximity to chemical plants.

Ingredients that are certified organic are grown to a range of stringent standards. No synthetic pesticides, herbicides or antibiotics may be used on them, and they may not be genetically-modified. Additionally, the land on which the herbs have grown must have been free from contact with all of the above for a specified period—usually around 3 years.



“In many cases, the most toxic thing in a person’s diet is the very herbs that they are using to detoxify their body.”

More and more is being discovered about the dangers of herbicides and pesticides. Perhaps the most well-known pesticide is Monsanto’s Roundup. Despite assuring us for years that the product is perfectly safe, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently announced that the product has been linked with an increase in cancers and even infertility^x. This should come as no surprise, if one considers that this is the very same company that, during the 1960s, proclaimed the wonders of Agent Orange as a safe yet highly-effective product.

Most synthetic herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers, to a greater or lesser extent, cause damage to the body, affecting the functioning of such things as its endocrine and nervous systems, as well as promoting the growth of a range of different cancers. They are particularly damaging for babies and young children whose bodies are more vulnerable than adults to problems associated with exposure to these chemicals.

Additionally, conventionally-grown herbs can contain high levels of heavy metals, which have been linked to a range of very serious health problems, from Alzheimer’s to Autism.

Since most people use herbs in order to promote the body’s health, it makes sense to purchase only herbs which are going to help your body detoxify and function as it should, rather than those which will only further burden it.

That means choosing only wild crafted or organic herbs, and avoiding those that are ‘conventionally grown’. (This is a misleading term if you ask me, since for centuries and centuries, the conventional way of growing crops was WITHOUT the use of harmful chemicals! It has only been in the last century or so that this has begun to become mainstream. Organic farming should be termed ‘conventional’, and farming with the use of pesticides termed ‘unconventional!’)

It is ironic but unfortunate that in many cases, the most toxic thing in a person's diet is the very herbs that they are using to detoxify their body and find their health. For this reason, asking your local health food shop or herbal supplement provider whether the herbs you plan to purchase are organic or wild crafted is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your body.

3. Are any of your herbs imported from overseas?

In many cases, big companies import their herbs in bulk from overseas countries such as those in Asia or South America, where the cost of labour is far cheaper. This means an increase in their profit margin—sometimes by up to twenty times, but this comes at the expense of your health.

“The land in China is so polluted and contaminated from decades of heavy chemical use that it is now virtually impossible to grow truly organic herbs in that country.”

With regards to herbs have been imported from overseas, the Certified Organic label does not necessarily offer the buyer the same level of reassurance that would come from Certified Organic herbs grown in Australia or other Western nations. For example, organic herbs from China are easy to find, as well as being cheap (which is why many, if not most, manufacturers include herbs from this region in their products). However, the reality is that the land in China is so polluted and contaminated from decades of heavy chemical use and next to no environmental regulations, to the extent that it is now virtually impossible to grow truly organic herbs in that country, according to USDA economist, Fred Gales^{xi}.

Many developing countries do not have the same stringent rules in place for what qualifies as organic. In China, for example, organic foods can have any amount of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic and aluminium, without it affecting their organic status!^{xii} Additionally, many pesticides and herbicides, such as the deadly DDT, that are banned in Western countries continue to be used in places such as Asia, and carry on contaminating the soil even for a long time after they cease to be directly used on the crops.

Another factor to remember is that although organic label food from China may be grown without the use of pesticides, herbicides, etc. the water used on those crops can contain any number of nasties in it. In fact, a government report found that **90 per cent of China's underground water supplies are polluted**^{xiii}—and often comes from rivers that contains chemical pollution and run-offs from factories that one would not want to bathe in, let alone consume.



The recent incident with the melamine in the baby formula in China gives an example of what can pass as food when the right quality guidelines aren't in place. The reason that wealthy Chinese parents are paying upwards of \$100 a can for Australian-made baby formula is because

they know that Australian food products **are** made with strong guidelines which are reinforced, while their own are not, and cannot be trusted.

“It is not uncommon for herbs grown in countries such as China and India to be contaminated with human faeces.”

In China, there is not the same level of accountability that exists in countries such as the USA or Australia. For example, order to certify a product from China as organic according to the USDA standards, the USDA employs accredited certifiers. However, there are far too few certifiers in China to check on all farms and producers. Consequently, when they are checked on, there is a high rate of non-compliance to the USDA organic standards that in some cases have been in existence for some years before being discovered. In the meantime, how many have been buying food which they believe is organic, and paying more to purchase these products, believing they are doing the right thing for their health?



Added to this is the fact that many countries do not have the same standards of hygiene that we have come to expect—it is not uncommon for herbs grown in countries such as China and India to be contaminated with human faeces or to be grown near toxic waste plants. As a result, they are often found to be contaminated by the E-coli bacteria.

Though some herbs are only available in certain countries, where possible, it is best to avoid those that are purchased in bulk from overseas, simply to save the manufacturer a few dollars. Be sure to check the origin of the herbal products you are buying.

4. Do you use heat in your manufacturing or packaging process?

Fresh is usually best when it comes to herbs. However, dried herbs are perfectly fine to use—and in some cases, even preferable—presuming the right conditions are met. When any plant is heated to more than around body temperature, the enzymes and other nutrition in it will begin to denature, or die off, thus robbing the plant of much of its potency.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that any herbal products you purchase have been dried in such a way as to preserve the potency and goodness of the plant.

Many herbal extracts are produced using heat—particularly those made by large-scale manufacturers—because this makes the production process easier.

Yet this process changes the herb from a raw herb to a cooked one.

This renders the product inferior and unhelpful in our quest for good health. Often, this isn't just a little bit of heat, either—it's enough heat to singe off the hair from your head.

Other companies may not use heat as part of the manufacturing of the herbal product itself, but use large amounts of heat in the packaging of their products, which can be just as harmful.

Perhaps even more destructive than heat is light.

Herbs should always be shade dried, away from direct sunlight. Many manufacturers leave their herbs out in the sun for days before they are packaged. The sun bleaches out all the nutrients from the herb, and they become rancid very fast. Yet rather than discarding these rotten and useless herbs, they are packaged up and imported to our country, to be purchased by people like you and me, unaware that we are wasting our money and placing our health on the line.



For years, people have dried herbs by hanging them in bunches upside down from the ceiling of a house or shed—they dried them away from the sun, in order that their herbs, whether culinary or medicinal, would be as potent as possible. They knew that the sun and light destroys the beneficial properties of any herb.

Often people try herbal remedies and give up quickly, because they don't see results. One of the many reasons for this is because the herbs in the products they are using have lost their potency in the manufacturing process. Asking about the role that heat and light have played in the production of herbal products that you plan on buying can make the difference between you purchasing something that can have a positive impact on your health, and throwing your money away.

5. How long are the herbal tinctures and extracts left to age?



A tincture is an extract created when a herb or a combination of herbs are soaked in a liquid (most commonly alcohol but in some cases, apple cider vinegar is used) called a 'catalyst' which extracts the herbs' active ingredients. After aging for a given amount of time, the herbs are strained, leaving the remaining liquid which is typically poured into dropper bottles for sale. Tinctures have been used by herbalists for centuries; they allow us to easily consume concentrated amounts of herb, and have a far longer shelf life than fresh or even dried herbs.

Many herbal manufacturers produce on such a large scale that they simply don't have the time to let their herbal extracts and tinctures sit and age. Just like a good wine, the longer a tincture is left to sit, the better the product and the more beneficial it is for us.

Herbal tinctures should be aged for two weeks at the very minimum, but preferably a month or more. Anything less than that, and you can be sure that you have an inferior product. The problem is, though, that it is actually very uncommon for herbal tinctures to be aged for long enough. This requires time, and time is money. But speaking of money, you are wasting yours if you buy these types of unaged tinctures. What you are buying is essentially a bottle of nasty-tasting alcohol, and paying a premium for it. `

All that some companies do is run alcohol through the herbs. That's right—instead of letting the alcohol sit for a MINIMUM of 14 days, they let the alcohol simply run through the herbs—a

process that takes a matter of minutes! Imagine the difference in the strength of a tincture that has been sitting for two weeks or a month compared to one prepared this way! And if you think that this difference is reflected in the price, you can think again—these companies still expect you to pay big bucks for these products, in spite of their inferiority.

Many large manufacturers, in order to avoid the time required to properly age their tinctures, use a process akin to that used with percolated coffee—liquid is forced through the herb using high amounts of pressure, and in doing so, extracting the nutrition from the herb. This allows manufacturers to produce large volumes of herbal tincture in a very short space of time. However, due to the heat used in the process, some of the medicinal benefits of the plant are sacrificed, and the tincture will not be as potent as one that has been aged in the recommended way.

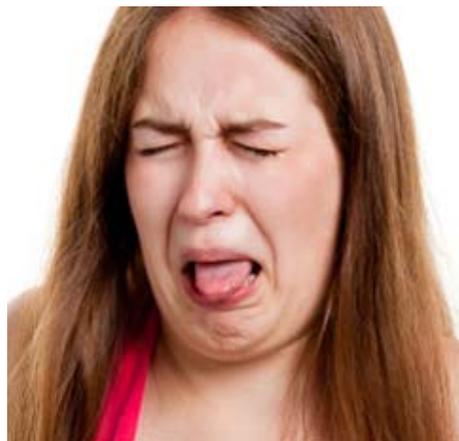
It is important to be aware that the length of time that a herbal product has been left to age has a direct influence upon its potency, and thus the effectiveness of that product.

6. Are flavourings added to your herbal products?

It can't be denied that some herbal products—particularly those in liquid form which cannot just be swallowed down—are particularly nasty in taste. However, the benefits of such products far outweigh the short-lived bad taste in the mouth; there is some truth in the saying that if it tastes bad, it must be good for your health!

In order to make their products taste more pleasant, and therefore increase their sales, many manufacturers add flavourings to their products. This in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, since some flavourings are from nature and are completely safe. However, when synthetic and dangerous flavourings are used, the supplement can cause more harm than good.

Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame have been linked to a range of negative health problems for many years. Despite this, many manufacturers of so-called health foods continue to use such products, proving that at the end of the day, the almighty dollar is more important to them than the health of their customers. Do you really want to be financially supporting such companies?



While some sweeteners and flavourings themselves may not be harmful, when used in a herbal formula, they may decrease the effectiveness of the herbs in that formula. One example is liver-cleansing herbs. These herbs need to taste bitter in order to encourage the liver to begin to produce bile, which in turn, increases digestion. Anything that prevents that bitter taste that makes us want to shudder and shake all over, prevents us from experiencing the true effectiveness of the product.

Adding honey, maple syrup, vegetable glycerin, etc. to liver cleansing products may create a more-pleasant taste, but prevents the formula from working effectively. Yes, it may taste better, but in the long run, it is not going to heal your liver, despite containing all the liver-cleansing herbs. Companies opt for flavourings to be added in order to appeal to a big market, in order to make more money, and in order for them to mass produce their products.

Another reason some manufacturers add flavourings in their products is to hide how weak their products are. Each different herb has a distinct taste, which any good herbalist will be able to detect. Adding flavourings to a herbal product can hide the fact that there is very little, or in some cases none, of some of the herbs on the label in the product you are buying.

So check if there are flavourings added to herbal products you intend to buy; be aware of what they are and whether they are going to have an impact upon the effectiveness of those products.

7. With regards to herbal tinctures and extracts, what is the percentage ratio of herb to catalyst?

A while ago I could feel the beginnings of a cold. Yet, I was on the road, away from home and away from my Echinacea tincture. The next best thing was to pop into a health food shop and purchase an Echinacea and Elderberry tincture.

“Watering down a tincture is one of the easiest ways for a herbal manufacturer to make the tinctures being sold go further, and hence make more money.”

Right away, I could tell that the tincture was not strong—it was watered down. I could definitely taste both Echinacea and Elderberry, but the flavour was nowhere near as strong as that in my own tincture. Consequently, I had to take large doses in order to ensure I beat the cold.

When I was home once more, I compared my tincture to the one I had bought. Mine was a deep, dark colour, purple from the Elderberry, and the flavour was far more intense than that of the shop-bought one. The shop-bought one was, in comparison, a pale colour and just didn't pack the same punch that mine did.



Watering down a tincture is one of the easiest ways for a herbal manufacturer to make the tinctures being sold go further, and hence make more money. Let's face it—some companies are all about increasing their profit margin. They care more about that than your health. Ideally, a ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 should be used in the production of herbal tinctures and extracts. That means that for every one part of herb used, there is an equal or, at the most, double amount of catalyst used. Any more than this, and the tincture is weak and unlikely to do much to help you, without you taking copious amounts.

Of course, some may find strong herbal tinctures to have a bad taste and be difficult to take. There is nothing stopping the purchaser from watering down the tincture themselves—taking a few droppers in a glass of water, for example, rather than on its own. It should be up to the

purchaser, though, not the manufacturer to do this. At the end of the day, any manufacturer who sells weak products is not placing your health as their number one priority.

Without asking what the ratio of herb to catalyst is in any herbal tinctures you plan to buy, you may be wasting more money than you thought and doing very little to help your health.

8. Are your herbal products made and supervised by a qualified herbalist?

While understanding the principles behind herbal medicine and preparing herbal remedies isn't rocket science, you do need to know what you are doing. There are some important rules that every herbalist should follow, and having herbal preparations that are not made by a qualified herbalist may result in ineffective products, or worse still, products that can cause harm to your health. If you go to a doctor, you expect that the doctor has the relevant qualifications. Likewise, you have every right to expect that your herbalist has had training in the area of herbalism.

If you are purchasing from a big company, you should be aware of what that company's principles are—whether they insist on using plant-based ingredients or are fine with using synthetic vitamins. It is helpful to look at a history of the company and see where they originated from and why they became established.

9. Are your plant-based herbal products using the herb in its whole form?

Mother nature has got it right. We get far more benefit from herbs in their whole form than extracts. Herbs in their natural form are delicately balanced, and doing such things as extracting active ingredients throws out that balance, or sometimes renders that herb ineffective.



Herbal manufacturers are always looking for more ways to make more sales and increase their profit margins. One such example is garlic. Garlic is one of the most potent herbs there is, and it appears close to number one on most herbalists' lists of top 10 favourite herbs. It's no wonder, with a recent study showing that the herb is up to 100 times more effective than antibiotics, and works in a fraction of the time!^{xiv}

The compound that gives garlic its potency is an amino acid called allicin. However, allicin is also what gives garlic its signature smell—and that signature smell that tends to linger on the breath of garlic consumers, is what deters many from taking the herb.

Herbal manufacturers have seized this opportunity, by trying to give their customers the best of both worlds—the effectiveness of this wonder herb, without the socially-unacceptable 'garlic breath'.

Enter deodorised garlic! While this may seem like a dream come true, is it really as effective as taking fresh garlic, since the herb is no longer in its original whole form?

When answering this question, let's keep in our minds the fact that it is the allicin in the garlic that does most of the work for this herb. Yet when many popular brands of this deodorised garlic are tested for their allicin content on expensive computer equipment, most register at zero, or very close to it! That means that these garlic capsules are almost completely ineffective.

This same principle applies for any herbal product that you buy—if the herb is not in its whole form, if it has somehow been tampered with and is in a different form from what it appears in nature, you are buying an inferior product which is little different to pharmaceutical drugs.

10. When were the herbs harvested?

There is the obvious question of whether the herbs are within their best before window (most dried herbs only have a shelf life of around a year, though for herbs in tincture and extract form, this is a lot longer). However, when asking the question, 'When were the herbs harvested?', discovering at what point in the plant's life it was harvested is just as important.

“Harvest too early, and the phytochemicals that form the plant’s medicinal properties have not yet developed, and harvest too late, and they have disappeared from the plant.”

For many herbs, there is a small window when the plant has its highest possible nutritional content—and this is different for different parts of the plant—the roots, the flower and the leaves.



Harvest too early, and the phytochemicals that form the plant's medicinal properties have not yet developed, and harvest too late, and they have disappeared from the plant—often they begin to

move towards the plant's root systems as winter approaches, to prepare for the next year, or evaporate into the atmosphere. This is the same principle we use with fruit and vegetables—we know that if we pick them too early, they are not ripe, and if we leave them too long, they will become rotten.

Plant roots must be harvested in the spring and autumn months, for this is when the chemical content is strongest in them; flowers should be harvested in the summer. If this time frame is not followed, the result is weak herbs that do not have the medicinal properties that are needed to get you well again.

Checking with your local health food shop or herbal supplement supplier on what time during the year the different parts of the herb have been harvested can help you know whether you are buying a quality product.

11. Which part of the herb is used?

Depending on what the herb is being used to treat, different parts can be used—and for some herbs, only certain parts of the herb should be used, as the remainder may be ineffective or in some cases even poisonous.

One example is Pau De Arco. The only part of that herb that has medicinal properties is the paper thin inner bark of the plant. However, many herbal manufacturers sell the whole trunk cut up. This may give them more profit, but it means that anyone who buys this product is wasting their money, as only a very small portion of what they purchase is the actual part of the herb that they need. Slippery Elm is the same—the inner bark is the part of the plant that is effective, yet some manufacturers will process the whole trunk of the tree.



Another example is stinging nettle—this herb’s root is effectively used for prostate issues in men, and can also be used topically for the treatment of dandruff. However, the part of this plant which is more commonly used, the leaves, are not used for these issues. Instead, the leaves are used for a range of other health problems, from arthritis to healing wounds to preventing anaemia. If you want to treat prostate issues but are given a nettle product containing both root and leaf, any herbal formula made with this will lack the potency that it would otherwise have if the root exclusively was used. Likewise, treating an issue such as arthritis with this mixture may not bring relief of this ailment as effectively as if just the leaf was used.

While many companies may try to make their herbs go further by including parts of the plant that have no use in herbal medicine—or have specific uses—checking to see which plant parts are included means you won’t be wasting your money.

The bottom line:

Remember that if you purchase from big name herbal or supplement companies, at the end of the day their main priority is the almighty dollar. Unfortunately, this means that they will often take shortcuts which result in less-potent, lower quality products that don’t give you value for money at all.

While herbal medicine is never going to be as easy as popping a pill, many people give up on it and dismiss it as ineffective, because they don’t see results. In most cases, however, this is due to the fact that the products that such people are taking are bad quality and lack the potency needed to actually make an impact on their health. If we as consumers take the time to ensure that what we are putting in our mouths is the best quality products we can find, we will have much more success and will find our health improve beyond our expectations.

ⁱ <http://www.cmaustralia.org.au/resources/Documents/Reports/CMA%20Industry%20Audit%202014.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cmaustralia.org.au/resources/Documents/Reports/CMA%20Industry%20Audit%202014.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cmaustralia.org.au/resources/Documents/Reports/CMA%20Industry%20Audit%202014.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs297/en/>

^v <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/05/05/global-cancer-spending-reaches-100b>

^{vi} <https://canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/what-cancer/cancer-australia-statistics>

^{vii} <https://canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/what-cancer/cancer-australia-statistics>

^{viii} <http://www.aihw.gov.au/deaths/leading-causes-of-death/>

^{ix} (Mursu J., et al. *Dietary Supplements and Mortality Rate in Older Women. The Iowa Women’s Health Study.* *Arch Intern Med.* 2011;171(18):1625-1633)

^x <http://naturalsociety.com/monsantos-best-selling-herbicide-roundup-linked-to-infertility/>

^{xi} <http://draxe.com/organic-foods-china-shocking-and-exposed/>

^{xii} http://www.naturalnews.com/039195_organic_foods_China_pollution_nightmare.html

^{xiii} <http://draxe.com/organic-foods-china-shocking-and-exposed/>

xiv http://preventdisease.com/news/12/050212_Garlic-Proven-100-Time-More-Effective-Than-Antibiotics.shtml