

# HERBS TO BREAK HABITS

## Herbal Support for Addiction Withdrawal



SUGAR – CAFFEINE – TOBACCO – ALCOHOL – CANNABIS – AMPHETAMINES – OPIATES – BENZODIAZEPINES





# - DISCLAIMER -

## PLEASE READ!

*Addiction involves a complex set of factors and causes, and it can become a chronic progressive condition . When the use of a substance that the body has become accustomed to is ceased, a predictable group of symptoms will usually occur. These may range from mild discomfort to acute anxiety to elevated blood pressure to seizures, depending on the substance in question and the frequency/duration of prior use.*

*If you or somebody you know is suffering from addiction to a dangerous or illegal substance(s), you are urged to seek professional help.*

*See the end of this publication for a list of relevant organisations and resources.*

*The information contained in this document is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any illness.*

*It is recommended to seek the advice of a healthcare professional before using herbs, particularly if you are pregnant or taking prescription medications.*

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# A NOTE ON ADDICTION

## **addiction**

[uh-**dik**-shuh n]

noun

*-the state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming, to such an extent that its cessation causes trauma.*

This e-book contains information on ways to support the body when halting the use of a variety of substances – from popular foods like sugar and coffee, to severely addictive drugs such as ice and heroin.

Please note that in any debilitating case of addiction, the emotional, psychological and social factors and causes involved must be considered along with the effects of physical dependence.

If you or somebody you know is suffering from a serious addiction, please don't hesitate to seek professional help.

*“It is impossible to understand addiction without asking what relief the addict finds, or hopes to find, in the drug or the addictive behaviour. ... Not all addictions are rooted in abuse or trauma, but I do believe they can all be traced to a painful experience. **A hurt is at the centre of all addictive behaviours. It is present in the gambler, the Internet addict, the compulsive shopper and the workaholic.** The wound may not be as deep and the ache not as excruciating, and it may even be entirely hidden—but it's there.”*

- Dr. Gabor Maté, Addiction Expert

# SUGAR ADDICTION

*Sugar is not only highly addictive, but there is evidence that it is also a causative factor in very many diseases of the modern age, from high blood pressure and heart disease to obesity, diabetes and liver disease. Herbs can help to break the habit in the following ways:*



## Sugar Alternatives

*To satisfy that sweet tooth*

*Stevia* (*Stevia rebaudiana*) is x1000 sweeter than sugar but has no sugar or calories whatsoever and has also been found to significantly lower both blood sugar and blood pressure. Use the leaf or powder to sweeten tea, or use stevia powder in baking.

*Fennel* (*Foeniculum vulgare*) is a sweet seed that is great to suck on instead of sugary snacks, or as tea to help digestion.

*Licorice* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is a sweet herb that is great as a tea and benefits the adrenals and digestion.



## Balance Blood-Sugar

*To reduce cravings and kick the habit*

*Gymnema* (*Gymnema sylvestre*) has been shown to reduce appetite, improve the ability of the pancreas to release insulin and to regulate sugar metabolism.

*Cinnamon* (*Cinnamomum verum*) has been shown to regulate the metabolism of sugars, and reduce the sugar spike that happens after a meal.

*Myrhh* (*Commiphora myrrha*) has been used to increase the uptake and use of sugar by cells, thereby dropping blood sugar.

*Ginseng* (*Panax ginseng*) is used to increase energy levels, and also helps to lower blood sugar levels if used long-term.

## Nutritional Support

*Balance the body to resist the temptation*

Water is critical when sugar cravings hit. Often when we feel low in energy, we are actually just dehydrated.

Chromium helps to regulate appetite, balances blood sugar and metabolism and is great for helping to reduce cravings.

Omega-3 fatty acids can help reduce sugar cravings, when eaten regularly (try flax, hemp, olive or avocado oils).

Complex carbohydrates such as brown rice or wholegrain breads allow sugars to be released slowly into the system as they are digested. This prevents sugar highs or lows and moderates appetite.

# CAFFEINE ADDICTION



*Caffeine is one of the most frequently and widely used addictive substances, but it can cause serious health issues if over-used. Excessive caffeine is often a contributing factor in stress, fatigue, anxiety, insomnia, burnout and other nervous and adrenal disorders. Herbs can help to break the habit in the following ways:*

## Caffeine Alternatives

*Rooibos* (*Aspalathus linearis*) is a delicious caffeine-free tea alternative that is full of antioxidants to give you that boost.

Roasted *Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*) and roasted *Chicory Root* (*Cichorium intybus*) are tasty coffee substitutes that support the liver at the same time.

*Peppermint* (*Mentha piperita*) is a stimulating caffeine-free herbal tea that benefits digestion and can assist headaches.

*Coffee Leaf* (*Coffea arabica*) is a delicious earthy tea that is high in antioxidants. It still contains a small amount of caffeine, but is a great way to wean yourself off coffee or energy drinks.

## Herbs for Liver & Adrenals

*Licorice* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is by far the top herb for adrenal recovery. Drink daily in your tea blends. Delicious with peppermint.

*Rehmannia* (*Rehmannia glutinosa*) and *Astragalus* (*Astragalus membranaceus*) are both used in Traditional Chinese Medicine as tonic herbs that benefit the adrenals.

*Milk Thistle* (*Silybum marianum*) is an excellent herb to support the liver when detoxing from caffeine.

## Stress & Withdrawal Support

*Ginseng* (*Panax ginseng*) is an excellent energy booster and tonic that can assist with withdrawal symptoms. *Siberian Ginseng* (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) and *Rhodiola* (*Rhodiola rosea*) are adaptogens that boost energy and help the body deal with stress.

*Ginkgo* (*Ginkgo biloba*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), and *Gotu Kola* (*Centella asiatica*) are excellent brain tonics that can help you to think clearly without caffeine.

*Tulsi* (*Occimum tenuiflorum*) is used for stress and mental clarity. *Skullcap* (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) is a tonic and relaxant for the nervous system and can assist with tension headaches. *Oatstraw* (*Avena sativa*) can help strengthen the nervous system after long-term caffeine use.

## Dietary & Lifestyle Suggestions

Drink lots of water. Get plenty of rest. Exercise will help boost energy, reduce stress and assist detoxification.

Adding fibre to your diet can support bowel function. Get plenty of zinc, magnesium, calcium, vitamins B-complex & C.

Fresh juice is a healthier alternative to soda or energy drinks.

# CANNABIS ADDICTION

*Cannabis addiction is a not typically considered a physical addiction, however the psychological effects can have impacts on health and quality of life. It is a serious addiction, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. How herbs can help:*



## Alternative Smoking/Tea Herbs

*Used to relax, improve mood & interrupt the addiction*

*Damiana* (Turnera aphrodisiaca) is our favourite relaxing and mood enhancing herb, most effective as a tea or tincture, but can also be smoked.

*California Poppy* (Eschscholzia californica), *Mugwort* (Artemesia vulgaris) and *Catnip* (Nepeta cataria) are excellent relaxing herbs drunk as tea or smoked.

*Skullcap* (Scutellaria lateriflora) and *Passionflower* (Passiflora incarnata) can ease tension and symptoms of withdrawal, great as tea, tincture or smoke.

*Lobelia* (Lobelia inflata) can be smoked for mental clarity, as well as to clean out lungs. **[RESTRICTED FOR DRINKING/EATING IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Mulungu* (Erythrina mulungu) is a strong sedative tea that assists with insomnia. Only used as tea or extract, NOT SMOKED.

*Rhodiola* (Rhodiola rosea) is an adaptogen that as a tea or extract assists with cravings. Only used as tea or extract, NOT SMOKED

*Kava* (Piper methysticum) can be drunk or chewed for relaxation of the body, and stimulation of the mind - an excellent alternative.

**[THIS HERB IS RESTRICTED FOR SALE IN AUSTRALIA.]**

## Herbs for the Lungs, Liver & Brain *To cleanse, rejuvenate and stimulate*

*Mullein* (Verbascum thapsus) is drunk as a tea or smoked to relieve coughs and clean mucus out of lungs.

Both *Coltsfoot* (Tussilago farfara) and *Lobelia* (Lobelia inflata) are also used in the same way.

**[BOTH RESTRICTED FOR EATING/DRINKING IN AUS]**

*Elecampagne* (Inula helenium) is drunk as a tea to clean out, tone and rejuvenate the lungs.

*Gingko* (Gingko biloba), *Brahmi* (Bacopa monnieri), and *Gotu Kola* (Centella asiatica) are all traditionally used to stimulate memory and brain function.

*Dandelion Root* (Taraxacum officinale), *Artichoke Leaf* (Cynara scolymus) and *Milk Thistle* (Silybum marianum) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term cannabis use.

# TOBACCO ADDICTION

*Tobacco addiction is a serious condition, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. However, herbs can help:*

## Herbs to Overcome Cravings

*To help resist the temptation*

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora Incarnata*) and *Lobelia* (*Lobelia Inflata*) both affect the same receptors in the brain as nicotine, thereby satisfying the desire for tobacco when smoked. **[LOBELIA IS RESTRICTED FOR DRINKING/EATING IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Ginseng* (*Panax ginseng*) when taken as capsules or extract, stops the brain releasing dopamine when tobacco is smoked, thereby making tobacco less pleasurable!

## Alternative Smoking Herbs

*To relax, ease tension and break the habit*

*Damiana* (*Turnera aphrodisiaca*) is relaxing and mood-enhancing.

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora incarnata*) is a relaxing herb that interferes with the craving for nicotine.

*Mugwort* (*Artemesia vulgaris*) once called 'sailor's tobacco', used for relaxation or to cleanse the liver.

*California Poppy* (*Eschscholzia californica*) is a satisfying and relaxing alternative to relax nerves.



## Healing herbs for Lungs, Liver & Nerves

*To cleanse, rejuvenate and stimulate*

*Mullein* (*Verbascum thapsus*) is drunk as a tea or smoked to relieve coughs and clean mucus out of lungs. Both *Coltsfoot* (*Tussilago farfara*) and *Lobelia* (*Lobelia inflata*) are used in the same way.

**[BOTH RESTRICTED FOR DRINKING/EATING IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Elecampane* (*Inula helenium*) is drunk as a tea to clean out, tone and rejuvenate lungs.

*Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*), *Artichoke Leaf* (*Cynara scolymus*) and *Milk Thistle* (*Silybum marianum*) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term tobacco use.

*Oats* (*Avena sativa*), *Skullcap* (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) and *St. John's Wort* (*Hypericum perforatum*) are excellent nerve tonics, helping the nervous system to restore a state of balance.

# ALCOHOL ADDICTION



*Alcohol addiction is a serious condition, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. However, herbs can help:*

## Alternative Tea Herbs

*Used to relax, improve mood & break the habit*

*Kava* (*Piper methysticum*) is an excellent muscle relaxant and social mood enhancer that stimulates pleasant sensations.

**[THIS HERB IS RESTRICTED IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Damiana* (*Turnera aphrodisiaca*) is a relaxing and mood enhancing herb that is drunk as a tea.

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora incarnata*) is a sedating herb that can be drunk as a tea before bed or smoked.

*Yerba Maté* (*Ilex paraguariensis*) and *Guarana* (*Paulinia cupana*) are both stimulants and great mood-lifters for social occasions as alternatives to alcohol.

*Catnip* (*Nepeta cataria*) is smoked for mild euphoria and drunk as a tea for relaxation.

Try mixing some of the above in a tea, and sip when the craving for alcohol kicks in - you might be surprised!!

## Healing Herbs for the Liver

*To cleanse, rejuvenate and stimulate*

*Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*), *Artichoke Leaf* (*Cynara scolymus*) and *Milk Thistle* (*Silybum marianum*) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term alcohol use.

*Burdock Root* (*Arctium lappa*) and *Red Clover* (*Trifolium pratense*) are blood cleansers that start the gentle process of cleansing toxins out of your blood and body. Drink plenty of water to assist your body in the detoxification process.

## Herbs to Overcome Cravings

*To resist the temptation*

*Gymnema* (*Gymnema Sylvestris*) is an amazing herb to regulate blood sugar - many people are surprised how much of their alcohol habit is really a secret sugar addiction!

*Kudzu* (*Peuraria lobata*) is one of the oldest known herbal medicines and has a direct action on the craving for alcohol

# ICE/AMPHETAMINE ADDICTION



*Amphetamine addiction is a serious condition, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. However, herbs can help:*

## **Herbs to Overcome Cravings: *To ease withdrawal***

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora incarnata*) and *Valerian* (*Valeriana officinalis*) are relaxing teas that can ease withdrawal tension and assist sleep.

*Mucunu* (*Mucuna pruriens*) and *Rhodiola* (*Rhodiola rosea*) are excellent herbs that modulate chemicals in the brain to reduce cravings and break addiction. (Not be used in conjunction with antidepressants.)

*Kratom* (*Mitragyna speciosa*) has pain-reducing & sedating effects in higher doses, and can ease withdrawal symptoms. Do not combine with other substances, especially MAOIs. **[THIS HERB IS BANNED IN AUSTRALIA.]**

## **Alternative Tea Herbs: *Used to improve mood, boost energy, and resist cravings***

*Ephedra* (*Ephedra sinica*) contains natural ephedrine and is much less harmful than amphetamines. **[THIS HERB IS RESTRICTED IN AUSTRALIA AND THE USA.]**

*Yerba Maté* (*Ilex paraguayensis*) is a stimulating and mood enhancing herb that can be drunk for increased energy.

*Green Tea* (*Camelia sinensis*) is full of antioxidants, and is a mild stimulant that can be used as an alternative.

*Guarana* (*Paullinia cupana*) and *Kola Nut* (*Cola nitida*) are both used to lift mood and boost energy.

## **Herbs for Liver, Nerves, Brain & Adrenals: *To cleanse, rejuvenate and strengthen***

*Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*), *Artichoke Leaf* (*Cynara scolymus*) and *Milk Thistle* (*Silybum marianum*) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term amphetamine use.

*Oats* (*Avena sativa*), *Skullcap* (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) and *St. John's Wort* (*Hypericum perforatum*) are excellent nerve tonics, helping to restore the nervous system to a state of balance.

*Licorice* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is an excellent herb to support the adrenals after long-term stimulant abuse.

*Siberian Ginseng* (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) and *Astragalus* (*Astragalus membranaceus*) help the body adapt to stress and support immune function.

*Ginkgo* (*Ginkgo biloba*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), and *Gotu Kola* (*Centella asiatica*) are all traditionally used to stimulate memory and brain function.

## **Nutritional Support:**

Vitamin C helps eliminate toxins and ease withdrawal symptoms. B complex vitamins as well as magnesium and calcium support the nervous system.

# BENZODIAZEPINE ADDICTION

**WARNING: WITHDRAWAL FROM BENZOS CAN BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS. ONLY REDUCE USAGE UNDER SUPERVISION OF A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL.**

Benzodiazepine (BZD/benzo) addiction is a serious condition, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. Most importantly, the underlying issues which lead to BZD use must be addressed. Benzos are generally taken to deal with anxiety. However, their efficacy as an anxiety treatment decreases over time and addiction (both physical and psychological) forms. However, herbs can help:



## Alternative Tea Herbs *Used to relax, improve mood & interrupt the addiction*

*Mulungu* (*Erythrina mulungu*) is a strong sedative that helps with insomnia, anxiety and 'restless legs'.

*Valerian* (*Valeriana officinalis*) works in a similar way to BZD and can assist with withdrawal & anxiety symptoms by calming the nervous system.

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora incarnata*) calms the mind, soothing anxiety and worry. Can also assist with insomnia.

*Kava* (*Piper methysticum*) is a popular anti-anxiety herb that also calms and sedates the body for a restful sleep.

**[THIS HERB IS RESTRICTED IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Damiana* (*Turnera aphrodisiaca*) is a gentle and effective mood-enhancer that may help with symptoms of depression and moodiness.

## Herbs for the Liver, Nerves & Brain

*To cleanse, rejuvenate and stimulate*

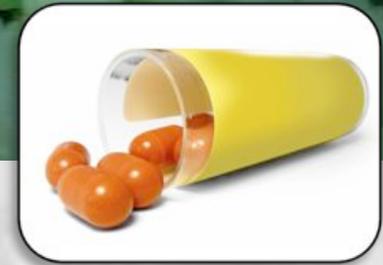
*Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Gotu Kola* (*Centella asiatica*) and *Ginkgo Biloba* (*Ginkgo biloba*) are renowned for their regenerative effects on brain function, memory and concentration. Any recovery program from BDZ should include these herb teas daily.

*Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*), *Artichoke Leaf* (*Cynara scolymus*) and *Milk Thistle* (*Silibum marianum*) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term substance use.

## Dietary Supplements

Taking GABA supplements may reduce withdrawal effects. B-complex vitamin supplements as well as calcium, magnesium and phosphorus may also be helpful.

# OPIATE ADDICTION



*Addiction to opium, heroin or painkillers is a serious condition, which requires dedication and willpower to overcome. However, herbs can help:*

## Alternative Herbs

*Used to relax, improve mood & interrupt the addiction*

*Passionflower* (*Passiflora incarnata*) and *Skullcap* (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) can be used to ease symptoms of withdrawal, tension, and anxiety.

*Mulungu* (*Erythrina mulungu*) and *Valerian* (*Valeriana officinalis*) are strong herbal sedatives that assist with insomnia.

*Wild Lettuce* (*Lactuca virosa*) has a very relaxing and dreamy effect

*Kava* (*Piper methysticum*) is traditionally used as a sedating, peace-inducing, pain-relieving ritual tea; however, this herb is restricted in Australia.

**[THIS HERB IS RESTRICTED IN AUSTRALIA.]**

## Herbs for Liver, Nerves & Brain

*To cleanse, rejuvenate and stimulate*

*Gingko* (*Gingko biloba*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), and *Gotu Kola* (*Centella asiatica*) are all traditionally used to stimulate memory and brain function.

*Dandelion Root* (*Taraxacum officinale*), *Artichoke Leaf* (*Cynara scolymus*) and *Milk Thistle* (*Silybum marianum*) are excellent herbs to cleanse and strengthen the liver when recovering from long-term opiate use.

*Oats* (*Avena sativa*), *Skullcap* (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) and *St. John's Wort* (*Hypericum perforatum*) are excellent nerve tonics, helping the nervous system to restore a state of balance.

## Herbs to Overcome Cravings

*To resist the temptation*

*California Poppy* (*Eschscholzia californica*) and *Blue Lily* (*Nymphaea caerulea*), both contain alkaloids that work in similar ways to opiates, but are non-addictive. These are best soaked in vodka for 2 weeks, then strained to extract the active alkaloids.

*Kratom* (*Mitragyna speciosa*) has similar pain-reducing effects to morphine opiates, without the addictive effects. Many people have found that this is the best ally when dealing with cravings, and transitioning away from opiate addiction.

**[THIS HERB IS BANNED IN AUSTRALIA.]**

*Mucuna* (*Mucuna pruriens*) and *Rhodiola* (*Rhodiola rosea*) are excellent herbs that modulate chemicals in the brain and reduce cravings.

# A NOTE ON IBOGA AND AYAHUASCA

*Iboga* (Tabernanthe iboga) is an African plant that is traditionally used by the Bwiti people to induce intense shamanic journeys.

It has a proven track record of assisting in successful recovery from severe addictions to alcohol and heroin, with a very low rate of relapse compared to orthodox treatments.

Many of those who have taken iboga (or its extract ibogaine) report that it allows them to explore the root psychological and emotional causes of their addictions.

Currently there are iboga clinics functioning in Mexico, Canada, the UK, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Thailand, and New Zealand, where it is classed as an approved non-prescription medicine.

Iboga affects the heart rate and liver and can cause intense hallucinations. One estimate of the mortality rate of ibogaine use is 1 in 300. Do not undertake its use without appropriate support!

[THIS PLANT IS RESTRICTED IN THE USA AND AUSTRALIA.]

*Ayahuasca* is a tea composed of a mixture of Amazonian plants that has been used for centuries in a ceremonial shamanic context, typically for the healing or enhancement of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of the self.

Scientists have been studying the effects of ayahuasca as a treatment for addiction. Current research suggests that when used in the appropriate context, it may help to reduce substance abuse by helping to facilitate personal or spiritual insight.

The chief admixture plant in an ayahuasca brew is usually a leaf containing high levels of dimethyltryptamine (DMT). DMT is a neurotransmitter that exists naturally in the brains of all mammals, however it is highly illegal in almost every country.

Ayahuasca can cause intense hallucinations and its use must be accompanied by certain dietary requirements in order to be safe. Do not undertake its use without appropriate support!

[RESTRICTED IN THE USA AND AUSTRALIA.]

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<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23627784>

Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies  
<http://www.maps.org/research/ayahuasca>  
<http://www.maps.org/research/ibogaine-therapy>

# LIST OF RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS

## AUSTRALIA

### HELP LINES

*If you want to contact someone about alcohol or other drug treatment:*

### Australian Capital Territory

24 Hour Alcohol and Drug Helpline 02 6207 9977

### New South Wales

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
02 9361 8000 (Sydney) 1800 422 599 (NSW Country)

### Northern Territory

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
1800 131 350 (statewide free call)

### Queensland

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
1800 177 833 (statewide free call)

### South Australia

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
1300 13 13 40 (statewide free call)

### Tasmania

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
1800 811 994 (statewide free call)

### Victoria

Directline 1800 888 236 (statewide free call)

### Western Australia

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)  
08 9442 5000 (Perth)  
1800 198 024 (country toll-free)

### Parent Drug Information Service (PDIS)

08 9442 5050 (Perth) 1800 653 203 (country toll-free)

### National

Counselling Online: free drug & alcohol counselling 24/7

[www.counsellingonline.org.au](http://www.counsellingonline.org.au)

P: 1800 888 236

*Counselling Online is a program funded by the Australian Government's Department of Health & Ageing and operated by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre in Victoria.*

### Cannabis Information and helpline

1800 30 40 50

## USA

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service at 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)