

POTENCY:

Powdered herbs and spices lose their potency within 6 months. Flavor is reduced and medicinal value is absent at this point. Keeping herbs and spices in their whole form as long as possible prolongs their integrity. Herbs and spices should be stored away from stoves, ovens, and microwaves.

DOSING:

For optimal therapeutic effect, many herbs are best taken on an empty stomach, between meals. Minerals, such as calcium and magnesium, are best taken before bed. Most multi-vitamins are best taken with meals.

Dosages are typically based on the “average” body weight of 150 lbs; if you weigh considerably more or less dosing may need to be adjusted.

INTERACTIONS:

Professional health practitioners can connect you with clinical research on pharmaceuticals, herbs, supplements and their potential interactions. It is of primary importance to pay attention to how your body reacts to each substance you ingest.

DEPENDABLE SOURCES:

My experience has taught that not all brands are created equal. Why purchase filler materials, low quality, or inactive ingredients?

I have also found that the internet to be an imprecise tool for finding specific information on health, herbs, and supplements—there is a vast assortment of conflicting information from all levels of “experts”. Use discretion!

It can be confusing to navigate the world of herbs, vitamins and supplements. There is much to learn and Robin’s Song is willing to help— just call or email! I too am always learning, and this is my passion!

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Basic Guide to Therapeutic Herbs & Supplements

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PHILOSOPHY

Robin's Song is committed to providing high quality herbs and supplements at an affordable price. Foods and medicines should be nutrient dense and vibrant.

Nutrition is a primary building block of health. While herbs and supplements are valuable to correct imbalances and initiate deeper healing processes, wholesome foods and lifestyles are the best long term strategies for maintaining health.

ORGANIC IS NOT

ALWAYS SUSTAINABLE

Habitat destruction, vague standards, potential heavy metal contamination, cheap labor, excess packaging, and a large carbon footprint are increasingly common shortcomings with organic products in our global economy.

For further reading on this topic:

Marion Nestle's essay: (<http://voices.rodale.com/organic-isnt-always-sustainable/2012/01/06/>)

NY Times article (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/31/science/earth/questions-about-organic-produce-and-sustainability.html?_r=0)

The less processed and the closer to home that items are sourced facilitates greater familiarity and assessment of ethical practices— not to mention overall quality. For those botanicals that I don't grow or harvest, Robin's Song sources bulk organic items from around the globe.

As of 2014, I am re-evaluating all items for alternative sourcing closer to home.

CARE & STORAGE OF HERBS & SUPPLEMENTS:

QUALITY:

To protect the quality of many therapeutic herbs and some supplements it is important to understand that they can deteriorate when exposed to heat, light, and oxygen. Most herbs and some supplements should be stored in a cool, dark place.

FRESHNESS:

Oil rich foods are more subject to rancidity. Flax seeds, hemp seeds, and all nuts need to be stored cold to maintain their therapeutic value. The colder the better (freezing is best).

VITALITY:

Live foods like acidophilus and fermented foods are at their peak quality when stored cold. Many probiotic organisms are now coated with a substance to extend their shelf life. These delicate organisms are deactivated over time however.

ASSIMILATION:

There are many different types of vitamins and supplements and it is important to find the form best suits your body's needs. It is often easier for the body to absorb a liquid than a pill or capsule, particularly in the elderly or if there are existing GI imbalances. The chemical composition is important, Vitamin D2 is not as easily utilized by the body as D3.

Many seeds are not digestible whole. For optimal digestion, most seeds and nuts should be ground fresh, soaked, or sprouted.

Some nutrients are water soluble and others fat soluble. For example, for optimal absorption of the primary anti-inflammatory constituent of turmeric, it must be taken with a fat (coconut milk, avocado, olive oil, nut butter).