

Using Herbs with Confidence Part 1 Helen Rosenbrock

When people hear that I am an herbalist they are typically quite supportive, at least for runny noses, minor rashes and the common cold. However, when it comes to more serious diseases such as cancer the support starts to dwindle. When it appears that life is in the balance there is a tendency to ignore positive holistic experiences of the past and instead relegate all trust and expectation to Western medicine. Almost two years ago, I was confronted with an opportunity to do that. It started with a few symptoms that I attributed to lack of sleep and consequential hormone imbalance (I have young children and was still breastfeeding one of them) as well as excess stress at the time. I had a full body itch, fatigue, recurrent shingles and night sweats. I was losing weight - I am already naturally very lean - despite an excellent diet and natural, consistent movement - I'm not sedentary. I had terrible brain fog and didn't feel like my normal happy self. Finally, I had noticed several swollen, hard, painless lymph nodes. After some time, we decided to seek a diagnosis and our suspicions were confirmed: lymphoma.

I delved into the research. Lymphoma is considered one of the more "treatable" cancers. In Western medicine, that simply means that there is relatively high probability that you will still be alive and "in remission" after five years. Having spent a few years studying herbalism (informally, as a hobby and then formally, through The School of Natural Healing), I looked into a variety of possibilities to strengthen and support the body as it heals itself. We decided that a holistic approach would be superior to anything that allopathic medicine could offer. In retrospect it shouldn't have been fully unexpected, but one great surprise was in the reaction and acceptance of friends and family, who considered the decision to be foolish. Statements such as, "You have your children to think about." and, "You're so young" and, "We just love you." were well-intentioned. However, they did not address the fact that I had considered these points and I wanted to live more than any of them wanted me to live. I am a biologist and researcher and have been in the habit of staying up-to-date with relevant academic papers. Thus, my decision was not based in ignorance, but rather an educated weighing of the available facts. That said, we obviously didn't want to leave anything to chance. The approach was multi-faceted and several of the methods alone should have been sufficient to cure the disease.

I read and researched, sifted and sorted. We discussed the detailed approach we wanted to take and what was required. We set some family goals and several alarms - so that we didn't forget anything. We made several thousand capsules of various single herbs and herbal formulas, placed the juicer in it's now permanent spot on the counter and started a slightly modified version of Dr. Christopher's Incurables Program. Like the late Dr. Christopher, I strongly believe that the body can heal itself. I also believe that the innate trust that we have in ourselves and our ability to heal - that instinct that tells us not just what we need, but that we know that we need it - has somehow been driven from us. We've been coerced into believing, in our modern society, that the professionals always know better. The problem with this, of course, is that even the professionals are constantly arguing about what works. Our scientific tools are limited and published knowledge confusing. Where there is data that says one thing, there is data that either disproves or says the opposite is true. What I knew was this: my body has never deceived me. I was certain that if I gave it what it needed, it would continue to do what I needed it to do. I proved that ancient wisdom within me and it did not fail.

Helen Rosenbrock is a biologist, mother of three spunky little girls, and lover of nature. She moonlights as a researcher and Master Herbalist student at Dr. Christopher's School of Natural Healing.