

Top 10 Tips for Herbal Support for Breast Cancer

1. Stress

To calm stress and support body cleansing, drink 1-3 cups daily long-infused herb teas like lime blossom, nettles, marigold, passionflower and chamomile, mixed or single, and optional grated/sliced ginger. Make a litre pot for the day with 6 tsp dried or a large handful chopped fresh herb per cup. Keep herbs in pot - refrigerate when cool to last up to 2 days - delicious cold. Keep blood sugar/insulin level even with fibre-rich, vegetable wholefoods, some protein, with main meal/s during the morning or early afternoon, and lighter early supper.

2. Hot flushes

Eat daily some beans/pulses, nuts and seeds for protective plant oestrogens and fibre, oily fish and cooling raw salads including fennel. Drink cup with 1 teaspoon of sweet miso paste in hot water daily – add parsley and spring onion/garlic for immune support. Cut down vein-dilating stressor alcohol. Drink 3 cups daily of herb tea with 2 tsp/cup (long-infused) eg lady's mantle, marigold, motherwort, fennel seeds, lime flowers and some rose petals.

3. Poor memory and low spirits

Drink rosemary tea – even better with some grated/sliced fresh ginger! Infuse a teaspoon of fresh leaves or half of dried for 5-8 mins, covered, in 2 mugs of boiling water. Teas like lemon balm (easy to grow and use fresh), scullcap, St John's wort, peppermint. Eat oats for breakfast (see 'Energy' below) to nourish nervous system.

4. Nausea

In chemotherapy and in general, take ginger in any form, eg. sliced or grated as or added to herb tea, alone in boiling water, as non-alcoholic ginger ale, or crystallised ginger. Also, 1 teaspoon pure slippery elm powder or marshmallow root powder in water or yoghurt 2-3 times a day with meals to line irritated gut with soothing gel. Teas: lemon balm, chamomile, ginger, peppermint.

5. Manage energy, weight and anti-inflammatory status

For weight loss, low cholesterol and sugar levels, stress support and immunity, strong bones/teeth, skin healing, breakfast daily with 2tbs+ slow-release fibre-rich *medium/pinhead* oatmeal, handful mix nuts, 2 tbs seeds as porridge, non-sugar museli or sprinkled onto a 5-fruit-with-berries yogurt smoothie. Lunch with beans wholerain/wild rice mix+vegetable. Big breakfast and/or lunch, much smaller early-evening meal/portion size.

6. Daily detox and for constipation

Add 1 tbs chopped parsley and handful of watercress or rocket every day with food for liver function and minerals. Can drink as a tea too! Take 1 tbs brown flax/linseed daily (grind to powder to release oil etc) on porridge, museli or smoothie, on any food or with water for constipation. Teas: nettle, marigold.

7. Appetite stimulant

Support your liver and immunity with 1/2 lemon juice in glass water morning and evening before meals. Or add 15 drops gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) tincture to a small glass water and drink before each meal.

8. Sore throat/cold/flu and to boost immunity

Gargle and hold in back of throat for a minute then swallow a crushed clove garlic mixed with half glass warm water plus a bit of extra virgin, soothing olive oil and vitC-rich lemon juice - just *feel* the infection recede! Repeat 2-3 times a day in acute infection. Teas: elderflower, yarrow, St John's wort, peppermint, ginger, lemongrass.

9. Relaxation and sleep

Put 1 drop of lavender essential oil on each side of your pillow at night. And/or, mix 6-8 drops of lavender essential oil well into your bath. Take calming herb tea like lime blossom, passionflower, scullcap, chamomile or hops to bed and give your whole attention to the sensation of tea drinking, then put out light and sleep well.

10. Scar tissue healing

Keep an Aloe vera plant indoors and apply soothing leaf gel directly to skin – cheaper and more effective than bought Aloe gel. Or, cover and gently infuse 1 oz/25g dried marigold flowers in 1/2pt/300mls vegetable oil, cool, add 20 drops of lavender essential oil and massage daily into skin. Eat pineapple and papaya for tissue healing, plus vitamin C rich foods, eg berries, kiwi, citrus fruit with a little bit of white pith/skin (the most antioxidant part).

Note: loose cut herbs for teas from Neal's Yard Remedies, Napiers, Baldwins and some health food shops. For individual herbal advice, consult a professional BSc medical herbalist via College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy (www.thecppp.uk) or the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (www.nimh.org.uk). See also www.herbalist.org.uk for more information about professional herbal medicine.