Health Bulletin



Take The Guesswork Out Of Herbs

(NAPSA)—More than one third of adult Americans use herbal products, according to a recent *Prevention* survey, but many people are still confused about how to select the right one and how much to use. Rachel Agnew, M.S., R.D., continuing education specialist for Nature's Resource herbs, frequently advises people on the proper use of herbs.

Following are her responses to five of the most common questions she's asked:

1. How much of an herb should I take?

Read the label to determine proper dosage. Some herbs require only one capsule daily to reach the suggested dosage, while others need several capsules taken throughout the day.

Have trouble remembering to take your supplements? To take only one capsule daily, look for a time-release formula, which has been prepared to specifically allow for slow, timed release of the herb's active compounds throughout the day.

2. What's the best way to take an herb?

Read the label to determine whether to take the herb with a meal or a full glass of water. Taking the herb as recommended will help you ensure optimal absorption in the body and avoid negative reactions, such as stomach upset.

Remember—results take time. It may be a month or longer before results are seen. The length of time an herb takes to work depends on both the herb itself and the condition you seek to address. Be patient. If unsure, call the toll-free hotline on the herb bottle.



Before you take an herbal supplement, be sure to read the label thoroughly.

3. Do herbs go bad?

Expiration dates on a bottle label advise when the herb contents have lost potency. Herbs that recently expired are still safe, they simply may not be as effective. Look for herbs with at least one year remaining on the expiration date.

4. What about safety?

Herb bottle warning labels caution about the potential adverse effects of taking a supplement. People on prescription medication, pregnant or lactating mothers, those with serious medical conditions or those anticipating surgery should be particularly aware of warnings on package labels. Because herbal supplements contain natural plant products, they may cause allergic

reactions in some people. Allergy information should be identified near the warning labels on the supplement bottle. Consult your health-care practitioner before beginning an herbal regimen.

5. Where can I learn more?

Have a question? Many quality manufacturers offer a toll-free number and Web site to respond to consumer queries. The Nature's Resource consumer affairs department, for example, can be reached by calling 1-800-314-HERB between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. PST. Or visit www. Natures Resource. com, an online herb education resource, for detailed information on herbs and how they can address your specific health needs.