

# How to Make Herbal Pills



An herbal pill is a combination of powdered herbs or extracts rolled into a small sphere. The herbs are combined with an excipient (defined as an inactive substance that serves as the medium for an active substance, in this case herbs), which moistens and binds the herbs together and allows them to be formed into small balls or ovals. They are inexpensive and simple to make, easy to swallow or chew and unlike tablets and most capsules, they contain no fillers. If chewed, they give our bodies the opportunity to taste the herbs. I believe when we taste herbs, we gain the important opportunity to learn more about the herb's properties, how to digest and assimilate them and how to incorporate their healing properties into our bodies. I hope you find these recipes helpful and enjoyable!

To Your Health,

*Waine* 

## TO MAKE HERBAL PILLS

When herbs are powdered, they get exposed to more oxygen, heat and light, making them lose their medicinal properties faster. For this reason, I think it is important to use recently powdered herbs. To do this, I will often grind the herbs in a mix or blender myself, just before making herbal pills. This is especially important to do with seeds and aerial parts of plants, as they are more fragile. I then sift the herbs through a mesh strainer to get out the larger pieces. You can use these larger pieces to make tea or tincture if you wish.

After combining the herbs, add your excipient. Knead the powdered herbs and excipient with a mortar and pestle or spoon in a bowl until they are well combined and make a very thick paste. Press down hard to combine the herbs. This can take some time to get everything mixed well. Make sure to add the excipient slowly so as not to thin the pills too much. Add enough until you have a thick and consistent paste, much like pie dough.

Roll the mixture out into a long, uniform cylinder about the thickness of your pinkie. Cut the roll every  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  centimeter ( $\frac{1}{5}$  inch) or so, depending upon how large you want the pill to be. Making them the size of a peanut is often a good dose. Roll each piece into a small ball or oval. I find that coating my hands first with olive oil or coconut oil keeps the mixture from sticking to my fingers. Once formed, I like to roll each pill in a little marshmallow powder so that they don't stick together. To dry,

lay the pills out on a cookie sheet covered with parchment paper. A food dehydrator can also be used. Another method is to heat the pills in the oven on the lowest temperature (be aware that to keep the benefits of raw honey intact, don't raise the temperature above the natural hive temperature of 95°) for 2-3 hours to speed the process. Pills made with honey may take a couple days to dry. Pills made with simple syrup or glycerin dry more quickly. Store dry pills in a glass jar with a tight fitting lid. Make sure to label them with the ingredients and date made.

## YOU WILL NEED

- Heavy duty blender or Vitamix (optional)
- Fine mesh strainer
- Bowl and spoon, or mortar and pestle
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Small bowl (for marshmallow powder)
- Cookie sheet
- Food dehydrator (optional)

## HERBAL PILL RECIPES

### **Digestive Bitter Pills**

Digestive bitters are traditional remedies dating back to ancient Egypt. They became very popular in the 1800's and you can find many different recipes in old formulary and pharmacopeia books. Digestive Bitters are taken before a meal to encourage proper digestion. These pills need to taste bitter in order to work well. Chew 1 pill 15 minutes before a meal.

#### *Measure by weight:*

- 2 ounces Gentian root (*Gentiana lutea*)
- 2 ounces Angelica root (*Angelica spp.*)
- 1 ounce Orange peel (*Citrus sinensis*)
- 1/2 ounce Ginger root (*Zingiber officinale*)
- 1/2 ounce Cardamom seed (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
- 1/2 ounce Marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*) to roll the pills in once they are done

#### *Measure by Volume:*

- Approximately 1/2 cup Honey or a bit more (or any other excipient). Add slowly and only use the minimum amount needed.

Cut into the desired size and roll. The number of pills you get depends on how large you make them. Roll in marshmallow powder and set on a cookie sheet until completely dry.

## **Calm the Cough Pills**

These pills are excellent for soothing and coating a sore throat, cough, bronchitis, and respiratory congestion. Take 1 pill as needed, up to 8 times a day.

### *Measure by weight:*

- 1 ½ ounces Marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*) (1 ounce goes in the pills, ½ ounce is used to roll the pills in after they are formed.)
- 1 ounce Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza* spp.)
- 1 ounce Wild cherry (*Prunus* spp.)
- 1 ounce Elecampane (*Inula helenium*)
- ½ ounces Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)

### *Measure by Volume:*

- Approximately ½ cup Honey (or a bit less) (or any other excipient). Add slowly and only use the minimum amount needed.

Cut into the desired size and roll. The number of pills you get depends on how large you make them. Roll in marshmallow powder and set on a cookie sheet until completely dry.

## **Digestion Soother Pills**

These pills can be used for GI discomfort, diarrhea, stomachache, leaky gut symptoms, ulcers, and after food poisoning or an allergic reaction, or sensitivity to, food. Take 1-2 pills 3 times a day.

### *Measure by weight:*

- 2 ½ ounces Marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*) (2oz goes in the pills, ½ oz is used to roll the pills in after they are formed.)
- 1 ounce Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza* spp.)
- 1 ounce Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*)
- 1 ounce Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- ¼ ounce Ginger Root (*Zingiber officinale*)
- ¼ ounce Cinnamon Bark (*Cinnamomum verum*)

### *Measure by Volume:*

- Approximately ½ cup Honey (or any other excipient). Add slowly and only use the minimum amount needed.

Cut into the desired size and roll. The number of pills you get depends on how large you make them. Roll in marshmallow powder and set on a cookie sheet until completely dry.

## RESOURCES

To find out more about medicinal plants and herbal recipes, check out Green Path Herb School!

Website: [www.GreenPathHerbSchool.com](http://www.GreenPathHerbSchool.com)

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/greenpathherbschool>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Green.Path.Herb.School>

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/greenpathherb/boards/>



### **About Elaine:**

The author of several books on herbal medicine and healing, clinical herbalist Elaine Sheff has been passionate about sharing herbal knowledge for over 25 years. Her latest book is *Naked: Botanical Recipes for Vibrant Skin and Healthy Hair*. Elaine is the Co-Director of Green Path Herb School, located in Missoula, MT, where she strives to inspire and empower students and clients to remember their connection to the earth, the plants and their own healing process. As a certified Instructor of the Natural Family Planning and Fertility Awareness Methods, Elaine has helped many couples to avoid or achieve pregnancy naturally. An artist and writer, Elaine has written numerous articles about her family's journey with epilepsy and a special needs child. You can often find her bent over an herb in her garden or marveling at small flowers in mountain meadows with her husband and sons. Find out more about Elaine and her life work at [GreenPathHerbSchool.com](http://GreenPathHerbSchool.com).

*Need ingredients?* If you purchase products through the links here, a small amount of the proceeds help support Green Path Herb School.

Mountain Rose • Starwest Botanicals