

## Herbal Antispasmodics

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### **What Are Antispasmodics and How Do They Work?**

From David Hoffmann:

*“Antispasmodics prevent or ease spasms or cramps in the muscles of the body. They will reduce tension in the body, and, as many of the antispasmodics are also nervines, they will sometimes ease psychological tension as well. Many of the herbal remedies that are described as nervines, sedatives or hypnotics also act as antispasmodics. The term is synonymous with spasmolytic.*

*There are general antispasmodics that reduce muscle spasming through out the body, and there are those that specifically work on certain organs or systems. The antispasmodics relax the autonomic nervous systems and necessarily the central nervous system. This allows a physical relaxation of muscles without a sedation effect upon consciousness. When this action is needed in the gut, the carminative herbs will often do exceedingly well. The relaxing expectorants have a localized anti-spasmodic effect in the respiratory system, but this might have a broader effect upon the body.”*

### **Why Herbal Antispasmodics?**

- ~ Herbs are safe and effective
- ~ Herbs don't have side effects that many pharmaceutical antispasmodics can
- ~ Herbs often give better pain relief
- ~ Herbs support and encourage the natural healing process
- ~ Herbs can help to heal underlying cause instead of just suppressing symptoms

### **Herbal Antispasmodics:**

Antispasmodic herbs effect the nervous system to relieve muscle tension and cramping. Each of these herbs has an affinity to specific body systems, though a few are considered “all purpose.”

#### **Circulatory System**

Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*)  
 Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)  
 Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)  
 Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

#### **Digestive System**

Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*)  
 Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*)  
 Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)  
 Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)  
 Kava Kava (*Piper methysticum*)  
 Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)  
Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)  
Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)  
Wood Betony (*Stachys officinalis*)

### **Muscular-skeletal System**

Black Haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)  
Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*)  
Jamaican Dogwood (*Piscidia erythrina*)  
Kava Kava (*Piper methysticum*)  
Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*, *S. incana*, *S. baicalensis*)  
Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*, *V. hastata*, *V. urticifolia*)  
Wood Betony (*Stachys officinalis*)

### **Nervous System**

California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)  
Kava Kava (*Piper methysticum*)  
Pasque Flower (*Anemone pulsatilla*)  
Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*)  
Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*, *S. incana*, *S. baicalensis*)  
Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*, *V. hastata*, *V. urticifolia*)  
Wood Betony (*Stachys officinalis*)

### **Reproductive System**

Black Haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)  
Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*)  
Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)  
Pasque Flower (*Anemone pulsatilla*)  
Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*, *S. incana*, *S. baicalensis*)  
Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

### **Respiratory System**

Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*)  
Elecampane (*Inula helenium*)  
Lobelia (*Lobelia spp.*)  
Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)  
Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*, *V. hastata*, *V. urticifolia*)  
Wild Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)  
Wild Lettuce (*Lactuca virosa*)

### **Urinary System**

Black Haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)  
Crampbark (*Viburnum opulus*)  
Kava Kava (*Piper methysticum*)  
Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

**Recommended Herbal Books (\*indicates available through library loan system):**

~The Herbal Handbook: A User's Guide to Medical Herbalism by David Hoffmann

~Herbal Medicine From the Heart of the Earth by Sharol Tilgner, ND

**Online Resources**

David Hoffmann on Herbal Antispasmodics:

<http://www.healthy.net/scr/article.aspx?id=1794>

Herbal Legacy:

<http://www.herballegacy.com/Spasms.html>

Spasmolytic Botanicals article by Eric Yarnell and Kathy Abascal:

<http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/63542574/spasmolytic-botanicals-relaxing-smooth-muscle-herbs>