

Herbs as raw materials

Definition of Herb

What is an Herb?

- An **herb** is a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, aromatic, or culinary properties.
- Herbs are used in traditional and modern medicine, food, cosmetics, and perfumery.
- They may include leaves, flowers, seeds, roots, bark, or other plant parts.



Characteristics of Herbs

- Can be **annual, biennial, or perennial**
- Used in various forms: **fresh, dried, powdered, extracts, oils, or tinctures**
- Can be used **individually or in combination** for medicinal or therapeutic purposes
- May contain **active phytochemicals** such as alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and essential oils

Examples of Herbs

- **Medicinal herbs:** Aloe vera, Turmeric, Ginger, Ginseng
- **Culinary herbs:** Basil, Oregano, Thyme, Rosemary
- **Aromatic herbs:** Lavender, Mint, Lemongrass

Herbal Medicine

Definition

- Herbal medicine, also called phytomedicine or botanical medicine, refers to the use of plants or plant-derived substances to prevent, treat, or manage diseases and promote health.
- It is one of the oldest forms of medicine and is widely used in traditional and alternative medical systems.

Types of Herbal Medicine Systems



1. **Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM):** Uses herbs like Ginseng, Licorice root, and Ephedra.
2. **Ayurveda (India):** Utilizes herbs like Ashwagandha, Neem, and Brahmi.
3. **Western Herbal Medicine:** Based on European herbal traditions, using plants like Echinacea and St. John's Wort.
4. **African, Native American, and other Indigenous Herbal Systems:** Use region-specific plants for healing.

Forms of Herbal Medicine

- **Teas and Infusions:** Water-based preparations (e.g., Chamomile tea).
- **Decoctions:** Boiling plant material to extract active compounds.
- **Tinctures:** Alcohol-based extracts for higher potency.
- **Ointments & Creams:** For external application (e.g., Aloe vera gel).
- **Capsules & Tablets:** Standardized herbal extracts in pill form.

Advantages of Herbal Medicine

- Natural and plant-based
- Can be used for preventive healthcare
- Often fewer side effects than synthetic drugs
- Supports traditional and holistic healing

Challenges & Limitations

- Variability in potency due to natural factors
- Potential for contamination or adulteration
- Lack of standardization and regulatory oversight in some regions

Herbal Medicinal Product

Definition

- A herbal medicinal product is a formulated and processed preparation derived from plants, used for therapeutic purposes.
- These products contain one or more active ingredients obtained from herbs, herbal extracts, or plant derivatives.



Classification of Herbal Medicinal Products

1. Traditional Herbal Medicines:

- Based on traditional knowledge, often used for **minor health issues** (e.g., Herbal teas, Ayurvedic churnas).

2. Licensed Herbal Medicines:

- Regulated products meeting safety and efficacy standards (e.g., standardized herbal capsules).

3. Homeopathic Herbal Medicines:

- Based on homeopathy principles, using diluted herbal extracts.

Examples

- Echinacea extract for immune support
- Ginkgo biloba tablets for brain health
- St. John's Wort capsules for mild depression
- Turmeric curcumin supplements for anti-inflammatory benefits

Regulation & Quality Control

- In the **USA**, regulated under **Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA)**.
- In the **EU**, regulated under **Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD)**.

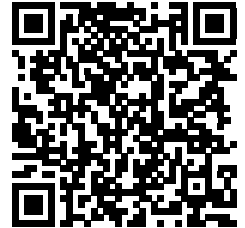


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