

The Green Pharmacy®

GUIDE TO

# HEALING FOODS



Proven Natural Remedies to Treat and Prevent  
More Than 80 Common Health Concerns

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**James A. Duke, PhD**

Author of the Million-Copy Bestseller *The Green Pharmacy*

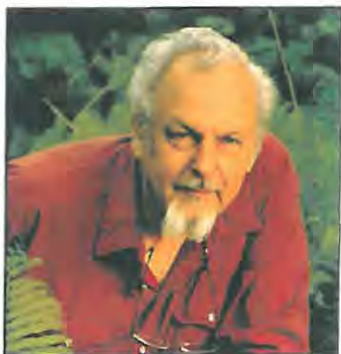
# NATURE'S BEST MEDICINES— AS CLOSE AS YOUR KITCHEN!

**Y**ou already know that foods supply vitamins and minerals to fuel your body's most basic functions. They also are the best source of phytonutrients, little-known substances with tongue-twisting names—like carotenoids, flavonoids, and isoflavones—and amazing therapeutic powers. Now you can take advantage of these all-natural disease-fighters with expert insight and guidance from Dr. James Duke, America's foremost authority on medicinal plants.

Through more than 30 years of independent research, Dr. Duke has identified a selection of food remedies that can help treat health concerns from allergies and fatigue to weight loss and wrinkles. Battling high blood pressure? Sip a cup of green tea, rich in natural beta-blocker and diuretic compounds. Stiff with arthritis? Reach for a pomegranate to help ease inflammation. Concerned about diabetes? Cinnamon may help maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

You'll discover dozens more remedies like these, each with an exclusive effectiveness rating based on scientific study and anecdotal evidence. *The Green Pharmacy Guide to Healing Foods* also presents:

- Duke's Dozen—the 12 foods that pack the most nutrients, and therapeutic potential, into every bite
- The latest research news on healing herbs, from the exotic to the everyday
- Easy recipes made from select staple ingredients to boost your body's natural defenses and speed healing
- The best preparation and cooking techniques to preserve a food's nutritional value and natural flavors



**JAMES A. DUKE, PhD**, retired from the US Department of Agriculture in 1995. He held several posts during his 30-year tenure, including chief of the Medicinal Plant Resources Laboratory and director of the Cancer Screening Program, funded by the National Cancer Institute. He is the author of numerous scholarly and popular books, including the bestseller *The Green Pharmacy*, with more than 1 million copies in print. He resides in Fulton, Maryland.



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ISBN: 978-1-59486-713-2



TC0040511

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This book is intended as a reference volume only, not as a medical manual. The information given here is designed to help you make informed decisions about your health. It is not intended as a substitute for any treatment that may have been prescribed by your doctor. If you suspect that you have a medical problem, we urge you to seek competent medical help.

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For information please write to:

Special Markets Department, Rodale Inc., 733 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Printed in the United States of America

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Book design by Christina Gaugler

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Duke, James A.

The green pharmacy guide to healing foods : proven natural remedies to treat and prevent more than 80 common health concerns / James A. Duke.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN-13 978-1-59486-712-5 hardcover

ISBN-10 1-59486-712-7 hardcover

ISBN-13 978-1-59486-713-2 paperback

ISBN-10 1-59486-713-5 paperback

1. Herbs—Therapeutic use. 2. Diet therapy. I. Title.

RM666.H33.D8474 2008

615'.321—dc22

2008041588

Distributed to the trade by Macmillan

4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 hardcover  
2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 paperback



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*To the dedicated healers of the world, especially those who do no harm  
and those who use foods as medicine when appropriate;*

*To the original researchers of the world,  
who have painstakingly performed the necessary studies  
that we authors eagerly digest and regurgitate;*

*To the staff of Rodale Books, who called many new ideas to my attention  
in our efforts to select the most promising food "farmaceuticals";*

*To my family, friends, coworkers, and students, who often saw me grow  
short-tempered as deadlines tightened like nooses around my neck;*

*And to you, my reader—I hope this book leads you  
to new choices in healing that may spare you more expensive  
and foreboding pharmaceuticals.*

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# Introduction

## *Food for Thought . . . on Food*

IT'S BEEN MORE THAN 10 YEARS since I wrote my book *The Green Pharmacy*. A lot has changed since then, especially as far as public perception of medicinal plants. Back then, they were something of a novelty, still on the fringes of legitimate medicine and science. Today, they're just short of mainstream. You can find their therapeutic compounds in products from cough drops to energy drinks.

Surely one of the reasons for the growing popularity of medicinal plants is the increase in legitimate research to support them. One of the most pervasive complaints about medicinal plants generally is that they're scientifically "unproven," even though many of them have been in use for hundreds if not thousands of years. Both the government and private institutions have been funding the investigation plants and their healing properties. The outcomes have been mixed for some, but others are faring quite well—even holding their own against prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceuticals.

Personally, I'll choose a plant over a pill any day. In fact, I've got dozens of these natural healers growing right behind my house, in my Green Pharmacy Garden. They're laid out in plots by condition; from spring through summer and on into fall, I can harvest the plants as I need them—whether to treat an insect bite or to keep my gout from flaring up, which happens if I get careless.

So it shouldn't be a surprise that for my new book, *The Green Pharmacy Guide to Healing Foods*, I continue to favor the use of medicinal plants for minor complaints as well as for more serious chronic conditions, for which conventional treatments often are appropriate or necessary. In cases like these, medicinal plants may enhance the healing process and perhaps even reduce the need for medication. (Though I can't stress enough that you should never change any prescribed treatment plan without first consulting your doctor.)

For this book, I've expanded my usual definition of medicinal plants as herbs to include all plant-based foods—namely fruits, vegetables, beans, grains, and nuts and seeds. For the most part, they're remedies that you would easily find at your supermarket or farmer's market, or that you'd have other reason to keep on hand in

your kitchen. I will admit to throwing in the occasional exotic, such as camu-camu, a fruit that I encountered on one of my numerous exploratory excursions to the Amazon. It is unmatched as a source of vitamin C. Right now it's available in only powdered form in the US. For my money, the actual fruit is a much better choice, because of all the other therapeutic compounds it contains.

This brings me to an important point: Though the conventional wisdom is to single out a particular nutrient in a particular food for its healing properties, I'm not entirely sold on this approach. Yes, our bodies require sufficient amounts of certain vitamins and minerals—the so-called essential nutrients—to carry out their basic biochemical functions. And nutritional deficiencies may contribute to the onset of certain diseases. That said, I'm convinced that no nutrient works in isolation. It's the synergistic effects of the nutrients and other compounds—especially phytochemicals—that give foods their healing potential. That's why foods are almost always a better choice than supplements, and whole, fresh foods are more beneficial than processed.

As you read this book, you're going to see an occasional reference to multiple activity menus, or MAMs. They're a product of the USDA Phytochemical Database, which I developed during my tenure with the USDA. Simply, a MAM identifies the phytochemicals in a particular medicinal plant, along with their respective therapeutic activities. Using this information, the MAM generates a "synergy score" that suggests how a plant might contribute to the prevention or treatment of a condition, relative to other plants. The MAMs aren't gold-standard research in and of themselves, but they can direct us to plants and plant-based foods that we may not have considered because they don't contain significant amounts of the essential vitamins and minerals.

Though this book is heavy on plant-based food remedies, you are also going to come across some animal products—mostly fish and dairy. Plant foods will always be my first choice, mainly because only they contain those all-important phytochemicals. Animal foods do not. Still, my editor and researchers persuaded me to include some animal products because they are the best available sources of certain nutrients. Calcium is a good example. You can get it in decent amounts from dark leafy greens, among other plant foods, but they rarely come close to dairy. Generally, I've tried to give plant-based alternatives to the animal-based remedies, so you can decide what's best for you.

I imagine that you're eager to jump to Part II of this book, where you'll find the remedies organized by condition. You're more than welcome to do so, but I would encourage you to sometime read through Part I. There you'll find helpful information on the science behind eating for good health, along with some suggestions for maximizing the nutritional "punch" of your own diet. You'll also find Duke's

Dozen, the 12 foods that I consider most beneficial for fighting disease, based on the nutrients and phytochemicals they contain.

In the condition chapters themselves, you'll notice that each remedy carries a rating of 1 to 3 stars. The ratings reflect a combination of scientific research, anecdotal evidence, and my own experience with particular remedies. They're entirely subjective, but I'm hoping that they may help prioritize your choices, as most conditions have a number of healing foods from which to choose.

A few other caveats to keep in mind:

1. If you're trying a food for the first time, proceed with caution—particularly if you have other known food allergies or sensitivities. Yes, foods are natural, and generally, they're safe. But even they can cause trouble for some people. If you notice any sign of an adverse reaction, stop eating the food and see your doctor as soon as possible.
2. I mentioned this earlier, but it's important enough that I'll reiterate here: Please don't make changes to any prescribed treatment plan that you may be following without first consulting your doctor. Reducing the dosage of a medication without proper guidance can have serious consequences. Better to be safe than sorry, as the saying goes.
3. Whichever remedies you choose, be sure to give them adequate time to work. Some may produce results quickly, while others may take weeks to show their effects. Further, everyone responds differently to individual remedies. If one isn't doing the job for you—even after, say, 6 or so weeks—by all means try another one. You may need to do some experimenting to find what's right for you.

So are you ready to begin? Good. Let's explore together all of the amazing healing bounty that nature has to offer.

douching products. Some would argue that since yeasts make vinegar, vinegar cannot be especially toxic to candida. My friend Jeanne Rose, distinguished California herbalist and prolific author of herbal books, including *Herbs & Aromatherapy for the Reproductive System*, suggests that vinegar douches can restore normal vaginal acidity and are useful for candidiasis.

★**Cranberry** These colorful berries are not just for Thanksgiving. Arbutin, a compound found in cranberries (and bearberries and blueberries), may help treat candida infections, according to naturopaths Joseph Pizzorno, ND, president of Bastyr University in Seattle, and Michael Murray, ND, authors of *Textbook of Natural Medicine*. If you like drinking cranberry juice or eating cranberry sauce, look for plain, unsweetened varieties.



## From the Herbal Medicine Chest

You might consider using echinacea in addition to whatever your doctor prescribes for your yeast infection. In studies using laboratory animals, treatment with echinacea protected mice from *Candida albicans* infections. It works by stimulating the white blood cells to gobble up yeast organisms, a process known as phagocytosis.

In an impressive German study, women with recurrent vaginal yeast infections were either given a standard antifungal medication or the antifungal plus an echinacea extract. Among those taking just the antifungal, 60 percent suffered recurrences. But among the women taking the drug plus echinacea, only about 10 percent experienced recurrences. That sounds to me like a good rationale for giving echinacea a try.

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