

"If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction."

Psalm 119:92

## Health Parameters Research

Pat Block, N.D., D.A.Hom.

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## Herbal Quality is Everything

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NOTE: If herbs are truly God's pharmaceuticals, and they become diluted or contaminated, we have lost our best option to rebalance and retain health.

News Flash...

Nutrition Journal reported that 90% of all St.John'sWort on the market was either spiked w/synthetic hypericin, adulterated with other substances related to St.John'sWort or didn't contain either what the label claimed OR any St.John'sWort at all. That's 90% of the St. John's Wort on the market. Perhaps you've tried some and came to the conclusion that it didn't work. No wonder.

News Flash...

A study of 54 ginseng preparations revealed that 60% contained so little ginseng that they were worthless; 25% contained no ginseng at all. Another study of the herb Feverfew found that 2 out of 3 contained no active ingredient. Maybe you've tried these and concluded herbs don't work.

News Flash...

Alternative Medicine Digest (Nov '99) reports high levels of toxic substances in many Chinese herbal preparations on the market. Arsenic, lead, mercury, belladonna, and strychnine were some of the contaminants that were found as well as pharmaceuticals.

News Flash...

A Colorado Springs supplement manufacturer was investigated for spiking its herbal products with pharmaceuticals. The company and its CEO pleaded guilty to conspiracy to evade and avoid the FDA investigation.

How can these things happen here in America?

The FDA does not regulate herbal or dietary supplements. That means that labels can lie (or that the label of a dietary supplement doesn't need to agree with its contents). Most companies have higher advertising budgets than quality assurance budgets and have not made the investment in the instrumentation and personnel to patrol the quality of herbs that they package. Cheap herbs not only do not work, but also can actually be harmful if loaded with toxic substances (like pharmaceuticals). If you want to get well, you have got to have the real, potent and unadulterated plant material. I've wasted a lot of money on cheap herbs, and I found that to get consistently good results, I need to insist on good quality.

**Herbs need to be checked for many components. Here is a list**

1. Bacteria & fungi (micro-contamination). Many herbs arrive at the encapsulator already ground, thus mold or bacteria are not easily detected. So the herbs are put in a growing medium to see if unacceptable levels of mold or bacteria are present in the sample. Root herbs often contain E. Coli, as does Black Walnut.
2. Check fingerprint by looking at the cell structure: Do you have red clover leaves or blossoms? Do you have St. John's Wort leaves, roots or flowers? In both cases it is the blossom that works best and if the other parts of the plant are included, you have a less effective product.
3. Chemistry: Does the ephedra have the proper balance of all 5 alkaloids? Is this a batch of Indian Valerian (which doesn't have the active ingredient) or European Valerian, which is 4 times more expensive but contains the important actives? Some companies extract the essential oils from the herbs then try to resell the herbs on the market. You don't want these.
4. Ash testing tells how much dirt is contained in the sample. Sometimes dirt is added because herbs are sold by weight.
5. Radiation: Russia was one of the world's major chickweed suppliers. At the time of the Chernobyl accident, NSP is one of the few companies that would not market Chickweed because of the high levels of radiation contamination. Yet other

companies had the radioactive chickweed on the shelves. Did they know? Did they check?

6. Heavy metal contamination – lead, arsenic...these can make you sick – not well. The FDA seized GNC's calcium supplement because of the high levels of lead. Why weren't they checking for this? This is very disconcerting to those who take supplements. (By the way, in 35 years NSP has had 0 recalls because they check their raw materials before and after processing)

7. Toxic substance (DDT, Ethylene dioxide, fungicides, fertilizers) – Each of these has a chemical fingerprint that the proper instrumentation can detect. Korean Ginseng is often contaminated with pesticides that are banned in this country. El Nino was responsible for the high levels of arsenic found in Kelp. Does the company or food coop that you get your Kelp from test for these things?

8. Disintegration & dissolution studies - Does the supplement fall apart in a timely manner in the stomach environment?

So, is it time for the FDA to step in?

NO!! Herbs need to remain food supplements that are openly available without a prescription to the public. The FDA has a tainted history and is likely to begin testing and banning useful, therapeutic herbs like they have done with chaparral and comfrey and lobelia, which all have hundreds of years of safe use. (Unlike Vioxx, Celebrex, Baycol, etc.)

Pharmaceutical Companies want the FDA to hold herb companies to the same standards. But herbs are much safer and could never kill as many people as pharmaceuticals do. Rather...

We the consumers must insist that the bottle of herbs that we have in our hand came from a batch in which all the above tests were done. We the consumer must insist on quality.

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