



INFLAMMATION

**THE SOURCE OF CHRONIC DISEASE:
HOW TO TREAT IT WITH HERBS AND
NATURAL HEALING**

Christine Herbert

Inflammation

the source of
chronic disease

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Sleep: the elixir of life

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Inflammation

the source of chronic disease

How to treat it with herbs and
natural healing

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Please note:

The information in this book is compiled from a blend of historical and modern sources, from folklore and personal experience. It is not intended to replace the professional advice and care of a qualified herbal or medical practitioner. Do not attempt to self-diagnose or self-prescribe for serious long-term problems without first consulting a qualified professional. Heed the cautions given, and if already taking prescribed medicines or if you are pregnant, seek professional advice before using herbal remedies.



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Preface

When looking for a suitable subject to teach to herbal students a couple of years ago I realised that understanding and treating chronic inflammation would have been a very useful subject to have studied when I had been learning some 25 years ago.

Chronic inflammation crops up with almost every person most alternative therapists see, and to consider it as an entity is a different way of looking at it – and I believe a useful one. Ignoring the name of the disease and considering the state of inflammation and where it is manifesting can be a useful way of understanding the problem.

Once I started writing lecture notes they multiplied and spread into many different avenues, so by the time I had finished I knew I had the makings of a book.

The present book owes thanks to many people, including all my herbal teachers over the years, many of whom appear here.

To my friends and colleagues Julie Bruton-Seal and Jennifer Holland, excellent therapists both who have backed me, kept me healthy and read through this book checking for errors.

To Nikki Darrell for emboldening me in the choice of subject.

To Matthew Seal for his support and editing.

To all my patients over the years for giving me the experience and learning without which I wouldn't have been able to write this.

To my publishers, Aeon, who decided that it would be worthwhile encouraging me to write.

To my good friends Lora Starling and Holly Gregson for illustrations.

And possibly most of all to my long-suffering partner Mark Naylor, who keeps me grounded, and often makes excellent practical suggestions.

The more we learn about the world, and the deeper our learning, the more conscious, specific, and articulate will be our knowledge of what we do not know, our knowledge of our ignorance

Karl Popper

Introduction

Inflammation is the underlying reason for all the major chronic diseases we see today. It is the result of many different pathological processes, which then result in one or other of:

- allergies
- arthritis
- autoimmunity
- bladder inflammation
- cancer
- cardiovascular disease
- chronic fatigue
- diabetes
- fibromyalgia
- inflammatory gut diseases
- inflammatory lung diseases
- inflammatory skin diseases
- neurodegenerative disease
- osteoporosis

and it has a big impact on mood and mental health.

There is an epidemic of chronic inflammatory diseases in the world, with incidences increasing all the time largely in response to our changing lifestyles. Instead of dying suddenly of acute infections we now die more slowly of chronic inflammatory diseases.

There are many factors that interact to determine chronic inflammatory disease. Our genes determine our individual strengths and weaknesses, but epigenetic factors control how our genes express themselves, and the way we live our life will determine this. Variable factors include diet, the environment in which we live, the health of our gut microbiome, the health of our digestive systems and of our immune system. Most of these variable factors are under our control and can be improved. Some of the methods of doing this will be found here.

This book is about chronic inflammation – the inflammation that doesn't have a useful or positive outcome in the body. Acute inflammation, with redness, swelling and heat that follows injury, is an important part of healing from an injury and needs to be allowed to proceed. The word inflammation derives from *inflamm*, to set on fire.

It is not holistic simply to stop an inflammatory response because inflammation is a result of and not a cause of disease. Inflammation is simply the body's way of defending itself against attack. This is where we have to play detective and determine the cause of the inflammation, then we can actually treat it. Anti-inflammatory medication may appear to help at first but it then becomes part of the problem if used long term.

There is further description of all the herbs mentioned together with a glossary of herbal actions in chapter 9, the materia medica.

How to Treat Inflammation with Herbs and Natural Healing

One of the major scourges of modern life, and the underlying reason for all major chronic diseases we see today, inflammation has affected most people to one extent or another. It can result in a range of conditions from cardiovascular disease and diabetes to allergies and cancer. This essential book takes a holistic approach, going beyond the use of anti-inflammatory medication which only treats the result of and not the cause of disease. It is aimed at herbalists, naturopaths and nutritionists, but is also very accessible to anyone interested in this incredibly relevant and complex subject.

"In this book Christine Herbert has distilled over 25 years of experience and research into a very readable and useful book which is a treasure trove full of gems of wisdom and nuggets of knowledge garnered over her years in practice. She weaves together her knowledge of herbs, nutrition and lifestyle factors into practical and accessible approaches to treating inflammation and illustrates this with some insightful and informative case studies. A most valuable addition to any student or practitioner's library."

Nikki Darrell, MBS BSc MNIMH MIRH

Principal of The Plant Medicine School and author of *Conversations with Plants*

"This is a really important book. Chronic inflammation is the root cause of chronic illness, and understanding the process enables us to get to the source of the problem. Christine has combined impressive research with years of clinical experience to take us through from the causes of chronic inflammation and how this can manifest in diseases from arthritis and cancer to neurodegenerative disease and mental health problems. Every health practitioner, and person interested in their own health, should have this book."

Julie Bruton-Seal, herbalist and author

"Christine weaves her knowledge and experience of herbs and healing into this concise yet information-packed book. Inflammation has become a huge problem with our modern lifestyles and so this book is a must for any home. Christine's no-nonsense, no-frills style is so refreshing and easy to understand and learn from. She weaves together beautifully a deep understanding of the subject and how the related body systems affect inflammation with relevant herbs, dietary and lifestyle information in a very holistic way. I will definitely be keeping this book on my bookshelf for future reference."

Cathy Skipper, BEd (Hons) herbalist, aromatherapist and teacher

Christine Herbert FAMH, DipAET, BA (Hons) qualified as a herbalist in 1997, after spending nineteen years in the NHS as a biomedical scientist. She retired from practice in 2019 in order to dedicate her time to sharing her knowledge through teaching and writing. Christine is an Honorary Fellow of the Association of Master Herbalists. Her previous book *Sleep, the Elixir of Life* was published in 2021.

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