

## **Herbal Products and Hepatotoxicity**

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### **Opinion**

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Indigenous Systems of Medicines like Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Homeopathy, Naturopathy in India and Chinese herbal medicine system and native systems of medicines working in various other countries often referred to as Traditional Medicine and the doctors working using these systems use their sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices for patient care and give good outcome and this knowledge and skill developed and modified by them time to time which is already based on the time tested theories, beliefs, and experiences. The physicians of traditional medicines advocate and promote various herbal/plant products for medicinal use to treat various diseases. The optimum amount of these plant products definitely has certain curative properties. There are a lot of benefits of use of plant products in the daily life of human if used appropriately in optimum amount for the intended purposes. It was a well-known fact that the herbal product "tobacco" obtained from the plant and initially used for medicinal purposes but later on it was proved to be carcinogenic and its by-products held responsible for cancers of various organs of human body for example its smoke is responsible for carcinoma of lungs, its processed leaves along with lime held responsible for cancers of oral cavity, liver and gallbladder. But I think the inappropriate and excessive use is the main reason of its fatal outcome.

There may be many benefits of green tea, but too much intake of green/herbal tea or fruits extract or natural food supplements could cause herbal hepatotoxicity. Present day's people have been replacing the bad habits of tobacco chewing; heavy tea and coffee intake which are fortified with milk and sugar by green tea thus they have been reducing the chances of tobacco related illnesses and calorie intake and subsequently reducing the obesity

related diseases too. Although replacing the bad habits of tobacco chewing in the country like India where this habit is very common among youths with the good habits of intake of tea and coffee or green/herbal/MASALA tea is a good and healthy step. But despite all the health benefits that come with those cups of green/herbal/MASALA tea, drinking too much in a day can actually make certain numbers of persons diseased. Even sometimes more than three cups of green/herbal/MASALA tea in a day for many months as part of a weight loss plan or for any other healthy intention can make a person diseased. Now a day spiritual healers claiming the many benefits of intake of various herbal products that are usually launched as part of their business although their claims don't have any scientific base but as the national governments permit them to sell these herbal products as symbol of patriotism and nationalism at the cost of health of their citizens so the people of the nation have been using these edible herbal product without much concern of the health benefits and harms. Later on these users visit the hospital with severe diseases and disorders and a type of herb-induced hepatitis.

It is called herbal hepatotoxicity or chemical induced hepatitis and it occurs when excessive amount of a herbal product from many herbs or nutritional herbal supplements like plant proteins, fruits extracts, green/herbal tea taken by the person frequently and too much amount separately or in combinations can chemically induce liver damage and the condition of this particular type, herbal hepatotoxicity, can happen when we take too much of an herbal supplement or too much of herbal tea or green tea in a day for long duration in months. The condition further worsens if the individual takes Metallic Ashes (BHASHM) or oxides of various metals

prescribed by traditional healers (BABAJI, SWAMIJI) simultaneously with herbal extract, herbal tea and or herbal medicinal products can cause metallic hepatotoxicity and herbal hepatotoxicity respectively and sometimes separately and sometimes in combination. Moreover the plants are living multicellular complex organisms they themselves avoid to be eaten by other living organisms particularly by animals so they generates certain toxins within them and try to keep themselves safe in the planet earth. The traces of toxins and other chemicals produced within the plants are being utilised by the humans for various purposes like colorants, scents and medicine in optimum amount but these become toxin for humans in excessive amount.

So in the green/herbal tea also have some good chemicals/organic compounds and some offending ingredient too therefore these beverages are normally healthy beverage until taken in excessive amount. Green tea is packed with catechins, an antioxidant compound that in the proper dose delivers big benefits like cholesterol control and low risk of heart diseases and cancers. But taken in highly concentrated doses like those found in a lot of weight loss intended supplements can cause liver cell damage or herbal hepatotoxicity. And these facts are also applicable in all the other plant products especially of medicinal use. The promotion of health benefits of herbal products only for commercial benefits and commercialised propaganda about health benefits of scientifically established facts of herbs has

further worsened the scenario of medicinal herbal products. The commercially available concentrated extracts of plants/parts/seeds can damage liver cells and can cause severe abdominal pain and subsequently jaundice. So what ingredient and how much amount are of medicinal use are not well known or well established facts. And are still under research by the institutions of science of traditional healing which credibility is under questions marks because these institutions don't have reliable monitoring and supervision systems of international standards. How much is too much and how much is of medicinal importance is not well-known as researchers have not been focussing on these aspects of herbal products. The mechanism of action of these herbal ingredients / organic compounds in healing and in toxicity is still unknown and these are much purified and highly concentrated items from herbs act in an idiosyncratic way. Meaning by these may act as healers in majority and affect few persons as toxins while among many others may not be affected at all.

So the moral of the whole story is that beware while consuming any item and just don't develop blind faith on herbal product only because these are coming from natural sources and promoted and advocated by spiritual and religious leader. Before planning to consume relatively for long duration just search good scientific article on particular type of herbal product which freely available and being sold in open market read and discuss its advantages and disadvantages with the colleagues too.

