

Parsley

Parsley is said to be the single most popular culinary herb in the west today, but it was once an important medicine. There are several theories as to where it derives its name from; one says it comes from the Greek word meaning "rock celery" (parsley is a relative of celery), another says parsley gets its name from latin because of its characteristic of relieving kidney stones since "petros" means rock in latin, and yet a third asserts that it was named for the rocks in the gardens that it likes to grow amongst.

Everyone agrees however, that it is not only a tasty culinary herb, but also a powerful and revered medicine. The ancient Greeks especially held parsley to be sacred, and used it to adorn their victorious athletes from the Nemea and Isthmian sports games (Olympians received Bay) and also to decorate the tombs of their deceased.

Hippocrates used parsley in medicinal general tonics and formulas to relieve kidney and bladder stones. With the latter use continuing in natural medicine today as it is still used to treat kidney stones and remove fluid retention. Science has even isolated a compound, apiol, which is now used in medications to treat kidney ailments and kidney stones. This requires the use of the root however, with the leaves being more commonly used for bad breath and indigestion.

Parsley is very high in vitamins and minerals, particularly vitamins A and C, and is a good source of folic acid, one of the most important B vitamins. In addition to this Parsley is commonly added to juices and soups as a part of a detox. This may in part be explained by its high chlorophyll content which is the part of plants responsible for energy production and green pigmentation. Parsley is also rich in compounds that actively clear toxins from the body. This action was traditionally understood via its ability to enhance the removal of waste products through the digestive tract and its alterative action on the blood chemistry.

Special Considerations for Parsley Root

Parsley root is not recommended for water retention due to a heart or kidney condition; and should not be used if you have active kidney inflammation. You should also avoid Parsley roots if you have ever suffered an allergic reaction to it or its active ingredient, apiole. When using Parsley to flush out the urinary system, be sure to drink large amounts of fluid. Because of Parsley roots stimulatory effects on the uterus, it should not be used during pregnancy.

In order to get the most therapeutic value out of any medicinal food of course the most important thing to remember, is to always buy organic!

- The Barefoot Doctor