

# North Shore Community Acupuncture

## Informed Consent for Herbal Medicine

### The Use of Herbs

Herbs are plant-based substances that can be used to enhance, maintain, and restore optimal health and wellness. The focus is not on fixing isolated problems but on enhancing the healing capacity and vitality of the body. Herbs are one choice for optimal health, which includes attention to body, mind and spirit. Herbal therapies do not take the place of medical care and treatment. Herbs are not recommended to replace prescribed medications. It is advised that clients seek and continue medical care when indicated.

### Regulation of Herbs as Dietary Supplements

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates herbs as dietary supplements. This regulation is not the same as over-the-counter and prescription drug products. Herbal manufacturers are responsible for ensuring that dietary supplements are safe before they reach the market. The FDA is responsible for taking action against any dietary product it deems as unsafe. The FDA can and does take action on reports and complaints regarding supplements, including herbs. The FDA can be contacted by mail, telephone or on the internet regarding concerns or complaints. Warnings and actions are listed on their web site. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates dietary supplement advertising and holds manufacturers responsible for truthful and non-misleading product label information.

### Side Effects

The historical record and modern research indicate that the herbs most often used for healthcare have an exceptional safety record. However, adverse events can occur after using any active substance. Side effects that have occasionally been reported after using herbs include headaches, skin rashes and digestive upsets. Such effects generally resolve rapidly, especially if the dosage is reduced or the herb is stopped. Allergic reactions are also very rare but have been reported, usually in individuals with contact allergy to specific plants. Your herbalist may be able to propose measures to reduce any discomforts or may refer you to a licensed practitioner.

### Herb-Drug Interaction

Although speculative interactions between herbs and drugs are sometimes publicized, confirmed cases are rare. Nevertheless, some prescribed drugs are very strong and have a narrow range of safe dosage, which makes any interaction more risky. It is the responsibility of the clients to disclose fully any medications currently in use, including other herbs and supplements, so that they can be offered informed advice. Clients are also expected to inform their physicians of any herbs or supplements they are using. Any suggestion that the effect of a drug is being altered by simultaneous use of an herb should be reported directly to all health professionals involved. It is also advisable to stop taking herbs at least 48 hours before any surgical procedure, and in the event of being prescribed anticoagulants, antiepileptic drugs, and digoxin until expert advice is received.

### Toxicity

Client safety is paramount, and it is our business to stay current with the literature on herbal safety. We will not expose clients to plant doses known to have toxic effects. The organs that are most vulnerable to any potent substances are the liver and kidneys, and it will be important for the client to divulge any previous history of disease in either of these organs. Herbs also should not be used in pregnancy or lactation without expert advice, and clients who become pregnant should stop taking herbs until advice is received.

### Consent to Treatment

I understand that my health information will be handled in accordance with federal regulations. I have been provided with written information regarding health information policy and protection.

I have read the above information.

PATIENT SIGNATURE X \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Or patient representative. Indicate relationship if signing for patient.)

ACUPUNCTURIST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_