

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDICINAL PLANTS IN JOINT DISEASES AND METHODS OF HERBAL TREATMENT AT HOME**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses common joint diseases in the human body (arthritis, arthrosis, and rheumatoid arthritis) and explains the role of medicinal plants in managing these conditions. It outlines how joint disorders may be addressed with herbal remedies in home settings and which herbs are traditionally used for this purpose. In particular, it highlights the composition, pharmacological effects, and beneficial properties supported by clinical research for plants widely used in folk medicine, such as ginger, cinnamon, licorice, fennel, and radish.

**Keywords:** joint diseases; arthritis; medicinal plants; folk medicine; phytotherapy; ginger; cinnamon; pharmaceuticals; arthrosis; rheumatoid arthritis

### **Introduction**

Today, joint diseases - particularly chronic inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, arthrosis, and rheumatoid arthritis - are becoming widespread among different age groups. These diseases limit mobility, reduce quality of life, and may lead to disability. Against the background of the many adverse effects of modern medicines, their high cost, and the need for long-term use, interest in natural methods based on medicinal plants is increasing. Therefore, conducting scientific research on treating joint diseases through phytotherapy is a relevant task.[]

Joint diseases are widely prevalent worldwide and represent one of the serious medical and social problems of our time. It is particularly concerning that chronic inflammatory diseases such as arthritis, arthrosis, and rheumatoid arthritis occur not only among the elderly but also among middle-aged adults and young people. These conditions are accompanied by pain, restricted movement, and sometimes disability. Although modern medicines play an important role in managing these diseases, their long-term use may adversely affect the body. In particular, steroids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can damage the gastrointestinal tract and the

cardiovascular system when taken for long periods. For this reason, scientific interest is increasing in natural medicinal plants that have long been used in traditional folk medicine. Phytotherapy - plant-based treatment methods - can be relatively safe, inexpensive, and effective for the human body. Plants such as ginger, cinnamon, licorice, fennel, and radish have been used for many years in folk medicine to reduce joint pain and inflammation.[]

### **1. Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*).**

Ginger contains active compounds such as gingerol and shogaol, which have anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. Scientific studies indicate that ginger extract may reduce joint pain and, in some cases, may have an effect comparable to certain drugs such as ibuprofen. Ginger is commonly consumed as tea or in capsule form.

### **2. Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*).**

Cinnamaldehyde and other antioxidant compounds found in cinnamon help slow inflammatory processes in the joints.[] Some studies suggest that cinnamon can influence the immune system and may be beneficial in autoimmune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.

### **3. Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*).**

Licorice root contains glycyrrhizin, which has an anti-inflammatory effect. It may also stimulate adrenal gland activity and support the production of natural corticosteroids. However, caution is required with long-term use.

### **5. Radish (*Raphanus sativus*).**

In folk medicine, radish has been used as a remedy to reduce joint pain. It has anti-inflammatory properties due to compounds such as sulforaphane and other bioactive substances.

### **6. Comparison of phytotherapy and modern treatments:**

Many medicinal plants may cause fewer adverse effects on the body compared with modern anti-inflammatory medications. For example, long-term use of ibuprofen or diclofenac can lead to gastric ulcers and renal insufficiency. Phytotherapy is considered a natural, inexpensive, and in many cases safer alternative. At the same time, professional guidance is important when using herbal treatment.

Joint diseases encompass more than 150 disorders. A large number of them lead to injury and disability. These include well-known conditions such as rheumatism, arthritis, osteoarthritis, and systemic diseases. The condition occurs in nearly 4% of the general population. In the past, it was believed that this disease occurred mainly in

older adults (60-70 years old). Today, it is appearing at younger ages, including among youth. The reasons are many, but a single definitive cause has not yet been identified. Among the factors that may contribute to the development of the disease are metabolic changes, excessive or insufficient physical activity, environmental influences, and hereditary predisposition. This disease can affect both small and large joints. If not prevented, the patient's condition may gradually worsen and disrupt their lifestyle. Symptoms can be recognized not only by doctors but also by representatives of other professions. The appearance of joint pain is a key sign. Pain may often occur after physical strain in the second half of the day. The pain is associated with movement, while at rest it may occur at night. For prevention of joint diseases, it is important to prevent illnesses such as sore throat, tonsillitis (angina), and colds, and to strengthen children through hardening practices.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, joint diseases are one of the medical and social problems that seriously affect human health, work capacity, and quality of life. Chronic inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, arthrosis, and rheumatoid arthritis are increasingly common not only among older adults but also among middle-aged and even younger people. Their development may be associated with hereditary predisposition, metabolic disorders, physical inactivity, unfavorable climatic conditions, and other factors. Although medicines used in modern healthcare play an important role in reducing symptoms, their long-term use can cause many adverse effects. Therefore, phytotherapy - natural treatment methods based on medicinal plants - is gaining attention. Plants such as ginger, cinnamon, licorice, fennel, and radish demonstrate benefits as natural agents that reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and strengthen the immune system.

Phytotherapy methods are considered an inexpensive, safer, and environmentally friendly alternative to modern medicines. However, such treatment should be carried out under specialist supervision because each plant has specific effects and requires careful use. Thus, rational use of phytotherapy alongside modern medicine, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and strengthening preventive measures are among the most effective ways to protect health in the context of joint diseases.

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