

What are Poultices? What are Powders?

Poultices are powdered herbal formulas that can be combined with a variety of liquid mediums to make a paste for direct application to an injured area. They are ideally used for treatment of more severe injuries. *Poultices* are designed to be used as stand-alone formulations for most presentations. However, they should be used in combination with powders, according to the symptomatic presentation of the injury. Herban Pharmer's™ *Powders* are designed as adjuncts to the *poultices*, enabling the treatment to be easily adjusted to address more severe heat and/or swelling presentations.

The Nature of Injury

Different types of injuries are characterized by varying degrees and combinations of local qi stagnation and blood stasis, obstruction of the channels and collaterals, pain and swelling. *Poultices* provide a more intensive therapy than liniments.

Choosing a Poultice

For effective use of a *poultice*, it is first necessary to assess the nature of the injury.

The *Acute Trauma Poultice* is a balanced product that treats sprains, strains, bruises, and contusions, while also reducing swelling and strongly alleviating pain.

The *Bone Mending Poultice* aids in the healing of bones and ligaments while alleviating pain. It is often used beginning 7-10 days after the injury and after a course of the *Acute Trauma Poultice*.

The *Tendinopathy Poultice* is formulated to address most any type of nagging tendonitis, from tennis elbow to plantar fasciitis. For acute flare-ups presenting with significant redness and heat, this very warm *poultice* can be enhanced by adding *Clear Heat Powder*, creating an invigorating and dispersing effect. However, it is important to note that most tendonitis actually responds well to the warm *poultice* as formulated.

The *Reduce Swelling Powder* is cool in nature and is used to treat severe inflammation and/or edema. It is best used in combination with the appropriate *poultice* above.

The *Clear Heat Powder* is cold in nature and strongly clears heat. It is best used in combination with the appropriate *poultice* above.

As mentioned above, the *poultices* can be used singly or in combinations with the *powders*. They are mixed in proportions appropriate to the presentation of the injury. For example, a sprained ankle presenting with moderate to severe heat, bruising, inflammation, and pain could be treated with 2 parts *Acute Trauma*, 1 part *Disperse Swelling*, and 1 part *Clear Heat* *poultice* *powders*.

How to Apply Poultices

Depending on the treatment principle, wine, water, egg white, vinegar, or one of our liniments is used as a medium. Water is considered neutral. Wine is more invigorating, with red being warming and white cooling. Egg white is more consolidating and great for soft-tissue injuries in the joints. Vinegar helps the *poultice* penetrate the tendons and ligaments, with white vinegar for injuries presenting with heat, and red vinegar for those with cold. Our liniments can be used as a medium for increased therapeutic effect.

Combine the appropriate *poultice* and medium to form a smooth paste. Spread the *poultice* paste about 1/8 inch thick on a piece of cloth, gauze, or paper towel. Place the gauze paste side down on the injury. Wrap first with plastic wrap to seal in the moisture, and then with a cloth bandage, if needed, to hold the *poultice* in place. Be aware that staining of clothes and or bedclothes can occur.

Poultices can be used in clinic during the course of treatment. Additionally, they can be sent home with the patient for self-application between office visits. Containing strong medicinal agents, the *poultices* occasionally may cause skin irritation on sensitive individuals. Apply for less than 4 hours, on new, sensitive, or elderly patients to ensure skin irritation does not occur. After a successful first application, subsequent applications can be made for up to 10 hours each time, usually overnight. Treatment should be supplemented by using the appropriate liniment during the day.

It is important to know that these *poultices* can be used as herbal soaks when appropriate and convenient. One example is to use the *Tendinopathy Poultice* as a warm foot soak for plantar fasciitis. In such cases, each batch (approx. 50g) can be reused 3-4 times.

Sending Patients Home with Poultices

Generally *poultices* should only be sent home with compliant patients that have not experienced any adverse skin reactions during the first trial application in the clinic. They should be provided with explicit written instructions for use.

*The information contained herein has not been evaluated by the FDA.

Warning: These products are not to be used over open wounds. See product labels for additional warnings