

Thyme For Me/October

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Herbal Mouthwash For A Healthier Smile

We all love fresh breath, but store-bought mouthwash can contain health-damaging chemicals and unwanted additives. With a homemade herbal mouthwash, you're in charge of the ingredients and can incorporate a variety of herbs that support oral health as you develop your own signature blend.

Backing up a bit, what's the problem with store-bought mouthwash? Commonly cited villains like fluoride, which is a neurotoxin in high doses, or alcohol and hydrogen peroxide, which kill beneficial bacteria in your oral microbiome, are just the beginning. Brand formulations vary, but the hazards range from coloring agents that pose a moderate cancer risk to chemicals like propylparaben, which poses a moderate risk for developmental and reproductive toxicity.

When we work with real herbs instead of herb-flavored concoctions, the above concerns vanish. And herbs offer more than a bright scent in mouthwash. Many have natural antimicrobial properties and soothing qualities, making them well-suited for slowing bacterial growth, calming irritated gums, and freshening the breath.

Herbal Mouthwash Recipe

In a small saucepan, combine 3 tsp. of dried herbs of your choice and 1 cup of water over medium-low heat. Cover, and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat, and let sit, covered, for 10 minutes. Using a fine-mesh strainer placed over a bowl, strain the herbs from the water. Compost the herbs, and place the tea into a bowl. Add 1/2 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. baking soda and 1/2 cup aloe vera juice (optional), if using, and 1/2 tsp. xylitol (optional), if using, to the herbal infusion, and stir to combine. Transfer the mixture to a bottle, and store for up to one week or in the refrigerator.

For best results, use after brushing and flossing, shaking before each use. With about 1 tbs. in your mouth, swish for 20-30 seconds. Finish with a gargle to help disinfect your throat. Spit out the mouthwash, and rinse with fresh water.



HOW TO EMBRACE THE SHIFTING SEASONS

Make handmade gifts Dry herbs and flowers Go to a pumpkin patch
Freshen the house with a simmer pot Start a gratitude journal
Take a hike and embrace nature Bake your favorite fall dessert
Cozy up on the couch Bake with apples and pumpkins Walk in the woods
Read by lamplight Host a tea party Preserve your garden harvest
Feed your soul Focus on self-care Acknowledge small moments of happiness
Infuse fall scents in your cleaning supplies Make new candles
Use warm colors and earth tones Make an autumn playlist