

Herbal Antimicrobials

Why Herbals Over Pharmaceuticals

One study found that 46% of patients on herbal antimicrobial treatment had a negative breath test after four weeks, compared to 34% on rifaximin alone. Herbal antimicrobials actually outperformed the pharmaceutical in that particular study.

Herbal antimicrobials don't cause the broad microbiome destruction that pharmaceutical antibiotics do. They're targeted, can be rotated to prevent resistance, and support rather than undermine gut health.

The Antimicrobials

Herb	What It Does	Dose	When	Duration
Berberine	Broad-spectrum antimicrobial. Disrupts bacterial DNA synthesis and cell membranes. Also lowers blood sugar.	500mg 2x daily	With meals (reduces GI upset)	4-8 weeks. Don't exceed 8 weeks continuous — can affect beneficial bacteria and liver enzymes.
Allicin (stabilised garlic extract)	Antimicrobial via thiosulfinate compounds. Particularly effective against methane-producing archaea — the hardest SIBO organisms to kill.	450mg 2x daily	With meals	4-8 weeks
Oregano oil (emulsified/enteric-coated)	Broad antimicrobial via carvacrol and thymol. Must be enteric-coated to avoid worsening reflux.	200mg 2-3x daily	Between meals, empty stomach	4-6 weeks

Herb	What It Does	Dose	When	Duration
Neem	Traditional Ayurvedic antimicrobial. Contains nimbidin and nimbin. Gentler on the system.	300mg 2x daily	With meals	4-6 weeks
Atrantil	Quebracho + horse chestnut + peppermint. Specifically targets methane-producing organisms.	2 caps 3x daily (first 10-20 days), then 2 caps daily	With meals	As needed

Rotation Protocol

Don't take all five at once. Rotation prevents bacterial adaptation.

Weeks 9-12: Berberine + Allicin. Berberine provides the broadest spectrum coverage. Allicin specifically targets methane producers. Different mechanisms — complementary.

Weeks 13-14 (if symptoms persist): Rotate to Oregano Oil + Neem. Different mechanisms of action from berberine/allicin. Surviving bacteria that adapted to berberine/allicin face an entirely new antimicrobial pressure.

If Phase 3 doesn't fully clear it: Atrantil can be layered in for methane-specific targeting. Consider elemental diet.

Critical Warning — Berberine and SIBO Yogurt

Do NOT take berberine alongside SIBO yogurt. Berberine blocks the yogurt's benefits (confirmed by Davis's Inner Circle). Stop the yogurt before starting berberine, resume after completing the antimicrobial phase. All herbal antimicrobials kill yogurt strains indiscriminately — berberine specifically interferes with the yogurt's mechanism of action.

Practical Notes

- **Berberine:** Short half-life (~4 hours), so splitting across two meals maintains even antimicrobial activity. Can cause mild GI upset initially — taking with food minimises this.

- **Allicin:** Must be stabilised extract (Allimax brand is most studied). Regular garlic supplements or dietary garlic won't deliver therapeutic allicin levels. The allicin in fresh garlic degrades rapidly after crushing.
 - **Oregano oil:** If using with reflux, must be enteric-coated (ADP by Biotics Research) so it passes the stomach without irritating the oesophagus. If reflux worsens despite enteric coating, stop oregano and continue with just neem.
 - **Neem:** Often used in rotation protocols because it's gentler and well-tolerated even in people with sensitive stomachs.
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