

Informed Consent

Attic Apothecary
Kelly McCarthy, clinical herbalist

The purpose of this form is to outline the responsibilities of the client and the practitioner as they enter into a healing partnership. It is provided to clarify the client/practitioner relationship and to outline the standards of practice of an herbal consultant. My hope is that with this information, you can make an informed choice about whether or not you wish to consult with me, Kelly McCarthy, and, if so, what you want to learn and achieve through your work with me.

The Role of the Herbal Practitioner

I believe the herbalist's primary role is as an educator and partner, encouraging and supporting your goals for improved health and well-being. Herbalists neither diagnose nor directly treat disease. Rather, we focus on educating you, the client, on how to best enhance your body's innate healing capacity. Our intent is to help you achieve the highest state of health consistent with your own goals. Herbal "medicine" is in essence adaptive, in contrast with conventional medical care which is primarily designed to compensate for what the body is not doing for itself. Herbal practice is based on the belief that the human body is a resilient and intelligent system that is self-healing and that properly crafted herbal formulas assist and encourage the body in its effort to return to a healthy state. Every person is physiologically, emotionally and energetically unique. I will consider your individual constitution and nature and recommend the most appropriate herbal, dietary and lifestyle changes specifically for you.

Client Rights and Responsibilities

All client records are confidential. I hold in strict confidence all information gathered and discussed with you, unless you specifically request otherwise. I will gladly answer any questions regarding practitioner training, credentials and scope of practice. If I feel that your needs and desires are beyond the scope of herbal practice or practitioner expertise, you will be referred to another practitioner. I support and encourage your right to consult any practitioner of your choice, especially in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Payment, when applicable, is due at the time services are rendered. You may purchase herbs and herbal products from me, however you are not obligated to do so and may purchase your herbs wherever you wish. Except in emergency situations, I request that you give no less than 24 hours notice in the event that you need to cancel an appointment. You are free to refuse to follow any of the recommendations provided as a result of your consultation and/or to choose to discontinue the client/practitioner relationship, however I appreciate you making me aware of this decision.

Side Effects, Toxicity, and Herb-Drug Interactions

Historical evidence and modern research indicate that the most commonly used herbs have an exceptional safety record. Similarly, confirmed cases of herb and drug interactions are rare. However, adverse events can occur after using any active substance. I will not suggest that clients ingest plant doses known to have toxic effects. The organs that are most vulnerable to

any potent substances are the liver and kidneys, and it is important for you to divulge any previous history of disease in either of these organs so that I can provide you with information suitable to your circumstances. Herbs also should not be used in pregnancy or lactation without expert advice, and if you become pregnant you should stop taking herbs until advice is received either from your herbalist or another knowledgeable professional. It is also your responsibility to fully disclose any medications currently in use, including other herbs and supplements, so that you can be offered informed advice. It is also recommended that you inform your doctor of all herbal and nutritional supplements you are taking. 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 a surgical operation, and in the event of being prescribed anticoagulants, antiepileptic drugs, and digoxin.

Acknowledgement

I _____, have read this document and I understand the nature and extent of the client and practitioner relationship. I hereby voluntarily consent to an herbal consultation. I understand that I am free to discontinue service at any time. I understand that my practitioner is not a licensed physician and therefore can not diagnose or treat disease, or prescribe drugs. I understand that an herbal consultation is not a substitute for regular medical care, but can offer guidance and information so that I may better understand and heal myself.

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Practitioner Signature: _____ Date: _____

(adapted from Vermont Center for Integrative Herbalism)