

# Benefits of Herbal Compounding for GI Health

Courtney Roberts, ND



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**Rebekah Kelley:** Welcome to the Humanized podcast, all about personalizing your health. I am your host, Rebekah Kelley, and today we'll be discussing the Benefits of Herbal Compounding for GI Health with Dr. Courtney Roberts. Before I introduce Dr. Roberts, I want to remind everyone to subscribe and get all of our variety of casts in audio, video and transcription at [HumanizedHealth.com](https://HumanizedHealth.com). I'd also like to thank our lead sponsors, Village Green Apothecary, at [MyVillageGreen.com](https://MyVillageGreen.com).

So, a little bit about Dr. Courtney Roberts. She received her naturopathic medical degree from Bastyr University. While there she gained an intense interest in the gastrointestinal system, women's health, metabolic and endocrine disorders, and chronic pain while witnessing the profound shifts that occurred in her patients' well-being with the use of individualized and evidence-based botanical, nutritional and lifestyle medicine in her clinical practice. Dr. Roberts focuses on uncovering the hidden environmental and infectious triggers as root causes of many common chronic diseases and she's utilized her extensive botanical formulation experience to provide individualized herbal compounds to treat the whole person.

Thank you, Dr. Courtney, for being here with us.

**Courtney Roberts:** Thank you so much. I'm happy to be here.

**Rebekah Kelley:** So, I just want to jump right in and ask you. The first question, of course, is why is GI health so important when it comes to total body health and wellness?

**Courtney Roberts:** Well, the GI system is huge. First of all, it's composed of 10 different organs in and of itself. And then on top of that, there are other systems. So we have the nervous system, the circulatory system, that play a role in GI function. There's processes like macro- and micronutrient absorption, which without these nutrients, our body has no fuel, it can't do all of the processes that it needs to do. There's digestion, there's waste elimination, immune function, blood sugar and hormone regulation, detoxification. And then of course, the microbiome, which is like, what does the microbiome NOT do at this point? We're learning things every single day about what the microbiome does and it's way more than just digestion.

So all in all, I would say that the GI system just has a ton of functions and a ton of areas that something can go wrong, by default. And there's a lot that we can do in those areas that something goes wrong. So really you can't have a healthy body, you can't have a healthy brain, you can't have healthy skin, you can't have a healthy immune system or any of those other processes without having a healthy GI system. And you really can't. It's going to be really hard to feel good without having a healthy GI system.

**Rebekah Kelley:** So then how are conventional doctors and their treatment approaches often missing the root cause of their patient's GI distress? I mean, you just mentioned all of these systems and frankly, whenever I go see my general practitioner, we may focus on one of those,

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but we definitely don't focus on all of those. There's got to be something that's definitely being missing in the process, right?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yeah. Yeah. For sure. Unfortunately, I don't think it's intentional at all. I just think it's how conventional doctors are trained. So for one, not really asking enough questions to the patient. They're not asking about diet and lifestyle – because we really need to know what are the obstacles to cure. So what are the things that you are doing every single day? What are you eating, where you're eating multiple times a day. What are you constantly doing? How are you exercising? How are you sleeping? How are your bowel movements? Just things that are habit that are contributing to your overall health and well-being and kind of adding insult to injury if we are not addressing them in the first place.

So, I would say not having adequate training in nutrition and the effects of diet on disease, as well as the effects of the lack of certain nutrients and certain foods and how that can contribute to disease.

Secondly, I would say that the testing is probably not comprehensive enough. So although it's very technologically advanced... when I'm ordering conventional testing and conventional imaging, I'm looking to rule out certain things and I'm looking to rule in certain things. So I'm looking for, let's say, IBD, Crohn's or colitis, I'm looking for cancer, cirrhosis, whatever it may be. But after those things are ruled out, conventional doctors, there's just not really much else that they are trained in, to know what to do next. So, the problem is really like, okay, well, I guess there's nothing wrong if we can't find it on this test – which is a little troublesome because obviously if your patient is feeling bad, then there is something wrong.

So, it seems like it's only considered a disease if there is a drug or a surgery to treat it. And we know that the human body is really a lot more complex than that.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Right. So you mentioned what lab testing you might take a look at, depending upon what issues a patient's dealing with, but that kind of gets me to what functional lab testing do you recommend when patients do present with GI symptoms? What would those tests be with you?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yeah. There are a few different tests when it comes to the GI system. So what I like to tell patients, and how I like to explain to patients when I'm ordering functional labs, because this is all brand new to most people, is that I need to assess the terrain and the triggers. So, the triggers are foods. Foods are definitely a huge one. So you can do food allergy, food sensitivity testing, or you can use an elimination and reintroduction food diet. I'm looking at environmental toxins that might be contributing, mental-emotional stress, which is just huge, I mean, everybody's dealing with that. And then when it comes to the terrain, let's say I need to get a sense of what would it look like if I was in your GI tract, what would I see? How is it functioning? What's happening in there? So I need to see the gut mucosa. Is it functioning

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properly? Is it letting the things in that needed to be let in and keeping the things out that need to stay out? Your digestive enzyme and stomach acid production, how's that looking? Digestion, absorption capabilities. And then of course the microbiome. So I need to see how are the commensal organisms of beneficial bacteria, how do those look? And then is there like an overgrowth of the pathogenic bacteria or fungi, whatever it might be? So a comprehensive stool analysis when it comes to assessing the terrain is really the best, the best thing. It gives you a wonderful picture of the terrain of the gut by assessing the stool itself.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Wow. So then that kind of gets us into the next, which is really kind of, I think, the base for this, right? What is the benefit of creating a custom herbal formula for patients? So how does that tie into this?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yeah, so herbal medicine. I just really love plants in themselves. And the reason is because plants contain hundreds of medicinal compounds. And not only are these compounds for the plants themselves, to protect them from different things that occur in the environment, but they are specifically tuned to our bodies' needs and the human body's physiology. Which just like, blows my mind every time I think about it, cause that's just so incredible. So they have an amazing ability to support the human body's innate defense and healing mechanisms. And this is really unlike most conventional drugs – not all of them – which block certain pathways. And this is a totally necessary step in certain instances, you definitely need a blocked pathway sometimes, but it is not suitable for every condition. And what I like about herbal medicine is that you can use it in instances when maybe pharmaceutical medicines aren't quite indicated yet. Or you can use them as an alternative in instances where pharmaceutical medicines would otherwise be indicated, but as long as you're doing it under the guide of a trained practitioner, that's important.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Right. So I understand that you're actually offering a special GI health lab package through Village Green Apothecary, and can you provide us with a brief overview of what this includes, and also how people could access it or order it?

**Courtney Roberts:** So with the new GI package, patients can directly order this kit through Village Green's website, and that's going to be on MyVillageGreen.com, and then you'll look under lab tests. And once you order that, that kit will be sent to the patient's home, the patient will collect the stool sample themselves, and then that stool will be shipped back to the lab. In the meantime, there is a questionnaire that gives me a little bit more information about diet and lifestyle, we talk about your medical history... and so I'm using all of that information with the results of the stool test to create a custom herbal formula. And then we can just see exactly what the patient needs and create the best, most results-driven formula from there.

**Rebekah Kelley:** And do you have anything that you would say, that certain people are a good candidate? Like if they have X, Y or Z, like maybe a lot of gas maybe or... is there a certain thing

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that would then flag to someone, hey, I really want to reach out and talk to Dr. Courtney Roberts about this and go ahead and have a GI health lab pulled?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yeah. So they often, like you said, gas is a big one. Bloating, sometimes just uncomfortable bloating or painful bloating in combination with stools. Stool changes, like maybe constipation or maybe sometimes they're a little bit loose. And then definitely other symptoms will often show up, like dysbiosis, overgrowth of certain bacteria. So you might have joint pain, also you may get headaches sometimes. You might feel a little depressed or down, you have some mood swings. So, those are often symptoms that I see that point me in the direction of saying, hey, you need to get a stool test.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Right. Or maybe just wanting to optimize your health, right? And understanding, hey, how am I doing? I'd like to just kind of get a read and maybe... I mean, would you recommend it for people like that too, who are just wanting to have options?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

**Rebekah Kelley:** Awesome. Thanks Dr. Roberts. These are really valuable insights. Dr. Roberts can be found at [MyVillageGreen.com](http://MyVillageGreen.com) and you can look actually under practitioners, right? Am I right Dr. Roberts?

**Courtney Roberts:** Yes, that's correct.

**Rebekah Kelley:** And then let me remind you to subscribe and get access to all Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders in personalized health at [HumanizedHealth.com](http://HumanizedHealth.com). Thanks so much for being with us. We really appreciate it.