

Herbalist Information Sheets

Client Communication, Product Claims & Certification in the United States

Information Sheet 1

What Herbalists CAN and CANNOT Say

Understanding the Difference

Herbalists in the United States generally work within an educational and wellness-support role unless they also hold a state-regulated healthcare license.

This means herbalists should avoid language that implies they diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent disease.

The safest approach is to focus on:

- Traditional herbal use
 - Wellness support
 - General body-system support
 - Education
 - Lifestyle support
 - Historical use of herbs
 - Energetics and nourishment
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Safer Herbal Language

Instead of:

"This tincture treats anxiety."

Say:

"This tincture is traditionally used to support relaxation and calm."

Instead of:

"This tea cures acid reflux."

Say:

"This tea was formulated to support digestive comfort after meals."

Instead of:

"This salve heals arthritis pain."

Say:

"This salve is traditionally used for topical comfort and massage."

Helpful Words Herbalists CAN Use

- Supports
 - Helps maintain
 - Traditionally used for
 - Nourishes
 - Comforts
 - Encourages
 - Promotes
 - Assists
 - Soothes
 - Wellness support
 - General wellness
 - Herbal tradition
 - Seasonal support
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Words Herbalists Should Avoid

- Treats
- Cures
- Prevents disease
- Diagnoses
- Prescription replacement
- Guaranteed results
- Anti-cancer
- Antibiotic
- Reverses disease

- Medical treatment
 - Clinically cures
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Important Reminder

Even social media posts, comments, testimonials, labels, blog posts, videos, and email marketing can count as advertising claims.

Suggested Disclaimer

“These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.”

Information Sheet 2

Can Herbalists Call Themselves “Certified”?

The Short Answer

There is currently no single national herbalist license or federally recognized certification in the United States.

Many herbalists complete educational programs and receive certificates from schools, but these are not government-issued medical licenses.

What Herbalists CAN Honestly Say

- “I completed herbal studies through...”
 - “I earned a certificate in herbalism from...”
 - “I studied clinical herbalism at...”
 - “I am a member of...”
 - “I am a Registered Herbalist with the American Herbalists Guild” (if applicable)
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What Herbalists Should Avoid Saying

- Nationally certified herbalist
- Federally licensed herbalist
- Government-certified herbalist

- Medical herbal doctor (unless legally credentialed)
 - Board-certified herbal physician
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Why This Matters

Clients may assume the words “certified” or “licensed” mean government regulation similar to physicians, nurses, or dietitians.

Using accurate wording helps maintain transparency and trust.

Professionalism Still Matters

Even without national licensing, many herbalists:

- Complete years of study
- Participate in apprenticeships
- Maintain continuing education
- Study herb safety and interactions
- Follow ethical guidelines
- Document client work carefully

Good herbal practice depends on education, ethics, honesty, and responsible communication.

Information Sheet 3

Advertising Herbal Products Safely

Why Advertising Language Matters

The wording used on labels, websites, Etsy listings, social media posts, brochures, videos, and advertisements can affect how products are legally viewed.

Claims suggesting a product treats or cures disease may cause regulators to consider the product an unapproved drug.

Safer Product Claims

Digestive Support

Safe examples:

- Supports healthy digestion
- Traditionally used after meals
- Comforting herbal tea blend
- Herbal digestive support

Avoid:

- Treats IBS
 - Cures acid reflux
 - Stops ulcers
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Sleep & Relaxation

Safe examples:

- Supports relaxation
- Encourages restful sleep
- Traditionally used for evening calm

Avoid:

- Treats insomnia
 - Replaces sleep medication
 - Stops panic attacks
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Immune Support

Safe examples:

- Seasonal wellness support
- Traditionally used during seasonal transitions
- Supports immune health

Avoid:

- Prevents flu
- Kills viruses

- Stops infections
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Pain & Inflammation

Safe examples:

- Comforting herbal salve
- Supports muscle comfort
- Traditionally used for topical comfort

Avoid:

- Treats arthritis
 - Eliminates pain
 - Anti-inflammatory cure
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Important Reminder About Testimonials

Customer reviews can also create claims.

Example:

If a customer says: "This cured my migraines."

...and the business reposts it publicly, regulators may view that as a product claim.

Best Practice

Keep testimonials focused on:

- Taste
 - Aroma
 - Ritual
 - Comfort
 - General wellness
 - Product experience
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Information Sheet 4

Safe Client Communication for Herbalists

Herbalists Are Educators and Wellness Supporters

Many herbalists focus on:

- Wellness education
- Traditional herbal use
- Lifestyle support
- Food and nourishment
- Stress support
- General wellness routines

This differs from diagnosing and treating disease.

Helpful Questions Herbalists Can Ask

- How has your stress level been lately?
 - How are you sleeping?
 - What does your daily routine look like?
 - Are you currently taking medications or supplements?
 - Have you discussed these symptoms with your healthcare provider?
 - How does your digestion generally feel?
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Helpful Phrases Herbalists Can Use

- "This herb is traditionally used for..."
 - "Let's focus on wellness support."
 - "Please keep your healthcare provider informed."
 - "This herb may interact with medications."
 - "This is educational and not medical advice."
 - "I recommend discussing this with your doctor or pharmacist."
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Herbalists Should Avoid

- Diagnosing disease
- Telling clients to stop medication
- Claiming herbs replace medical treatment
- Promising results

- Interpreting lab results without credentials
 - Saying a client “has” a disease
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Documentation Matters

Good herbal practice may include:

- Intake forms
 - Client notes
 - Safety information
 - Allergy information
 - Medication review reminders
 - Referral recommendations
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Information Sheet 5

Social Media Safety for Herbalists

Social Media Counts as Advertising

Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest, blogs, YouTube, podcasts, and email newsletters can all be reviewed as marketing claims.

Common Social Media Mistakes

Risky:

“This herb cures anxiety.”

Safer:

“This herb has traditionally been used to support calm and relaxation.”

Risky:

“This tea fixes hormonal imbalance.”

Safer:

“This tea was formulated to support overall wellness during times of hormonal transition.”

Risky:

“Natural Ozempic.”

Safer:

“Traditionally used alongside healthy nutrition and lifestyle support.”

Be Careful With Hashtags

Even hashtags may contribute to claims.

Examples of risky hashtags:

- **cancercure**
- **diabetescure**
- **anxietytreatment**
- **naturalantibiotic**

Safer examples:

- **herbalwellness**
- **traditionalherbalism**
- **plantwisdom**
- **wellnesssupport**
- **herbaleducation**

Best Practices for Herbal Businesses

- Use educational wording
 - Include safety disclaimers when appropriate
 - Avoid fear-based marketing
 - Do not shame conventional medicine
 - Encourage informed healthcare decisions
 - Keep claims realistic and honest
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Information Sheet 6

Ethical Herbalism & Professional Boundaries

Ethical Herbalism Is About Trust

Professional herbalism is not only about herbs. It is also about:

- Honesty
 - Safety
 - Respect
 - Transparency
 - Clear boundaries
 - Responsible education
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Ethical Herbalists:

- Continue learning
 - Stay within their scope
 - Refer clients when necessary
 - Understand contraindications
 - Respect medications and healthcare providers
 - Avoid exaggerated promises
 - Value informed consent
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Red Flags Clients Should Watch For

Be cautious of practitioners who:

- Promise miracle cures
 - Claim herbs cure everything
 - Tell clients to stop medications suddenly
 - Discourage medical care entirely
 - Claim secret knowledge
 - Guarantee results
 - Use fear to sell products
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Ethical Herbal Practice Includes

- Encouraging medical care when needed

- Understanding herb-drug interactions
 - Using proper sourcing and storage
 - Accurate labeling
 - Honest marketing
 - Respecting client autonomy
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Final Thought

Herbalism can be a meaningful, supportive, and educational wellness practice while still respecting legal and ethical boundaries.

The goal is not to avoid talking about herbs. The goal is to speak responsibly, honestly, and safely.