

Traditional medicines are a good starting place on the road to healing, recovery, and spirituality.

TOBACCO

Tobacco is often considered the medicine of the East, the direction of new beginnings. Many traditionalist and spiritual leaders remind us that Tobacco always comes first. A person experiencing emotional stress may find Tobacco useful and calming. They may, for example, request help with their Tobacco, carefully asking the question they need answered, and then waiting patiently with their Tobacco. Traditionally, Tobacco was given to us by our Creator to help us communicate our thoughts and feelings with the Creator, so it is often used for prayer.

Tobacco comes in several forms - loose cigarette or pipe Tobacco can be purchased at a store. The purest form, with no additional ingredients is preferred for ceremonial purposes. Tobacco seeds, allow you to grow your own Tobacco. Seeds are available for purchase in some stores and online.

Tobacco is some times made into Tobacco ties for giving. To make a Tobacco tie, cut a small two inch square cloth of any color (many people use red) and place Tobacco in the center of the cloth. Next tie the ends with a

ribbon or yarn. While making your tie, think about who or what you are making the tie for, and put your prayer into your Tobacco tie.



How we use Tobacco varies. It can be sprinkled on the ground or onto the Water while saying your daily prayers or it can be smoked in a sacred pipe.

SAGE

Sage is often considered the medicine of the West. Its smoke is used to release whatever is troubling the mind. It also removes negative energy and prepares us for ceremonies and teachings. If you have experienced stress, burning sage would bring you a sense of peace and clarity of mind. The smoke of sage is also used to cleanse the home and to cleanse sacred items like rocks or feathers. There are many types of sage. Sage is used when it is in dried form. When we smudge, we place a pinch of

sage in a smudge shell and light it with a match, allowing the smoke to cleanse us. Sage may also be purchased in a bundle stick and burned for smudging. Sage can be purchased or grown from seed.



SWEETGRASS

Sweetgrass is the medicine of the north, which is also the direction associated with Elders and wisdom. It is said that when we burn sweetgrass, it brings closer the grandfathers and grandmothers of the spirit world to hear our prayers. It has sometimes been called the hair of Mother Earth. When we pray with sweetgrass, our prayers are lifted and carried in the smoke to the Creator. When we smudge with sweetgrass, we wash ourselves in the smoke of the burning sweetgrass. Sweetgrass has a sweet, pleasing aroma that connects people to their gentle spirit.



A good prayer for smudging is: “May our minds have clarity of thought, our hands do good work, and may our mouths speak truth.” When a negative situation is experienced burning sweetgrass will calm the room and everyone in it. When used in healing or talking circle it brings positive energy. Many people like to place a braid of sweet grass in their cars for good medicine as they travel. Sweetgrass grows along the coast where the salt water meets fresh water.



CEDAR

Cedar is often considered the medicine of the South. It is said that before the Creator placed us humans on this Earth, Grandmother Cedar agreed that she would help us to survive. Before picking Cedar, it is always a good practice to leave an offering of tobacco for the Cedar. In order to enjoy the full spiritual and medicinal use of the Cedar, tell the tree who you are and



how you will use the Cedar. It is best to pick from the largest tree.

Different tribes and different people use Cedar in different ways. Cedar is well-known for its medicinal properties and is often considered a medicine that protects and purifies. When a person has experienced great stress or trauma, a cedar bath is sometimes helpful for comfort and healing the body. For this purpose, Cedar is removed from the branches and boiled in water then add to the bath water. Cedar baths are often used in traditional funeral ceremonies.



Cedar is a protection medicine. Many dancers place fresh cedar in their moccasins and it can also be placed in your shoes to keep their energy pure. Cedar sprigs can also be tied together in a bundle and hung over windows and entry ways of a home or office, to protect you and keep unwanted negative energies from entering.

THE FOUR SACRED MEDICINES

