



Parsley (lat. *Petroselinum crispum*)

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Abstract. The article discusses the main properties of parsley and its effect on the human body. A systematic review of modern specialized literature and relevant scientific data was carried out. The chemical composition and nutritional value of the product are indicated, the use of parsley in various types of medicine and the effectiveness of its use in various diseases are considered. The potentially adverse effects of parsley on the human body under certain medical conditions and diseases are analyzed separately. The scientific foundations of diets with its application are considered.

Beneficial features

Table 1. The chemical composition of parsley (according to [Food+](#)).

Main substances (g / 100 g):	fresh parsley ^[one]
Water	87.71
Carbohydrates	6.33
Squirrels	2.97
Alimentary fiber	3.3
Sugar	0.85
Fats	0.79
Calories (kcal)	36
Minerals (mg/100 g):	
Phosphorus	58
Calcium	138
Potassium	554
Sodium	56
Magnesium	fifty
Iron	6.2

Zinc	1.07
Copper	0.149
Vitamins (mg/100 g):	
Vitamin C	133
Vitamin B2	0.098
Vitamin A	0.42
Vitamin B6	0.09
Vitamin B1	0.086
Vitamin PP	1.313
Vitamin E	0.75

According to the given data, it can be seen that parsley contains about 2.5-3 times more vitamin C than lemon and almost the same amount of ascorbic acid as blackcurrant and sweet red pepper. Moreover, plants grown in the northern regions are much richer (sometimes 4-5 times) in vitamin C than their southern "relatives". In addition, parsley also contains vitamins of the P group, which in biological processes often act in tandem with ascorbic acid.

Depending on different growing conditions, parsley contains from 2 mg to 20 mg of carotene (vitamin A provitamin), B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), flavonoids, nicotinic acid. This greenery is also rich in vitamin K, which is involved in the synthesis of proteins necessary for normal blood clotting and metabolism in muscle and connective tissues. To get the daily requirement of vitamin K, it is enough to eat about 10 grams of parsley.

In the seeds of the plant, the highest (compared to other parts of parsley) concentration of essential oil is up to 7%. In fresh leaves, it is noticeably less (up to 0.3%), but even this is enough for culinary specialists to have a reason to attribute parsley to a fragrant spicy seasoning.

The main components of the essential oil are myristicin $C_{11}H_{12}O_3$ (37%) with antioxidant properties and apiol $C_{12}H_{14}O_4$ (16%), which is also called parsley camphor. It is thanks to apiol that the effect of contraction of smooth muscles occurs, which determines a number of specific properties of parsley. However, there is very little apiol in oils derived from the leafy part, so there are far fewer restrictions when using green "tops" than when using essential oils obtained from seeds or roots.

Medicinal properties

A thousand years ago, the famous Avicenna in his "Canon of Medicine" argued that with the help of parsley you can stop coughing, get rid of breathing problems and chest tightness, cure asthma, liver, spleen, and activate urogenital function.

Almost seven centuries later, in the "Cool Helix" clinic, among the healing properties of the plant, the ability of parsley to cure diseases of the liver and bladder, as well as to demonstrate a diuretic effect, was also mentioned. But, besides this, recommendations were given in the clinic on the use of parsley to normalize digestion, improve vision, heal gums and wounds on the body, restore kidneys and slow down inflammatory processes. And two centuries later (in the 19th century), they began to produce a drug from parsley seeds, which the doctors of that time prescribed for the treatment of malaria, neuralgia and getting rid of menstrual pain and menstrual irregularities.

Most of the listed medicinal properties of the plant are still used in various therapeutic practices today. Among the time-tested effects are the following:

- **Increased tone of smooth muscles.** Parsley increases the tone of the muscles of the bladder, intestines, uterus (the latter is not always safe, since the same property gives reason to use the plant in amateur abortion procedures).
- **Diuretic effect.** Leaves, roots and seeds of the plant activate the urethra, accompanied by increased release of sodium chloride and excretion of salts from the body. This property of parsley is used, for example, to relieve puffiness.
- **Choleretic effect.** Bile secretion is caused by both fresh leaves and concentrates of various parts of the plant. Some therapists in parsley decoction see a means of correcting dyskinesia - a violation of the outflow of bile caused by relaxation of the walls of the bladder and ducts (hypokinetic type). The choleretic effect of parsley is most pronounced in the first 2-3 hours after taking the herbal preparation, but manifests itself within 6 hours.
- **Improved digestive function and appetite.** Essential oils and extracts from different parts of parsley contribute to the activation of the digestive system (the secretion of saliva, gastric juice, enzymes, and increased intestinal motility). In addition, the fiber contained in parsley contributes to the stimulation of the digestive tract.
- **bactericidal effect.** The essential oil of the plant is able to suppress the putrefactive bacteria of the intestine and reduce gas formation.

Some publications claim that parsley juice and essential oils have a beneficial effect on the functionality of the heart muscle. It is also assumed that fresh juice can normalize the functioning of the thyroid gland and the adrenal cortex, and also that it can strengthen the walls of capillary blood vessels.

In medicine

In medical preparations, parsley is considered primarily as a diuretic and antispasmodic. Also, in the instructions for herbal remedies and dietary supplements based on parsley, manufacturers among the indications indicate the presence of edema, inflammation of the prostate gland and bladder mucosa (cystitis), and urolithiasis. Examples include the following drugs:

- **Phytolysin** is a paste-like complex herbal remedy based on plant extracts, which include parsley root extract. A suspension is prepared from the paste, designed to dissolve urinary calculi. The tool has a diuretic, analgesic and antimicrobial effect (inhibits the development of gram-positive microflora). Also, the drug exists in the form of capsules with a similar effect.
- **Uronefron** - a drug designed to dissolve urinary stones, is available in various forms (drops, tablets) and includes a complex of plant components, which include parsley root. It has a diuretic, antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory effect.
- **Nephrokea** is a Swiss drug belonging to the group of dietary supplements for the prevention of inflammation of the genitourinary system. Along with berry and herb extracts, it contains parsley leaf powder.
- **Tazalok** - drops with natural herbal ingredients are designed to correct menstrual disorders. For weight loss cycle and reduce the level of pain. The complex composition includes curly parsley root tincture.

There are other drugs with a similar effect. And although parsley is not considered as an independent and main drug in the fight against serious diseases, this plant can certainly expand the possibilities of therapeutic practices. For medicinal purposes, parsley is introduced into diets No. 2, 3, 5, 8-11, 15.

In folk medicine

Antispasmodic, bactericidal, urinary and choleretic and other effects of parsley, described in the previous sections, were first in demand in folk medicine in various countries around the world. As a

diuretic and laxative, all parts of the plant are used in Indian traditional medicine. In the same place, with the help of parsley, they dissolve and prevent the formation of oxalate stones in the gallbladder and bladder, and normalize menstruation. In Morocco, parsley healers treat cardiovascular diseases, and in Denmark they correct memory disorders.

In general, the entire spectrum of the use of parsley in folk therapy can be reduced to several key areas:

Problems of the urogenital area

In folk medicine, the diuretic effect is easily achieved thanks to the young shoots of the plant, which are added to salads. To do this, the seeds are planted on gauze in a flat plate, poured with water and, holding the dishes in a bright, warm place, simply wait for the sprouts to appear.

For the treatment of more serious problems, they usually resort to the manufacture of infusions and decoctions (mainly from seeds and roots). In diseases of the urological nature (pyelonephritis, cystitis, prostatitis, etc.), medicinal decoctions and infusions are prepared with the addition of a large amount of water. Seed decoctions are also commonly used to relieve edema caused by disruption of the cardiovascular system.

Following the ancient healers, traditional medicine uses parsley seeds to enhance potency, which are mixed either with sugar and ox bile (in equal proportions), or with unsalted butter. To get the result, it is recommended to take the medicine for three days in a row. True, at the same time (to consolidate the effect), healers advise eating meat and sex glands of a fat rooster.

Overgrown with details in folk therapeutic practice and ways to correct menstrual irregularities. So, in order to provoke the onset of menstruation, herbalists advise women to pluck greens and pull out parsley root not at any time of the month, but at the new moon, when the crescent of the moon is above the horizon.

Skin problems

Parsley root decoctions in folk medicine relieve not only cosmetic, but also medical problems. Lotions soaked in decoction or juice are applied to lichen, inflammation that appeared after an insect bite, and allergic redness. In addition, in ancient times, taking decoctions of parsley roots accelerated the transition to the next stage of smallpox and measles - it was believed that the decoction would contribute to the appearance of skin rashes in these diseases.

Problems of the gastrointestinal tract

Folk medicine caused choleric and carminative effects by means of preparations boiled from different parts of parsley, and used the antioxidant properties of the plant to prevent damage to the gastric mucosa by relieving oxidative stress. Parsley was also recommended to increase the acidity of gastric juice and to normalize the secretion of the gastrointestinal glands.

In ancient times, people were sure that parsley was able to slow down the rate of intoxication. In order to keep a clear mind longer during a feast, this plant began to be cultivated and diversified with its help in the diet. Today, parsley is also sometimes eaten to stay sober, although more often than not, this spicy herb is now just an effective breath freshener after alcohol, garlic or onions.

Decoctions and infusions

When it comes to concentrated decoctions and infusions of parsley? supporters of traditional and official medicine are often irreconcilable. The former base most therapeutic procedures on decoctions and infusions, the latter, as a rule, are categorically against the independent use of any parsley extracts, pointing out their danger to health (for more details on the risks of using concentrates, see the "Contraindications" section). Therefore, the recipes below are given, first of all, for example, and not for uncontrolled reproduction.

- **An example of the use of a decoction for urological problems.** Large amounts of water are used in such preparations, because it is important to reduce the concentration of urine and maximize the removal of waste products from the urinary tract. To prepare the product, take parsley root (1 pc.), Grind it together with herbs and boil for 30 minutes in a liter of water. Apply 100 ml twice a day. If the seeds of a plant are prepared in a similar way, then their decoction is drunk in a teaspoon twice a day, washed down with 2 glasses of water.
- **An example of the treatment of prostatitis.** The fresh root of the plant is finely chopped and poured with boiling water at the rate of 1 tbsp. l of raw materials per 100 ml. water. The remedy is infused for 10-12 hours, filtered and taken 1 tbsp. l. four times a day half an hour before meals. "Winter" dry parsley root for the same purposes is taken at the rate of 4 tsp. per 100 ml. water. The raw material is poured with boiling water in a thermos and infused for 8-10 hours. Take the mixture in the same way - 1 tbsp. l. half an hour before meals. The course lasts 2-2.5 months.
- **An example of the correction of menstrual manifestations.** In case of painful and / or untimely menstruation, parsley seeds (4 tsp) are poured into 250 ml of water and boiled for a quarter of an hour over very low heat. After cooling and filtering, the remedy is 1 tbsp. l. taken 5 times a day between meals.
- **An example of the removal of edema of a cardiovascular nature.** Cold infusion is prepared from parsley root. To do this, crushed roots and leaves (1 tablespoon) are poured with warm water (250 ml) and infused in this form for 8 hours. An infusion is taken three times a day, 1 tbsp. l. It is important not to forget that in case of cardiac edema, a herbal remedy based on parsley cannot replace synthetic drugs and cardiac glycosides. It is considered only as part of a complex of adjuvant therapy.

in oriental medicine

In Chinese Traditional Medicine, parsley is rated +1 on the Yin-Yang food scale (from -3 to +3, respectively), meaning it is considered a very balanced food with minimal Yang value. It is the products of the -1 / +1 groups that Chinese doctors advise eating as the basis for any obvious imbalance with a predominance of one of the principles.

At the same time, being part of folk medicines, parsley is used for almost the same indications as in traditional medicine of other peoples of the world:

- With violations of bile formation, bile excretion and congestion in the gastrointestinal tract with symptoms of pain and heaviness in the right hypochondrium, indigestion, nausea, vomiting.
- In diseases of the urinary and reproductive systems with metabolic disorders. Among such pathologies are prostatitis, menstrual irregularities, loss of the ability to contract the uterus (atony), urolithiasis, decreased diuresis.
- With edema provoked by diseases of the cardiovascular system (heart failure, decompensated heart disease, etc.).

In addition, parsley is prescribed for an excess or lack of vitamins, obesity, diabetes, muscular dystrophy. Outwardly, parsley is applied for pediculosis (its decoctions and juice remove lice), as well as for the occurrence of skin diseases provoked by malnutrition of tissues.

In scientific research

Today, the potential of parsley is being tested by researchers around the world. And often this plant becomes the object of research, precisely because of its centuries-old reputation in traditional medicine.

- **A diet including parsley has been shown to be effective in reversing gastric damage caused by oxidative stress [2].**

Because parsley is rich in antioxidants (flavonoids, carotenoids, and ascorbic acid), it has been tested for its ability to prevent oxidative stress, which plays a major role in the pathogenesis of gastric damage. The plant in the diet was compared with the efficacy of the anti-ulcer lansoprazole (LPZ) in the same diet, as well as with a diet without any experimental inclusions.

Male laboratory rats (40 animals) were divided into five groups (with the addition to the three listed also of the control group and the group of animals that did not experience dietary restrictions at the same level of oxidative stress). To create stressful conditions, the animals were subjected to starvation (for 72 hours) and exposure to cold in an immobilized state (8 hours).

In all animals, except for the control group, damage to the gastric mucosa was recorded, but in animals from the "stress + parsley" and "stress + LPZ" groups, the level of oxidative stress and fat peroxidation markers in the studied tissues was significantly lower. Thanks to parsley, the average level of glutathione, which exhibits antioxidant properties in cells, and the superoxide dismutase enzyme, which is characterized by similar manifestations, increased.

- **Precursors (precursor molecules) were isolated from parsley and dill seeds, from which, in turn, substances were synthesized that inhibited the growth of cancer cells [3].**

Russian scientists have developed a cheaper (due to the availability of raw materials) method for obtaining precursors, and have found a one and a half times shorter (than existed before) route for synthesizing an antimyotic called glaciopianin A. The therapeutic effect of this substance and several of its structural analogues were tested on rapidly dividing embryonic cells sea urchins and on human cells of cancers of various types: colon, prostate and breast, lung carcinoma, ovary, melanoma.

The results of the study showed that the most effective (compared to similar antimyotics) was the substance from the seeds of greens (parsley and dill), which showed anti-cancer activity against melanoma. At the same time, glaziopianin did not have a significant effect on blood cells.

- **Parsley methanol extract has shown biological activity against human melanoma A375 [4].**

In another study, the anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antitumor potential of Romanian parsley extract against A375 melanoma was compared with chamomile and celery extracts. The results showed that although all extracts were rich in polyphenolic compounds and flavonoids and could generate free radical scavenging capacity, only parsley extract had significant pro-apoptotic potential against A375 human melanoma cells. At the same time, unlike other tested substances, parsley extract did not suppress the reproduction of dendritic cells, which play an important role in the regulation of innate and acquired immune responses.

- **In experiments on laboratory animals, parsley extract has been shown to be effective in the treatment of type 1 diabetes mellitus [5].**

In an experiment on diabetic and healthy rats, scientists tested the effect of two plant extracts, among which was parsley extract. The effect of the extracts was evaluated by several parameters at once: body weight, plasma glucose, insulin, total antioxidant capacity (TAC), the level of malondialdehyde (MDA - an oxidation marker), etc.

As a result, it was found that parsley extract significantly reduced mean plasma glucose and a marker of fat peroxidation (MDA), and markedly increased mean plasma insulin and total antioxidant capacity (TAC). In parallel, an apparent increase in pancreatic weight and size of the islets of Langerhans was recorded in those groups that received plant extracts.

Unfortunately, not all studies confirm the effectiveness of the studied product, even if there are optimistic assumptions. For example, Brazilian scientists evaluated the antibacterial potential of parsley and rosemary against bacteria that cause urinary tract infections. They concluded that the use of crude extracts of parsley leaves and stems did not lead to satisfactory results in the suppression of the activity of most of the studied bacteria. Although a moderate antimicrobial effect has been found against some microorganisms [6].

Weight regulation

By itself, parsley is a low-calorie food containing about 30-40 kcal / 100 g. However, in nutrition this is a dependent product - you cannot build a mono-diet on it. Therefore, parsley is considered in weight loss programs, first of all, as an auxiliary nutrient that helps a person to receive the necessary amount of healthy substances.

So, parsley is part of a slimming cocktail called "Lightness of Princesses": 250 ml of mineral water are mixed with gruel from ground parsley (20 g), dill (20 g), cucumber without peel (1 piece of medium size). The juice of half a lemon is also often added to the mixture. It is believed that in the absence of contraindications, such a cocktail can be drunk up to 1 liter per day.

In addition, parsley can also affect weight as a diuretic: it removes swelling and helps to reduce salt intake without losing the taste of food. Finally, parsley activates digestion and metabolism, which, in turn, also contributes to weight control.

In cooking

In order to correctly "read recipes" for dishes with parsley, you must first figure out what kind of plant the authors of these recipes have in mind. As a rule, parsley is divided into two main subspecies:

- **Root parsley** is a plant with a thickened, fleshy root that has fragrant yellowish flesh. It is sometimes referred to as "white root" in recipes, and is used in much the same way as other root vegetables. They make stews, sauté, carpaccio from it, add it to salads and soups, stew and salt it, and use it when cooking fish. In chopped form, after sautéing, the root is added to soups and broths. To improve the color and make the broth more fragrant, the fresh root is often simply halved and baked without oil until a brown crust forms.

A. Averchenko's story "The Poem of a Hungry Man" describes a method of cooking horse parsley as a side dish for fried fish. There, the root crop was simply cut into pieces and deep-fried for a short time. Such a side dish is suitable not only for fish, but also for chicken or veal.

- **Leaf parsley** is a plant with developed "tops" and hard thin "roots". Its subspecies - Neapolitan parsley - is distinguished by very fragrant greens, and the leaves of the curly parsley subspecies, although less fragrant, look spectacular in a dish as a decoration. Plant greens are often added to cottage cheese, scrambled eggs, butter sandwich butter, pancakes, pies, meat cutlets, minced meat for dumplings.

Dried parsley can easily replace pepper, salt and other spices. In order not to forget about the alternative for everyday use, write, finely grind dried parsley and put it in a pepper shaker. True, when dried, the specific spicy smell partially disappears.

In salted form, greens are more often used in the absence of fresh shoots, adding it to stews, broths and minced meats. However, due to the fact that vitamins are destroyed when going into the brine, this is considered a less useful way to use the product. Although, for the smell, parsley umbrellas are willingly added to homemade marinades and pickles.

In some national dishes, parsley can become one of the key ingredients. In the Middle East, tabbouleh salad is prepared, in which, in addition to parsley, you can find bulgur, tomatoes, onions (garlic), mint, seasoned with olive oil and lemon juice. In French persilade sauce, finely chopped parsley is also mixed with garlic and olive oil, while in Italian gremolata, the plant's greens are combined with garlic and lemon juice or zest. In this combination, parsley neutralizes the smell of garlic, and the citrus component retains the spicy smell.

Parsley seeds are almost never used in cooking, since the high content of essential oils gives a strong bitterness to the finished dish.

In cosmetology

In cosmetologists, infusions and decoctions of parsley roots (sometimes mixed with lemon juice, sometimes in pure form) are known as one of the most popular means for whitening the face - removing freckles, age spots, tan marks.

Another area where a decoction of parsley is considered especially effective is the elimination of the effects of insect bites (mosquitoes, wasps, bees, etc.). For these purposes, green gruel or parsley juice is also often used, which are applied to the affected area of the skin in the form of a compress that eliminates itching, pain, redness, and swelling. But, since cockerel extracts themselves can cause allergic inflammation, before use, a test application of the decoction should be made on a small area of the skin (for example, behind the ear).

In home cosmetology, with the help of a mask of parsley ground into gruel, they solve the problems of fine wrinkles (especially around the eyes), as well as acne. There is a legend that Thais of Athens loved to "wear" such a rejuvenating and refreshing mask - hetaera and the second wife of the ruler of Egypt Ptolemy I, who had previously become famous for her relationship with Alexander the Great.

Today, less often, and in the old days, various parts of parsley were often used to increase hair strength. Back in 1788, in the Economic Store publication, a recipe was published by the then-famous agronomist A. Bolotov, who recommended that "so that the hair does not come out of the head" grind parsley seeds into powder and "powder much" with such vegetable powder hair for several days.

Dangerous properties of parsley and contraindications

Parsley concentrates (extracts, decoctions, infusions, oils) are contraindicated in inflammatory diseases of the kidneys and acute inflammation of the bladder. (First of all, we are talking about essential oil,

decoctions and infusions of seeds and roots). Apiol contained in essential oils in high uncontrolled concentrations can damage the tissues of the excretory organs. And an excess of oxalates can cause the growth of stones in the gallbladder and kidneys.

Even fresh parsley is not recommended for therapeutic diets No. 1, 1A, 1B in cases of exacerbation of gastric ulcer and duodenal ulcer. Exclude greens from diet number 4 for diarrhea caused by intestinal diseases. Limit on table number 7 with exacerbation of renal diseases.

It is also forbidden to use large quantities and concentrated preparations of different parts of parsley for epilepsy, salt metabolism disorders, gout, oxaluria due to the content of purines and oxalic acid in the plant.

Special attention should be paid to the use of parsley during pregnancy. The main danger to the gestating fetus is apiol, which is a strong antispasmodic. In concentrated form, it can provoke uterine contractions and abortion, even in food use.

Often, the antispasmodic property of parsley in terminating an unwanted pregnancy is used consciously. (As an abortifacient, parsley has been used since antiquity.) However, independent attempts to provoke a miscarriage can lead to the death of a woman.

In the form of ordinary shoots, parsley does not pose a serious danger. There is little apiol in greens (in the leaves of the plant there are 10-12 times less essential oils than in the seeds) and it is rather difficult to exceed the limits of the permissible amount. Nevertheless, pregnant women are still advised not to abuse apiol-containing food and limit the consumption of fresh parsley leaves to 10 grams.

In addition to apiol, essential oils contain myristicin (a derivative of elemicin), which is considered a psychoactive substance that can affect the clarity of consciousness. Because of it, in 2011, the fruits and essential oil of the plant were banned in Russia for use in the production of dietary supplements and were included in the list of parts of the plant that contain narcotic substances. The situation with the ban was repeatedly commented on by representatives of the drug control of the Russian Federation, focusing on the fact that parsley is not a drug and its circulation is not limited.

Finally, another health threat posed by most garden plants is the contamination of parsley leaves with various pathogenic microorganisms and helminths. Therefore, greens collected from open ground are recommended to be washed as thoroughly as possible before use. This is especially important because fresh leaves are not always heat treated before being put on the table. In this sense, greenhouse plants growing on hydroponics in an isolated environment are much safer without the risk of animal feces, acid rain drops and other negative factors.

Selection and storage

Before you choose parsley, you should decide on its purpose. Stems with broad, large leaves are likely to be "Neapolitan" ("Italian") in appearance and will give a complex rich flavor in the dish. In order to feel it at the time of purchase, you should smell the stem at the cut point, where the smell is stronger.

The appearance of parsley should be "healthy", and the leaves should have a uniformly saturated color: without spots, dust, mold, parasitic organisms, lethargy, bruising, yellowness, stickiness. The cut points should be without a characteristic dry film and not dry. But there should also be no drops of moisture on the leaves (or packaging). Since parsley is bought in bunches, these rules apply to all stems in a bunch.

Fresh stems can be kept at home for up to 5-7 days if parsley is wrapped in a damp cloth or placed in the refrigerator in a plastic bag at a temperature of about 1-2°C. Parsley roots are also usually stored in the cold, covered with dry sand.

For a long time, fresh parsley is frozen with salt in oil. To do this, the greens are finely chopped, poured into molds, which are poured with oil, and put in the freezer. Frozen cubes are taken out as needed for seasoning broths or salads.

A more traditional way of harvesting parsley is to dry it. To do this, parsley greens are washed, large drops are shaken off, loosely tied into small bunches and hung in well-ventilated dry rooms in shaded corners. If the weather does not allow these conditions to be met and the storage places are too humid, then the parsley is dried in the oven at a temperature not exceeding 40-50 °C for better preservation of vitamins and essential oils. Small root crops for blanks are dried as a whole, and large ones are cut into 2-4 parts along the fibers. Fold the parsley prepared in this way in glass jars, tightly closing them with a lid.

Despite the ability to connect parsley to the solution of some economic problems, the main areas of its use still remain culinary and traditional medicine. A whole range of diseases associated with the urinary and genital areas, congestion in the gastrointestinal tract, bile formation, skin diseases can be treated thanks to parsley. And the successes of evidence-based medicine in recent years additionally demonstrate the hidden potential of this plant.

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Parsley - useful properties, composition and contraindications

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