

HERBAL REMEDIES

(Do not use if you are on prescription drugs)

ALOE

Family: Liliaceae

Genus and species: Aloe vera

Also known as: Barbados aloe, Curacao aloe

Medicinal Parts: The gel from the leaves, and the yellow juice extracted from the leaves' inner skin.

Properties and Uses: Excellent first aid treatment of burns, especially if the area had been flushed with cold water immediately after the burn occurred. Also used for wounds, scalds, scrapes, and sunburn. May help prevent infection in injured skin.

Preparation: Split a lower leaf from the plant and apply directly to the injury. Aloe gel is also available in bottles at many drug stores (chemist's).

Cautions: Do not take internally. Consult a physician if wounds/burns do not heal significantly within two weeks.

BALM

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: Melissa officinalis

Also known as: Lemon balm, melissa, sweet balm, cure-all

Medicinal Parts: Leaves

Properties and Uses: Most often used as a mild, natural tranquilizer. Also known to be useful in treating colic and fighting infection-causing bacteria in wounds. Lemon balm (one of my personal favorites) is a good herb for beginners because it is not only safe and tasty, it works noticeably! Have a cup of lemon balm tea when you're feeling "down" or "stressed out." Just in case you question whether its effects on you are imaginary, offer a cup to a friend or family member who's been showing signs of slight depression without discussing its "possible" medicinal effects. (A cup of lemon balm tea is harmless and tastes good.)

Preparation: Infusion for tranquilizer. To help treat wounds, make a hot compress using 2 teaspoons of leaves per cup of hot water. Boil 10 minutes, strain, and apply with a clean cloth.

Cautions: Anyone with a thyroid condition should first consult a physician concerning balm's thyrotropin-inhibiting effect.

BARBERRY AND OREGON GRAPE

Family: Berberidaceae

Genus and species: Berberis vulgaris (barberry) and Berberis aquifolium or Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon grape)

Also known as: Barberry, jaundice berry, pepperidge bush, sow-berry

Medicinal Parts: Root bark

Properties and Uses: The berberine in barberry has remarkable infection-fighting properties. Studies show it kills microorganisms that cause wound infections, diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, giardiasis, urinary tract and vaginal yeast infections. Barberry has a traditional (and effective) use in treating conjunctivitis (pinkeye).

Preparation: Decoction, compress

Cautions: Do not administer to children under two.

BUCHU

Family: Rutaceae

Genus and species: Barosma betulina, B. crenulata, B. serratifolia

Also known as: Bookoo, buku, bucky, bucco

Medicinal Parts: Leaves

Properties and Uses: Most often used as a diuretic

Preparation: Infusion. Capsules are available in many health food stores and pharmacies.

Cautions: Increase potassium intake (bananas and fresh vegetables) when using any diuretic, including buchu.

CARAWAY

Family: Umbelliferae

Genus and species: Carum carvi

Also known as: Carum

Medicinal Parts: Seeds ("fruits")

Properties and Uses: Digestive aid; also relieves menstrual cramps.

Preparation: Fresh seeds may be mixed into food or chewed a teaspoonful at a time. A pleasant infusion may be made after bruising or crushing the seeds.

Cautions: None known.

CASCARA SAGRADA

Family: Rhamnaceae

Genus and species: Rhamnus purshiana

Also known as: Cascara, sacred bark, chittern bark

Medicinal Parts: Dried, aged bark

Properties and Uses: Constipation

Preparation: Decoction

Cautions: Never use for more than two weeks. The bark must be stored for a year before use. The fresh bark contains chemicals that can cause severe intestinal cramps.

COLTSFOOT

Family: Compositae

Genus and species: Tussilago farfara

Also known as: Cough plant, coughwort, horse foot

Medicinal Parts: Leaves, flowers

Properties and Uses: Coltsfoot has been a cough suppressant mainstay of Asian, and European herbalists for over 2,000 years. A German study showed that the herb increases the activity of microscopic hairs in the breathing tubes that move mucus out of the respiratory tract.

Preparation: Infusion. (Note: coltsfoot used to be smoked in order to obtain positive results until recently.)

Cautions: In very large quantities, may cause liver damage. Anyone with a history of alcoholism or liver disease should not use coltsfoot.

COMFREY

Family: Boraginaceae

Genus and species: *Symphytum officinale*

Also known as: Bruisewort, boneset, knitbone

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and roots

Properties and Uses: Wound healing and casts for minor broken bones

Preparation: Ointment, Poultice

Cautions: Do not use the ointment on dirty wounds; comfrey will heal the wound so quickly that dirt and pus could be trapped. Do not use internally without having researched further.

CRANBERRY

Family: Ericaceae

Genus and species: *Vaccinium macrocarpon* or *Oxycoccus quadripetalus*

Also known as: No other common names.

Medicinal Parts: Juice from the berries

Properties and Uses: Urinary tract infection prevention.

Preparation: Cranberry juice is available in most supermarkets. Pure cranberry juice is too acidic and sour to drink.

Cautions: If urinary tract infection develops, consult your physician. Antibiotics are usually necessary.

ECHINACEA

Family: Compositae

Genus and species: *Echinacea angustifolia*, *E. purpurea*

Also known as: Purple coneflower

Medicinal Parts: The root

Properties and Uses: Infectious diseases (colds, flu, tonsillitis, bronchitis, tuberculosis, meningitis, wounds, abscesses, pertussis, and ear infections); may help preserve white blood cells and protect radiation patients from infection; rheumatoid arthritis.

Preparation: Decoction or tincture.

Cautions: For children over 2 and adults over 65, start with a small dosage and adjust if necessary.

ELECAMPANE

Family: Compositae

Genus and species: *Inula helenium*

Also known as: Wild sunflower, velvet dock, horseheal

Medicinal Parts: Root

Properties and Uses: Intestinal parasites, lowering blood pressure

Preparation: Decoction or tincture

Cautions: Begin with low-strength dosages in children over 2 and adults over 65.

EPHEDRA

Family: Ephedraceae

Genus and species: *Ephedra sinica*, *E. vulgaris*, *E. nevadensis*, *E. antisyphilitica*

Also known as: Ma huang, Mormon tea

Medicinal Parts: Stems, branches

Properties and Uses: Decongestant. *E. sinica* has the most potential as a decongestant; the other species have milder effects.

Preparation: Decoction, tincture

Cautions: Do not use if suffering from heart disease, diabetes, glaucoma, or an overactive thyroid gland. May cause insomnia.

FEVERFEW

Family: Compositae

Genus and species: *Matricaria parthenium*, *Chrysanthemum parthenium*, *Tanacetum parthenium*

Also known as: Febrifuge plant, wild quinine, bachelor's button

Medicinal Parts: Leaves

Properties and Uses: Migraine headaches

Preparation: Chew two fresh leaves a day or take a capsule containing 85 milligrams of leaf material. Use as an infusion to help lower blood pressure.

Cautions: May inhibit blood clotting; do not use if taking anticoagulant medication. May cause mouth sores. Feverfew suppresses migraines but does not prevent them. Migraines typically return once usage is stopped.

GARLIC

Family: Amaryllidaceae

Genus and species: *Allium sativum*

Also known as: Stinking rose, heal-all

Medicinal Parts: Bulb

Properties and Uses: Antibiotic; reduces blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels; eliminates lead and other toxic heavy metals from the body.

Preparation: Cook with garlic; may also be used as an infusion.

Cautions: Do not use if you have a blood clotting disorder; do not use garlic if it causes a rash.

GINGER

Family: Zingiberaceae

Genus and species: *Zingiber officinale*

Also known as: Jamaican ginger, African ginger, Cochin ginger

Medicinal Parts: Root

Properties and Uses: Motion or morning sickness

Preparation: Infusion. Drink about 30 minutes before traveling.

Cautions: Do not use while pregnant if you have a history of miscarriages.

GOLDENSEAL

Family: Ranunculaceae

Genus and species: *Hydrastis canadensis*

Also known as: Yellow root, Indian turmeric, jaundice root, eye balm, golden root

Medicinal Parts: Root and rhizome

Properties and Uses: Antibiotic; may also boost the immune system

Preparation: Infusion or tincture

Cautions: Should not be used by those with histories of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, glaucoma, or stroke. Goldenseal is difficult to grow, and it is expensive when available. Try the less expensive barberry first.

HOREHOUND

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Marrubium vulgare*

Also known as: Hoarhound, white horehound, marrubium

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flower tops

Properties and Uses: Colds, flu, cough. Horehound is an excellent expectorant.

Preparation: Infusion

Cautions: Should be avoided by those with heart conditions.

HYSSOP

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Hyssopus officinalis*

Also known as: No other common names.

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers

Properties and Uses: Herpes treatment; cough remedy.

Preparation: Compress (for herpes), infusion or tincture (for cough)

Cautions: No reports of harm due to hyssop use; however, make sure that what you are using is *H. officinalis*, not *Gratiola officinalis* or species of the genus *Agastache*, as these should not be ingested.

MINTS

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Mentha piperita* (peppermint) *M. spicata* (spearmint)

Also known as: Many other types of mint.

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers

Properties and Uses: Digestive aid, possible decongestant (peppermint)

Preparation: Infusion

Cautions: Peppermint should not be given to children under the age of 2; use diluted spearmint instead.

MOTHERWORT

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Leonurus cardiaca*

Also known as: Lion's tail, heartwort

Medicinal Parts: Leaves, flowers, stems

Properties and Uses: Lowering blood pressure, mild tranquilizer

Preparation: Infusion -- add sugar or honey to improve taste.

Cautions: Those with blood clotting disorders should avoid this herb.

PENNYROYAL

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Mentha pulegium* (European); *Hedeoma pulegioides* (American)

Also known as: Fleabane, tickweed, squawmint

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flower tops

Properties and Uses: Pennyroyal's main talent is in repelling insects, fleas in particular. Rub fresh, crushed plant around the area to be treated, including pets' beds. As a mint, pennyroyal is also useful as an infusion to aid digestion and heartburn.

Preparation: See above for flea control. Infusion for digestive aid.

Cautions: Do not use internally in concentrated oil form.

ROSE

Family: Rosaceae

Genus and species: *Rosa canina*, *R. rugosa*, *R. centifolia*

Also known as: Hipberry

Medicinal Parts: Fruits (Hips)

Properties and Uses: High in Vitamin C, rose hips are useful in preventing a variety of ailments -- scurvy and the common cold in particular.

Preparation: Infusion of 2-3 teaspoons of dried, crushed, hips per cup of water.

Cautions: None known.

SAGE

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Salvia officinalis*

Also known as: Spanish, Greek, or Dalmatian sage

Medicinal Parts: Leaves

Properties and Uses: Traditionally used to treat canker sores, bleeding gums, and sore throat.

Preparation: Infusion, which one may drink and/or gargle.

Cautions: Slight possibility of inflammation. If mouth becomes irritated, discontinue use.

ST. JOHN'S WORT

Family: Hypericaceae

Genus and species: *Hypericum perforatum*

Also known as: Hypericum

Medicinal Parts: Leaves and flowers

Properties and Uses: Antidepressant; possible AIDS treatment (being studied now). This herb has been clinically proven to provide safe relief from depression. It is widely available in health food stores and even in supermarkets and drug stores in the US.

Preparation: Infusion for depression and possibly to stimulate the immune system: 3-4 cups per day. Other alternatives are capsules and extracts.

Cautions: AVOID SUN while using this herb; contains photosensitizing agents. Overuse may cause diarrhea or nausea.

SKULLCAP

Family: Labiatae

Genus and species: *Scutellaria lateriflora*

Also known as: Quaker bonnet, helmet flower, mad dog weed

Medicinal Parts: Leaves

Properties and Uses: Tranquilizer, sedative -- first aid for shock.