

Natural First Aid – Herbal Clinic Swansea

An understanding of how to care for oneself and family during illness gives security and peace of mind. By becoming familiar with the herbs around us we discover a wealth of medicinal substances which we can learn to rely on. We have within reach the tools we can effectively use to treat many ailments. We can choose to take that first step to empowerment, to begin to take control of our own health and guide our own healing.

Remedies

Minor burns and sunburn: Lavender essential oil (*Lavandula officinalis*) applied neat to the affected area brings immediate relief to pain and inflammation, allowing the burn to heal quickly. Another valuable herb is Aloe vera which has the unique ability to help skin renew itself by stimulating cellular metabolism, thereby promoting oxygen exchange and increasing the absorption of nutrients. Keep a plant on the windowsill, they are easy to grow and can be used whenever needed. Snap off one of the fleshy leaves at the base, slice off the outer skin on one side, and place the gel side of the leaf against the burn. Cover the aloe with roller gauze and surgical tape to keep it firmly in place.

Colds and sore throats: Listen to the signals your body gives, we often feel a little run down, tired or irritable at the onset of a cold, this is the time to act! Drink plenty of warm water and take a hot foot-bath with a tablespoon of Colman's mustard powder to enhance the circulation. This will increase the body's energy and boost the immune system. For sore throats place 1-2 tablespoons of fresh sage (*Salvia officinalis*) into a mug, pour on boiling water and cover so that the steam (and medicinal essential oils) cannot escape. Allow to infuse for 10 minutes, then drink with a little manuka honey. Sage is specific for clearing viral and bacterial infections from the throat and sinus and can be drunk frequently until the problem clears. Sage also has an effect on the female reproductive system, proving useful for the hot flushes of menopause, though it is not advised during pregnancy and breast-feeding.

Nausea and bloating: Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*) has anti-emetic and carminative properties making it useful for indigestion, nausea and morning sickness. Use one teaspoon of the fresh grated root and infuse in hot water in a covered mug and sip slowly. Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) can be grown in pots in the garden and a few leaves chewed or an infusion made to calm the stomach and ease wind.

Accidents and injuries: Homeopathic Arnica montana is a vital remedy to keep at hand to arrest bleeding and help with shock in the event of an accident. Rescue Remedy is a Bach flower remedy formulation that calms and reassures assisting with the psychological trauma of an injury.

Wounds: Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) is a strong antiseptic and antibiotic, both topically and internally. Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginica*) can be used externally to reduce bleeding as its astringent properties bring tissue and blood vessels closer together.

Stings: Lavender essential oil and aloe vera can again be useful here to cool the heat and reduce inflammation. Also of value is homeopathic Apis (dilution made from a bee sting), which can be used to treat anything with symptoms of redness and swelling made worse by heat.

© Extracted from a weekly radio broadcast 2010

Published in 'Aura' magazine in August 2011
<http://www.herbalclinic-swansea.co.uk>