

Herbs for Kids

By Amy Darling

Kitchen Wisdom: Even if you have never considered purchasing herbs or natural remedies for your family, there are some simple tried-and-true options sitting right in your kitchen!

A pinch of **Fennel Seeds**-for sore bellies, to aid digestion, calm hiccups, ease gas

GARLIC-as soon as you hear of the neighbor or friend coming down with an illness, chop up a garlic clove, and put it on a piece of bread with olive oil or butter. Eat to ward off what's coming! (My kids have been known to eat a clove straight! Nibble by nibble.)

Ginger powder-1/4 t. to a cup of w/m water-for nausea

A bit of **cinnamon** or **cardamom** in warm milk for calming an over-excited, restless, wakeful child (maybe a bit of honey...mmm)

Peppermint candy-car-sickness, nausea, gas

Molasses (blackstrap is best)-for constipation

Honey- (not for those under 2!!!) a tsp. a day of LOCAL honey (gathered within 50 miles of your house) can ease seasonal allergies; good for burns, minor scrapes, bee stings

Black Tea- for diarrhea; to stop a bleed

"Elixir of Life"- an easy remedy for a dehydrated person is 1 t. honey, 1 t. lemon juice and pinch of sea salt in 4 oz. warm water

Salt –add a little salt to water for stuffy noses; gargle for sore throats

Baking Soda: make a paste with a little water and apply to a bee sting

Apple Cider Vinegar: calms a sunburn; relieves a bee sting

Lavender Oil (angustifolia is superior for burns!)-you may not have this one already, but go get it. It is one of the only essential oils you can apply safely directly to skin without a carrier oil, and it is ridiculously versatile. It is 'anti-everything' - from bacterial to viral to fungal to pain'. A little goes a long way. We use it almost daily! Rub on temples for headache; use as aromatherapy (in a burner) for sleep or relaxation; add 4-5 drops to bath for calming emotions or itchiness; put a few drops in olive oil to massage the legs of the child with growing pains or sore muscles after a day of hard play!; for a burn- immediately get affected area under cold water and then apply the oil-act fast!; for those of you with girls...a few drops in a little olive oil for 'yeasty' symptoms (or a few drops in a squeeze bottle of warm water applied while sitting on toilet)-that plus some acidophilus ('bum drops' in my house..I know, classy) will make all the difference; put on bug bites or bee stings

How to become a Mama Herbalist

Seasonal Allergies: Make a concoction of equal parts Nettle (antihistamine) and Elderflower (anti-phlegm) tea with a tsp. of local honey (combats local allergens).

Growing pains: Catnip tea-It is filled with all those minerals that need replenishing; have after dinner to soothe and calm the pains and aid sleep.

Colic: for really little ones, mom can drink fennel or chamomile tea and then nurse. Or a T. chamomile tea for baby.

Teething: Pop equal parts Chamomile and Lavender flowers in a securely fastened muslin bag. Let 'em go for it! Empty, clean and replenish as needed. (Supervise in case bag comes loose.)

Stuffy Nose: Chamomile steam (1/2 oz or so to 2 qts boiling water, cover and steep 20 minutes, towel over head—with a little one you may need to make a little tent and go under with them!! You can leave tea covered on stove and reheat/reuse for this purpose for a day or two.

Sore tummies: Equal parts Chamomile and Catnip tea OR Peppermint Tea (Spearmint is milder and better for under 3s); I make a GORGEOUS peppermint/spearmint glycerite that tastes exactly like Wrigley's gum.-a great idea for car-sick kids... ; candied ginger

Cold and Flu: 'Cold Tea'-equal parts elderflower, yarrow, peppermint (or spearmint), and rosehips (1 rosehip has the Vitamin C of 3 lemons!!!!- Things from nature belong together-isn't a rosehip lovelier than a Vitamin C tablet for your child?); Lemon balm is also antiviral.

Everyone's heard of Echinacea (dose often and as soon as it starts!)

Garlic, of course (a simple garlic sandwich!)

Elderberry Syrup, to stay well or get well.

Recipe: 1 c. fresh or ½ c. dried Elderberries and 3 c. water, simmered ½ hr. Strain spent berries. Add 1 c. local honey or simple syrup (¾ c. sugar boiled with ½ c. water). Take 1 t. every 2-3 hrs if sick or 1 T./day to stay well during cold and flu season. Can add to some hot water if you are concerned about microbes or to cut flavor-tastes like raisin juice! Keeps 3 weeks or more in fridge.

Here is an alternative recipe I have not tried but sounds nice:

½ c. dried or 1 c. fresh Elderberries

1 cinnamon stick, 5 cloves, 1 T. freshly grated ginger (all are warming herbs which is nice)

2 c. water

Simmer about 20 minutes. Strain. Add 1 c. local honey.

Headache: Equal parts Lavender flower and Peppermint tea

Sore throat, sour stomach, UTI...all mucous membrane issues: Marshmallow root syrup: Recipe: Make a decoction of Marshmallow root (put an ounce in a mason jar and cover with 4-6 oz cold water-let sit at least 4-6

hrs or overnight). Strain out 2 oz. liquid-will be thick and slimy and super good for you... and add to simple syrup (3/4 c. sugar and ½ c. water simmered til sugar dissolves). Refrigerate. Take a tsp. as needed.

Moodiness, sadness, grumpiness: Lemon balm tea (or leaves munched straight from garden). Lemon Balm is the BEST 'gladdening herb'. I make the tincture and the glycerite (Girls are moody...I have 4.). If this is something you end up using a lot, I recommend it.

Happy room spray: Take a 2 oz. bottle and fill with rose water (rose is antidepressant). Add 40 drops lavender oil and 40 drops orange oil- lavender soothes, orange is antidepressant. Shake and sit 2 hrs. Spray the room the child is in. Acknowledge their feelings. (If you have a girl, you could make a wee perfume with rose water and a drop of lavender...)

Sunlight: "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy!"

Fresh air and exercise: "Clear away the cobwebs!"

Insomnia OR Too much energy: equal parts Chamomile and Catnip tea (I like to make a glycerite for bedtimes b/c if someone doesn't want to go to sleep they can play the 'make me some tea' card; Glycerite on hand is quicker and easier! However, if difficulty going to sleep is chronic, the tea can become part of the after dinner routine. e.g. tea, bath, brush teeth, story, lullaby...sleep)

Earache: Mullein oil, 3 drops in ear, lay for ½ hr with cotton ball on outside of ear.

Splinters, cuts, scrapes: Plantain is the best!

How to make a Plantain spit poultice: (and your kids will love this): find some clean plantain. Put in mouth, chew it up, spit it out and put on cut, scrape, bee sting, splinter...

It will magically draw out something that shouldn't be in there- whether it is a foreign object or insect venom or dirt!

Plantain also tends to stick to skin so you can make a natural plantain bandaid from spring to fall (no spit needed)!

Gather in the spring, dry and save for when it isn't around in the winter! Crumble leaves, add just enough water to make it wet-BAM-you have a poultice! Apply directly to skin.

Other:

I also love homeopathic arnica tablets and arnica cream.

I keep Rescue Remedy on hand for little upsets.

It's nice having an aloe plant around for burns, scrapes and pinches (We know how that happens! Siblings, anyone?).

Best things to plant for a kid-friendly **medicinal herb garden:** Lemon Balm, Spearmint, Catnip, chamomile, lavender, Calendula, edible flowers like Nasturtium, Johnny Jump-ups, Day Lilies, and of course, Honeysuckle..they can pretend they are little hummingbirds.

Best things for kids to learn how to identify and '**graze**' on or use: Dandelions (cleansing-the perfect spring tonic!), sour grass, Plantain ('spit poultice'-not dangerous to eat-a nourishing herb), edibles from their herb garden (excellent for making 'soups and salads' as part of outdoor play), wild berries like huckle, blue, black and strawberry.

Medicine Making

How to make a **tea**: A generous tsp. to a cup of boiled water. Steep 10-15 minutes. Strain. (I love the teaball spoon for simplicity's sake. They are around \$2 at Mountain Rose Herbs).

Tea Dosages for kids:

Little Ones, 1T. up to 3X/day (remember, no honey for under 2s!)

3-6 yr old, ¼ c. 3X/day

6-10 yr. old ½ c. 3X/day

10-15 yr. old ¾ c. 3X/day

>15-adult 1 c. 3X day

2 good general **salves** to have:

Calendula salve-for cuts and scrapes and other booboos, diaper rash, a dry skin area

Comfrey salve-for bumps and bruises, strains and sprains

To make a salve, start by filling a BONE DRY pint jar ½ way with dry herb of choice (or fill to top with fresh herb of choice). Cover with oil of choice-olive or almond are good-, paper towel and jar ring. Stir daily for a week. Watch (may need to add more oil), and wait 3 weeks. Strain herb out. Heat 1 c. medicinal (yes, it is now medicinal!) oil gently on stove. Add 1 oz. beeswax. Melt. Remove from heat and add preservative of choice-maybe Vit. E oil and/or Lavender oil. Same technique applies for making lip balm but add a bit more bees wax (2 oz. is customary but I like it a bit softer/glossier so I add a bit less).

Making **tinctures and glycerites** is fun and easy! I don't want to overwhelm you so the teas and salves are a good place to start. Just ask me if you want to do more or check out some of the resources listed. Herbalism is addictive, and I am proud to be a mama herbalist!! I hope you catch the fever!

For supplies: your local herb store, or www.mountainroseherbs.com, www.bulkherbstore.com

For plants: your local greenhouse or www.zackwoodsherbs.com

For online learning or to get the Wildcraft game: www.learningherbs.com or www.herbmentor.com (also has free e-books); www.avivaromm.com also has a free e-book.

Books, to name a few:

Green's The Herbal Medicine-Maker's Handbook

Tierra's A Kid's Herb Book

Bruton-Seal and Seals Backyard Medicine

Fritchey's Practical Herbalism

*No Yarrow or Catnip for pregnant moms. Please watch your child with any new herb. As with any food or medicine, allergic or adverse reactions can occur (e.g. if you are prone to allergies to the aster family, avoid Yarrow). Please educate yourself independently so you can use herbs confidently and safely!