

First aid for family health

Homeopathy is a safe and effective system of medicine, which can be used with confidence for treating the whole family. It is simple to use, has no taste or smell and has no side effects. Every home should have a simple, readily accessible first aid box containing sticking plasters, cotton wool and bandages. The addition of a few homeopathic medicines, available from most high street chemists and health food shops, means you can deal quickly and effectively with any accidents in the home as well as common ailments such as the sudden onset of cold symptoms or exam nerves.

*Every accident, whether great or small, is accompanied by some degree of shock. Keeping the person warm is vital, but **Arnica** 30c will also help. It is especially useful when the person pushes help away, insisting that they'll be all right in a minute, but it's also useful for panic. Arnica will help bruises and sprains. It is useful for tired, aching, over-worked muscles after too much gardening or unaccustomed exercise. You can also take Arnica after dental treatment when there is bruising. Whether it is a fall, an accident or surgery, Arnica is the first remedy to think of to reduce bruising and speed up the body's own healing process. Gentle massage with **Arnica cream** relieves swellings but do not use it if the skin is broken.*

Calendula tincture made into a lotion (1 teaspoon to a pint of cooled boiled water) should be used to bathe and clean an open wound. It inhibits the proliferation of germs so sepsis will not form in a wound properly cleaned with Calendula. Don't forget to give Arnica internally for shock and bruising while the wound is being cleaned and dressed. **Ledum** 6c is invaluable for puncture wounds, from nails or barbed wire for instance. It will quickly reduce the shooting and pricking pains. Use Ledum internally every 4 hours and clean and dress the wound with Calendula. Typically, a wound requiring Ledum feels numb, is cold to the touch but better for cold applications.

Some injuries are especially painful. Nerve-rich tissues such as the spine, fingers and toes will benefit from **Hypericum** 30c. It's the remedy to think of for fingers crushed in a car door, a heavy block falling on toes, or a fall affecting the spine or coccyx. It will also soothe pain in the coccyx after giving birth. Apply Hypericum tincture to bites and stings and wherever there is pain shooting up the limb from the site of a wound.

One of the most common injuries is a sprain - usually the wrist or ankle. Usually the joint remains functional but there will be pain and swelling. Rest is important and a support bandage will help to reduce the swelling. To bandage an ankle, start the bandage under the foot and wind it in a figure of eight pattern around the ankle and back around the foot, overlapping the bandage on each turn. Give Arnica for shock and bruising. After that give **Rhus. Tox** 6c - a wonderful remedy for stiffness. Use it also for rheumatism, especially where the joint is stiff to begin with and gradually improves with movement.

Burns and scalds are amongst the most common and the most painful of home injuries. Of course, if the burns are extensive, you will need to take the patient straight to your nearest Accident and Emergency unit, but give Arnica first for the shock. For simple burns that can be treated at home give the patient frequent sips of water to alleviate shock and to prevent fluid loss. Treat first with Arnica 30c (up to 3 doses) for the shock and bathe the burned area of skin with a Calendula lotion (one teaspoon to a pint of boiled water) to soothe the pain. It is useful to keep an Aloe Vera plant in your kitchen for small burns from the iron or oven. The leaves contain a cooling gel, which can be very soothing and healing to burned skin. It also relieves the pain by shutting out the air. Recovery from burns can be assisted by taking extra Vitamin C.

Pulsatilla is a great remedy to have in your first aid box: it's useful for the family's coughs and colds, for painful periods and for teething infants. A good clue for prescribing Pulsatilla is that the person can seem a bit weepy or clingy but always feels better for being out in the

fresh air. Pulsatilla 6c can help in gastric disturbances especially if the cause is pork, pastry or bad fish or meat. There will be nausea, a bad taste in the mouth and dryness, together with bloating of the stomach and colicky pains. The patient is without thirst, restless and better for having the windows open. **Nux Vomica** 6c is also a splendid remedy for poor digestion, especially when the cause is over-indulgence. It's a marvellous hangover remedy.

Quick treatment when a cold threatens can save the whole family a great deal of misery. **Arsenicum** 6c taken in half-hour doses at the very first sign of a cold may abort it altogether. Give **Aconite** instead (6c hourly for three doses) if the chill is due to waiting around in a cold wind for a late train or a bus. **Nux Vomica** colds also come on after exposure to cold winds with fluent coryza in the morning and blocked flow at night. The patient will be unable to get warm, irritable and impatient. Give Nux Vomica 6c every two hours. In young children, the early stages of colds or childhood illnesses may be accompanied by a fever for which a parent may think of using Calpol, but the homeopathic remedy of **Belladonna** 30c is a good substitute. The patient will be thirsty, the face will be flushed red and there may be a headache of a throbbing kind. Giving water with a little lemon juice to drink and gentle sponging with tepid water will also help to bring down a temperature.

Gelsemium 6c is useful for colds or early stages of flu' where the person is chilly with heavy, aching limbs. Keep Gelsemium handy for anticipatory anxiety and stage fright before exams, interviews or driving tests. The nervous Gelsemium patient will be shaking, and having to make frequent trips to the bathroom with diarrhoea and/or frequent urination. For people who lack confidence but usually perform well once they get into their stride, **Lycopodium** is the remedy. They become nervous before making a speech or making a presentation, even though they do it well when the moment comes. They like sweet things and when they are nervous their desire for chocolate may run away with them, so it's a good thing that Lycopodium is also a good remedy for indigestion with flatulence and irritability.

All remedies should be stored in a clean cool, dry place away from light, heat, electrical interference and strong smells. Do not keep your homeopathic remedies in the same box as aromatherapy oils, for example, or with any strong-smelling substance. Carefully stored, homeopathic remedies will last a long, long time. To give a dose, avoid touching the tablets by tipping a tablet into a spoon and then into the patient's mouth. Let the tablets dissolve slowly under the tongue. Remedies can be taken at any time of day but, ideally, allow a gap of at least 20 minutes away from food, drink or toothpaste. Discontinue treatment when the symptoms have abated and only repeat remedies when and if pain or other symptoms return. Homeopathy has remedies to treat all sorts of illnesses in the whole family from babyhood to old age. Home prescribing for the family can be very rewarding and usually your local professional Homeopath will be happy to give advice over the telephone if you are not sure which remedy to give but do visit a professional Homeopath when more serious or chronic conditions arise.

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