

WEDGROW HERBS

The quarterly newsletter from your local herbalist - Julie Dore
Articles, news, recipes and tips for a healthy you

JULY 2008

FREE

Welcome to the summer edition which includes information on herbal medicine for kids and herbal first aid

HERBAL KIDS

Children with their dynamic metabolism and uncomplicated medical histories respond well and quickly to herbal medicine. It provides a gentle and effective way to treat them without



overpowering or overloading their immature physiological systems. People have commented to me that no clinical trials have been done on herbs for children. Well the same applies to conventional medicine trials as it would be unethical - a child could not be deemed to have given consent. However collections of data of children taking "approved" medicines have been made and this has highlighted some issues. There have been well documented cases of where adult medicines when prescribed to children leading to serious problems, for example the use of certain anti-depressants causing suicidal tendencies. Usually adult doses are reduced and artificial colourings and flavourings are added to make them more palatable. This has included additives known to cause hyperactivity. Herbs, on the other hand, have been used for treating children for centuries to good effect and without serious side-effects so herbal medicine has had a very long field trial instead of medical trials.

Whilst adults usually get a bottle of horrible tasting brown tincture to take, there are lots of other ways herbal medicine can be used to treat children and babies. Even if tinctures are used the doses are so small that the alcohol content is minimal and is far less damaging than many artificial additives. However there

are many ways of using herbs and ingenious ways of getting a reluctant child to take them.

Crafty ways to hide the medicine:

- Add tincture drops or teas to fruit juices
- Use teas to make jellies
- Add powdered herbs to nut butters, mashed banana, yoghurt or any other paste
- Use teas in the bath or make an oatmeal scrub especially for skin complaints
- For breastfeeding babies, dosing the mother is very effective as babies get one tenth of what the mother has which gives them a therapeutic dose

Below are just some of the examples of common childhood health problems that herbs can successfully help.



Heartsease *Viola tricolor*

Babies

- Cradle cap
- Eczema
- Sleep problems
- Teething
- Colic
- Nappy rash

- Thrush

Eczema is the most common problem I see with babies as a herbalist, followed by sleeping problems and colic. In cases of eczema it is always important to look at food allergies as, even with a breastfed baby, allergens can cross over through the milk including cow proteins. Dairy intolerance is a big cause of eczema and if the mother is consuming a lot of cow's milk, cheese or yoghurt this can cause a reaction in the baby. Formula milk is also derived from cow's milk so a switch to goat's milk formula can often be very beneficial (the milk proteins are much closer to those found in human milk, hence the term "nanny" goat). Adding herbs like heartsease, red clover or marigold to the bath water can be a very good way of treating the itching.

Colic can be treated via the breastfeeding mother taking carminative herbs such as fennel seed tea or by dosing the baby via its feed. Gently massaging the baby's stomach with just a finger's pressure in an anti-clockwise direction with chamomile essential oil in a carrier oil (5 drops to 10mls of carrier) can relieve the trapped wind and soothe the infant.

Californian Poppy *Eschscholtzia californica*



Toddlers and young children

- Colds & coughs
- Recurrent tonsillitis or infections
- Otis media (earache) and other respiratory tract problems
- Bed wetting
- Asthma, eczema & hayfever
- Constipation, diarrhoea and stomach upsets
- ADHD
- Emotional and anxiety problems
- Skin conditions such as rashes, molluscum contagiosum (something doctors often say it will clear up on its own – true but herbs speed up the process considerably), warts, cold

sores, impetigo, athlete's foot and verrucas

- Allergies
- Sleep problems
- Parasites including worms and head lice
- Urinary infections e.g. cystitis

If conditions are recurrent. for example repeated episodes of otis media or diarrhoea. then again diet and lifestyle needs to be investigated. With ear problems reducing catarrh forming foods or foods likely to cause intolerances should be excluded for 2 weeks to see if things improve. These include wheat, dairy, bananas, white sugar and large oranges (not satsumas). Other conditions like ADHD often improve by the addition of essential fatty acids to the diet along with herbs such as Californian poppy. For a child with recurrent cystitis or bedwetting, it is worth trying a fluoride-free toothpaste as fluoride irritates the bladder in sensitive individuals leading to urinary problems.

A simple recipe for mild cases of infant diarrhoea is the apple peel cure. Simmer the peel from four unripe apples in a cup of water with a teaspoon of honey for 20 minutes until a sauce forms (use the rest of the apples in cooking). Sprinkle with cinnamon (for taste and because it reduces gut inflammation) and serve. The natural pectin and astringents in unripe apples firms up the bowels. For constipation, stew the flesh of very ripe apples, peeled and sliced, one per serving in a tablespoon of water with honey to taste if needed. The soluble fibre gently helps to get the gut moving again.



Teenagers

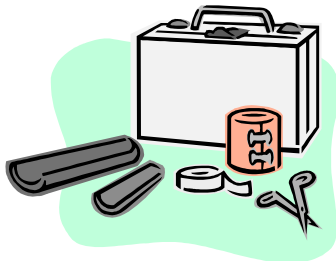
- Stress (i.e. at exam time – April 2006 newsletter on my website for more information on exam time)
- Anxiety and low mood
- Menstrual problems such as pain, heavy bleeding and PMT

- Acne
- Anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders

A difficult group to treat due to their reluctance to attend a consultation and their forgetfulness in taking the medicine! Nevertheless herbs and improvements to diet can make a big difference at this time of immense physical, emotional and physiological changes.

I will be dealing with some of the commoner conditions that affect children in more detail in future newsletters.

A HERBAL FIRST AID KIT FOR THE HOME



You can create your own first aid kit for you and your family using herbal products. Indeed many of them you can even make yourself (see my website www.hedgerow-herbal.eclipse.co.uk

and go to the herbcraft section). Below are my suggestions for your home kit and some have several uses.

CREAMS AND OILS

Calendula cream – healing, antiseptic and antifungal

Chickweed cream – for dry itchy skin but also for burns and scalds or use for drawing splinters

Arnica cream – bruises and sprains DO NOT USE ON BROKEN SKIN

Chamomile ointment – for chapped, damaged skin plus for rashes and allergic reactions

St John's Wort Infused Oil – burns, sunburn, inflammations and earache

Comfrey leaf infused oil - bruises and sprains and with added essential oils as a muscle or joint rub.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Lavender - use directly on skin if not sensitive or dilute 10 drops to 10ml (2 tsp) of any light vegetable oil

- Massage into neck/temples for headaches (combine with peppermint)
- Minor burns including sunburn, scalds to prevent blistering

- Insect bites to stop itching
- Put drops onto a pillow or handkerchief for sleep or to reduce stress & anxiety

Eucalyptus

- Add to steaming water to clear sinuses
- Add a few drops to petroleum jelly for a chest rub
- Use with comfrey oil to ease aching muscles

Tea Tree can be used neat as lavender above or diluted in a carrier oil. It has a mild analgesic effect to relieve discomfort and stimulates local circulation to speed healing as well as being a strong antiseptic

- Put in bowl of water near a radiator to evaporate and disinfect room
- Antiseptic - use on cuts, grazes, bites, stings, spots and acne
- Antifungal - use for athlete's foot, thrush and fungal nails

Clove oil - Rub on the gums to relieve the pain of toothache and sore gums (or you can chew the whole cloves instead)

Lemon Balm (Melissa) - add to marigold cream to treat cold sores and warts or use as an insect repellent

DRIED HERBS to make teas (or make into tinctures using cider vinegar or wine)



Chamomile *Chamomila recutita*

Chamomile – to help with sleep, soothing for sunburnt skin, headaches, colic, period pains

Sage – as a gargle for sore throats, add salt, cider vinegar or honey to an infusion and gargle every 2 hours. Add a handful of dried herb to hot water and 1 tbsp of sea salt to refresh tired feet or to deodorize them.

Peppermint – after heavy meals or if suffering from wind and bloating, travel sickness, poor appetite

Elderflowers – combine with peppermint for colds and hayfever, lower fevers

Valerian – for insomnia, tension headaches, cramp, anxiety, shock or stress

Nettle – for hayfever, as a tonic or for iron

OTHER PREPARATIONS

Distilled Witch Hazel - for burns, to stop bleeding (it dries the wound), soothe bites or make some into ice cubes (LABEL!) to apply to bruises and sprains

Have an **Aloe Vera** plant growing in the kitchen. Break off a leaf and squeeze the sap straight onto burns (including sunburns) to relieve pain and speed healing

Cider vinegar - antiseptic and antifungal properties. Use as a douche for thrush and vaginal itching, for athlete's foot and gargle for sore throats. A weak acid, it can neutralise a wasp's sting (bicarbonate of soda for bee stings. For mild burns including sunburn add vinegar to the bath, or dilute and dab onto affected area.

Honey – take a spoonful to ease coughs or apply to cuts and wounds to prevent infection (Manuka honey is the best for antiseptic properties)

Ginger – settles the stomach especially nausea (use for travel sickness or hangovers), improves circulation, warming for colds and flu

Garlic Honey – two whole bulbs of (organic) garlic, skins removed and finely crushed with a pestle and mortar until transparent. Add 450g (1lb) of honey (organic or locally produced). To use as a tonic take ½ tsp daily but for chest infections or bacterial gut infections take ½ tsp 3 times daily. Add to lemon and water, milk or herb vinegar (esp. thyme). Do not use for babies. Helps prevent infections, and improves cardiovascular health

Muscle Rub - to help alleviate back pains, muscle aches and strains, joint pain and stiffness (see recipe on website)

Thyme and Liquorice Cough Syrup – chesty coughs

Wild Cherry Cough Syrup – tickly coughs

DIARY DATES

- **Sunday 21st September**
(10am-4pm) **West Stow Country**

Park, Bury St Edmunds. Walk and herbcraft workshop. Contact 01284 728718 booking is essential numbers limited

- **28th September** (2pm) at **Sandy RSPB HQ** Tickets include entry to reserve – phone 01767 680541 to book a place
- **Sunday 5th October** (2pm) **Milton Country Park** Tickets £5 adults, £3 children – phone 01223 420060 to reserve a place

ADVANCE NOTICE There will also be a herbcraft event at **Physic in November**, making family medicines and herb gift ideas

WANT YOUR OWN EVENT?

Talks – I offer a range of different talks, some with slideshows. Topics range from “Growing Old Disgracefully” to “The Healing Hedgerow”. Talks last about 45 minutes plus time for questions and I bring along some herbal teas to try and products to purchase. Contact me for a full list of titles OR suggest your own!

Herb Walks -I can introduce you to the medicinal plants growing in your local area or nature reserve, lots of information on the folklore, myths and modern and traditional uses of the plants. I also do indoor walks using slides – great for winter time!

Demonstrations/Children's parties

-practical sessions on using plants to make your own medicines to treat common family illnesses including teas, creams, oils and vinegars with samples to try. Parties include making herbal bath bombs & soaps, lip balms and lavender bags – suitable for 8-12 years

Fees are negotiable, between £28-£40 for talks and walks, more for children's parties as it depends on the time and materials needed, plus mileage expenses @ 35p per mile.

THIS NEWSETTER IS PUBLISHED 3 TIMES A YEAR SO LOOK OUT FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF HEDGEROW-HERBAL NEWS WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM NOVEMBER 2008

Visit the Hedgerow Herbals website www.hedgerow-herbals.co.uk.
For advice, consultations etc contact **Julie Dore** at

Physic Oakington Therapy Centre Oakington Road, Girton, CB3 0QH. Telephone 01223 237459, or email reception@physic.co.uk.

St Ives Complementary Health, Armes Corner, London Rd, St Ives Cambs PE27 5ES 01480 492088

Royston Complementary Health Centre, 31c Market Hill, Royston, Herts. SG8 9JS 01763 247440