

Hearth Medicine: Traditional Food and Plant Medicines of the family herbalist

Hearth medicine is the practice of using foods, spices, herbs, and common plants found in yards and grown in gardens, to care for the health and well-being of self and family. This is the medicine of the home, practiced by the keeper of the hearth, the family herbalist, and caregiver of the home. It is a practice that can be found in every corner of the world, within every medicine tradition.

- I. Essential kitchen apothecary tools
 - A. Jars and bottles of assorted sizes
 - B. Rubber spatulas
 - C. Electric coffee grinder
 - D. Mortar and Pestle
 - E. Measuring cups and/or graduated cylinders
 - F. Lid grips
 - G. Stirring devices
 - H. Strainers
 - I. Double boiler
 - J. Funnels
 - K. Mixing bowls
 - L. Scales
 - M. Spouted pouring devices
 - N. Turkey baster
 - O. Filters and cheesecloth
 - P. Calculator
 - Q. Yogurt and Candy thermometer
 - R. Labeling materials
 - S. Paper towels
 - T. Sponges and rags
 - U. Dehydrator (optional)
 - V. Blender/Juicer
 - W. Instant Pot or Yogurt Maker and Crockpot
 - X. Food processor
 - Y. Knife
 - Z. Cutting Board
 - AA. Gloves
 - BB. Apron

- CC. Something to keep the hair back
- II. Common plant medicines found in your kitchen and garden - Your Apothecary
 - A. Fruits
 - 1. Blackberries
 - 2. Blueberries
 - 3. Currants
 - 4. Oranges
 - 5. Lemons
 - B. Bulb Plants
 - 1. Garlic
 - 2. Onion
 - C. Roots
 - 1. Ginger
 - 2. Turmeric
 - D. Grain
 - 1. Oatmeal
 - 2. Rice
 - E. Teas
 - 1. Chamomille
 - 2. Dandelion
 - 3. Spearmint
 - 4. Black
 - 5. Green
 - F. Herbs and Spices
 - 1. Cayenne
 - 2. Fennel Seeds
 - 3. Rosemary
 - 4. Thyme
 - 5. Sage
 - 6. Basil
 - 7. Dill
 - 8. Cinnamon
 - 9. Oregano
 - 10. Black pepper
 - 11. Cardamom
 - 12. Anise
 - 13. Cloves

14. Mustard

15. Bay

G. Oils

1. Coconut Oil

2. Grapeseed Oil

3. Olive Oil

4. Castor Oil

H. Solvents

1. Wine

2. Vinegar

3. Brandy or Vodka

4. Honey

5. Clean Water

I. Misc

1. Nopal

2. Beeswax

3. Iodized salt

4. Baking soda

III. Basic Herbal Extractions and First Aid Methods

A. Tisanes (Teas)

B. Vinegars

C. Wines

D. Honeys

E. Syrups

F. Oils

G. Salves

H. Poultices

I. Compresses

J. Eye washes

IV. Definitions of Extractions

A. Infusion - Gentle, passive heat/no heat extraction of plant medicine components from the cell walls of plant material with a liquid solvent. Infusions are typically made with leaves and flowers or mucilaginous plants. Infusions can be made with water, vinegar, liquor, wine, honey, and oil. Infusion heat sources include heated solvent, sunlight, and moonlight.

B. Decoction - Extraction process using steady active heat to extract the medicinal components from the cell walls of a plant with a liquid solvent. Typically made

with roots, woody stems, berries, seeds, and mineral-rich content plants.

Decoctions can be made with water and glycerin.

- C. Salve - Oil combined with hard wax, such as beeswax, to make a firm skin preparation. The hardness of the salve depends on the ratio of oil to wax.
 - D. Poultice - Chopped, diced, or minced (macerated) plant material that is placed onto an injured/ill area of the body. A poultice is often placed in between thin layers of cloth. Heat is often (but not always) applied to the poultice.
 - E. Compress - Similar to a poultice but uses a (liquid) herb-infused piece of cloth to treat the ill/injured area.
- V. Medicine Making Tips
- A. Remember that your medicine is only as potent as the quality of your plant material.
 - B. It takes heat (active/passive) and time to make an infusion
 - C. Vinegar is excellent for bitters, sours, and minerals
- VI. Folk Method - Method of medicine making in which measurements are given as parts. A part is a unit of measurement that can be interpreted to mean cup, ounce, spoon - any amount as long as it's consistent. I.e. 2 parts mullein, 1 part orange peel, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cinnamon chips - 1 part = 1 cup
- VII. Dosing Instructions
- A. Guidelines to determine dosage
 1. Primary action of plant
 2. Toxicity
 3. Tonic or System/Organ Specific
 4. Constitution of individual
 5. Is the disease/imbalance chronic or acute
 - B. Adult
 1. Chronic
 - a) Tea - 3-4 cups for several weeks
 - b) Extracts $\frac{1}{2}$ -1tsp 3x daily
 2. Acute
 - a) Tea - $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ throughout the day, 3-5x day
 - b) Extracts $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp every 30-60 in until symptoms subside
 - C. Children
 1. Young's Rule - Add 12 to child's age, divide by total
 2. I.e. - Child is 4yrs old - $4 + 12 = 16$, $4/16 = .25$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of adult dose
- VIII. Common ailments/injuries and suggested hearth remedy
- A. Head

1. Pink eye
 2. Dry eye
 3. Headaches
- B. Ear, Nose, and Throat
1. Ear Pain and Infection
 2. Sinus Infection
 3. Nasal Congestion
 4. Nasal Drainage
 5. Sore Throat
- C. Respiratory
1. Chest Cold
 2. Common Cold
 3. Flu
 4. Covid
- D. Digestive
1. Diarrhea
 2. Constipation
 3. Heartburn
 4. Stomaches
- E. Skin
1. Rash
 2. Burns
 3. Cuts
 4. Infection
 5. Bruises
- F. Musculoskeletal
1. Sprains/Strains
 2. Joint Swelling
 3. Pain
- G. Dental
1. Abscesses
 2. Pain
- H. Urinary Tract Infection
- I. Poisoning
- J. Diabetes
- K. Heart Attack
- L. Allergies/Anaphylaxis

IX. A Few Seasonal Remedies

A. Sore Throat/Laryngitis

1. 1 oz sage, 4 cups water, honey to taste
2. Bring water and sage to simmer, cover, turn off heat, steep 30 min, strain, sweeten, drink $\frac{1}{2}$ c every 30 minutes until throat stops hurting or voice returns

B. Sinus Congestion

1. Thyme, salt, distilled water
2. Boil water, steep 1tbsp thyme in 1 cup water, cover for 15 in, strain, add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, cool to warm, use as neti rinse
3. Can also do a steam inhalation of thyme

C. Chest Congestion

1. Thinly sliced onion, 2 pieces of thin cotton cloth, heating pad
2. Sandwich onion between cloth, place on the chest, place a heating pad on top of cloth, relax for 30 minutes

D. Allergies

1. Rosemary, onion, apple cider vinegar
2. Equal parts chopped onion and rosemary leaf, fill a qt jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full, cover with apple cider vinegar until about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch over plant material
3. Let set for 4-6 weeks, shake daily

E. Fortify Tea

1. Peel of 1 orange, 2 cinnamon sticks, 4 pieces of star anise, 1 grated knuckle of ginger rt, 2 tbsp dandelion rt (or 4 tea bags), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blackberries or blueberries or currants, Raw honey
2. Simmer plant material in 4 cups of water for 15 minutes, strain, sweeten to taste

X. Nopal

- A. All parts medicinal and edible (well not the spines and glochids of course!)
- B. Highly mucilaginous - supports mucosal membranes - mouth, upper airway, digestive and genitourinary tracts
- C. Hydrophilic - absorbs water and acts as a drawing agent for infections
- D. Can be used externally for burns, boils, abscesses, and cellulitis
- E. Helps stabilize blood sugars
- F. Protects nerves from damage
- G. Reduces cholesterol
- H. Anti-inflammatory
- I. Interrupts bacterial communications

