



Herbal First Aid

Protocols, Pain remedies, Wound care and Street medicine

7Song, Director,
Northeast School of Botanical Medicine
7Song.com

Introduction

While it is advantageous for everyone to have basic first aid skills, be aware that some situations can spiral rapidly out of control into potentially dangerous situations. In any situation that you are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with, seek help immediately. Please don't take unnecessary risks; your patients' rights come before your need to train.

Basic Safety Protocols

1. When arriving at an emergency scene, quickly size up the situation for any potential threats to yourself, others around you, and the patient.
2. Send for help immediately after you decide you will need further assistance. Keep competent people around to assist you or run for further help as needed.
3. Protect yourself from possible communicable diseases by wearing barrier devices including disposable gloves and facemasks to avoid direct exposure to blood, pus and saliva.
4. Be *very* cautious when moving anyone suffering from an accident. If they have a spinal injury, moving them may worsen their condition considerably.
5. Avoid panic. Find your good nature and calmness in stressful situations. Your stress will readily be felt by your patient and others around you. Try to be confident, but not overbearing.

Basic Herbal Protocols

1. Before administering tinctures to anyone, always ask if they have any difficulty with alcohol. If they feel even small amounts alcohol (such as in a tincture) may start them drinking, choose another type of preparation
2. When initially administering herbs internally, especially for pain relief, start with a small amount and check for reactions.
3. After initially testing a remedy and finding it acceptable, increase dosage incrementally while supervising their condition and tolerance.
4. Ask the patient if they have any herbal medicine preferences or if they are allergic or have strong reactions to any medicines.
5. You may want to warn your patients about the flavor of herbal medicines. You can also dilute them or/and give them a chaser

6. While choosing your remedies, consider the therapeutic categories to draw your herbal medicines from. This helps widen your selection especially if you don't have the specific medicine you were looking for.
7. Stronger herbal remedies (such as Aconitum) should be administered by experienced hands only.
8. When administering medicines, remember there are two aspects; frequency and quantity. Let patients know how much and how often to take their remedies. You can also let them know that they can a larger amount and more often if the remedies effective that way.
9. When considering remedies for an individual, it can be helpful to find plants that fit into a number of therapeutic categories, this helps un-complicates the formula.

Pain Remedies

An important consideration when dispensing pain-relieving agents is that people have substantially different reactions to them. Valerian is a good example: about 1 in 10 people have an opposite reaction from than the one they were hoping for. Instead of relaxation, the Valerian excites them, exacerbating the problem.

Dosage also plays an important role in giving pain remedies. Some people may have a strong reaction to just a few drops of a specific tincture, while others may feel the same effect after a teaspoonful.

Test small amounts first. One way to test for individual reactions is to initially give a few drops of a tincture to check for individual responses. Especially when people are in pain, they can often feel subtle differences, either helping or worsening their pain with a minute dosage.

Therapeutic Categories of Remedies

Analgesic-reduces sensation of pain

Alcohol	Clove bud essential oil	Heat
Cayenne	Cold	Tobacco

Adsorbents-attracts and holds onto foreign material such as bacteria

Activated charcoal	Clay
Charcoal	Gauze

Antiinfectives-kills or inhibit infection causing organisms

Baptisia	Echinacea	Oregon graperooot	Yarrow
Boneset	Garlic	Propolis	
Chaparral	Myrrh	Tree resins	

Antiinflammatories-reduces inflammation

Aloe	Chickweed	Licorice
Arnica	German chamomile	Meadowsweet
Calendula	Ginger	Poplar

Pussytoes	Turmeric	Yarrow
St. Johnswort	Willow	

Antispasmodics-relieves smooth muscle spasms

Belladonna	Marijuana	Valerian
Black haw	Silk tassel	
Crampbark	Skullcap	

Astringents-tightens tissues

Agrimony	Oak	Witch hazel
Blackberry root	Potentilla	Yellow dock
Canaigre	Rhatany	Yerba mansa
Geranium	Rose	
Lady's mantle	Tea	

Essential oils-concentrated volatile oils from plants, various medicinal applications

Clove bud	Lavender	Wintergreen
Eucalyptus	Tea tree	

Hemostatics-reduces or stops bleeding

Cayenne	Shepherd's purse	Yunnan Paiyao
Cinnamon	Yarrow	

Pain remedies-reduce pain in a number of ways for various circumstances

Aconite	Ethanol	Lousewort	Valerian
Alcohol	Gelsemium	Marijuana	Wild lettuce
Belladonna	Henbane	Passionflower	Wild oats
Black cohosh	Hops	Silk tassel	
California poppy	Kava kava	Skullcap	
Epipactis	Lobelia	St. Johnswort	

Rubefacient-reddens skin by increasing local blood flow

Camphor	Friction	Mustard seed
Cayenne	Heat-topical	Tiger balm

Sedatives-reduce excitement, anxiety and pain

Alcohol	Kava kava	Skullcap
California poppy	Lobelia	Valerian
Epipactis	Marijuana	Wild lettuce
Hops	Passionflower	

Skeletal Muscle Relaxants-relaxes skeletal (voluntary) muscles

Black cohosh	Lousewort	Skullcap
Kava kava	Marijuana	Wild lettuce

Trauma aid-aids in recovery of emotional trauma

Anemone	Jamaican dogwood	St. Johnswort
Blue vervain	Lavender essential oil	Vervain
California poppy	Lobelia	

Vulneraries-helps with recovery of tissue after wounds

Aloe	Comfrey	Plantain
Arnica	Mallow	Slippery elm
Calendula	Marshmallow	St. Johnswort

Warming Herbs-constitutional remedies for cold problems

Bayberry	Ginger	Rosemary
Cayenne	Prickly ash	Wild ginger

Wound Protocols

1. Determine seriousness of wound
 - How much damage is there to local tissue
 - What is the potential for infection
 - Might it leave a scar
 - Is this a situation within your abilities
2. Stop excessive bleeding with hemostatics
3. Clean thoroughly and check for any extraneous matter that may cause infection or prevent the wound from healing
4. Give internal pain-relieving herbs
5. Consider what will be the best preparation to counteract any possible infection and speed wound recovery; soaks, compresses, tinctures, salves or other preparations
6. Use herbs to fight infection or increase host resistance internally and externally
7. Use herbal antiinflammatories do decrease potential inflammation
8. Consider astringents to draw tissues close
9. Apply herbs topically before dressing the wound. Do not wrap too tightly, as it may become inflamed
10. Check the dressing and wound regularly and change as needed.
11. If wound becomes infected, clean and probe for foreign materials. Re-dress.
12. If infection spreads (especially with fever) seek assistance.
13. Treat wounds promptly to help prevent and arrest infection and scarring.

Wound Care Notes

1. While tinctures are often excellent antiseptics, the alcohol in them can slow down tissue repair.

2. Do not apply Comfrey initially to a wound, especially if it is deep or liable to become infected. The superficial skin growth that Comfrey initiates can allow infections to proliferate underneath.
3. Learn to apply steri-strips, butterfly and other helpful bandaging techniques.
4. Consider using self-adherent wrapping to hold bandages in place instead of tape which can be messy and painful to remove (especially if the wound needs to be checked frequently)
5. Be aware that many serious infections are communicable by blood and use disposable gloves.
6. Know when and when not to use salves or other 'greasy' applications as they can form a film allowing bacteria to grow underneath
7. Salves are often better around a wound (in the reddened area) and use antiseptic tinctures if there is a puncture wound.
8. When using salves, use a clean applicator to remove the salve from its jar to avoid contamination.

Soaks

A primary treatment in treating wounds, soaks help the herbs penetrate deeper into the wound and also float out foreign matter. They are easy to prepare and need minimal equipment. You are basically going to soak the affected area in a very strong herbal tea. The equipment includes a heat source (camp stoves work well), water, container for boiling water, herbs, a container to soak the body part in. It can also be helpful to have something strain the herbs out. 2 ½-gallon plastic tubs are useful for foot and hand wounds. You can also just use a thick plastic garbage bag, which can be thrown out after. To clean the plastic container, use soap and water, and then bleach or iodine to sterilize it. Be sure to clean well between each patient.

Preparation method: Boil water and then add plenty of plant material or tincture and soak the afflicted part for at least 15 minutes. Best if the soak water is kept warm to hot, so refresh as needed.

Street Medicine

This section is about treating people at protests, demonstrations or places such as Occupy encampments. The people who do this work are generally called street medics. These are often high stress situations with participants and medics dealing with confrontations situations as well as eating foods they are not used to and may be not getting enough rest. It is important for anyone who wants to help out in these environments to make sure they bring the medicines they personally need and take reasonable care of themselves so they don't end up needing continual treatment or making bad judgments in confrontational or medically important moments.

Herbalists and their tools offer a lot of help and support in this arena of health care.

Common Situations

- Allergic reactions
- Anxiety, Stress
- Asthma
- Coldness
- Dehydration
- Diarrhea
- Emotional crises
- Exacerbations of pre-existing conditions
- Indigestion
- Infections
- Injuries
- Insomnia
- Prescribed medicine problems
- Pain
- Sun exposure
- Trauma
- Viruses-Respiratory and Digestive
- Wounds

Medicinal Plants List

Aconite-Aconitum spp.
 Aloe-Aloe spp.
 Anemone-Anemone spp.
 Arnica-Arnica spp.
 Barberry-Berberis spp.
 Belladonna-Atropa belladonna
 Black cohosh-Cimicifuga racemosa
 Blue vervain-Verbena hastata
 Calendula-Calendula officinalis
 California poppy-Eschscholtzia californica
 Catnip-Nepeta cataria
 Cayenne-Capsicum spp.
 Chaparral-Larrea spp
 Chickweed-Stellaria media
 Cinquefoil-Potentilla spp.
 Comfrey-Symphytum spp.
 Conifer resins-various
 Datura-Datura spp.
 Echinacea-Echinacea purpurea
 Epipactis-Epipactis helleborine
 Garlic-Allium sativum
 German chamomile-Matricaria recutita
 Ginger-Zingiber officinalis
 Goldenseal-Hydrastis canadensis
 Jamaican dogwood-Piscidia piscipula
 Kava kava-Piper methysticum
 Lemon balm-Melissa officinalis
 Licorice-Glycyrrhiza glabra/G. uralensis
 Lobelia-Lobelia inflata
 Lousewort-Pedicularis spp.
 Mallow-Malva spp.
 Marijuana-Cannabis spp.
 Marshmallow-Althaea officinalis
 Meadowsweet-Filipendula ulmaria
 Motherwort-Leonurus cardiaca
 Myrrh-Commiphora spp.
 Nettles-Urtica dioica
 Oak-Quercus spp.
 Oregon graperoot-Berberis spp.
 Osha-Ligusticum porteri
 Passionflower-Passiflora incarnata
 Pine-Pinus spp.
 Plantain-Plantago spp.
 Propolis-Bee resin
 Pussytoes-Antennaria spp.
 Ragweed-Ambrosia artemisiifolia
 Rose-Rosa spp.
 Sagebrush-Artemisia spp.
 St. Johnswort-Hypericum perforatum
 Shepherd's purse-Capsella bursa-pastoris
 Silk tassel-Garrya spp.
 Skullcap-Scutellaria lateriflora
 Slippery elm-Ulmus rubra
 Tobacco-Nicotiana rustica/N. tabacum
 Turmeric-Curcuma sp.
 Valerian-Valeriana officinalis/V. spp.
 Vervain-Verbena officinalis
 Wild indigo-Baptisia tinctoria
 Wild lettuce-Lactuca spp.
 Wild oats-Avena sativa
 Willow bark-Salix spp.
 Witch hazel-Hamamelis virginiana
 Yarrow-Achillea millefolium
 Yerba mansa-Anemopsis californica

Herbs and Remedies

1. **Activated charcoal**-adsorbs a variety of toxins. Apply as soon as a wound or bite has been soaked cleaned, and debrided. Change the dressing daily, wash out any charcoal in the wound, inspect the wound, and redress with a fresh poultice. *Charcoal poultice preparation:* Prepare a moist (but not overly wet) paste of activated charcoal powder with water and layer it on a gauze or nonstick pad. The poultice patch should cover the area beyond the immediate wound and be applied flush against the area. Use roll gauze to hold it in place.
2. **Aloe gel or fresh plant**-sunburn and other burns. Apply liberally to burn.
3. **Anemone tincture**-trauma aid, use drop doses for anxiety or panic.
4. **Arnica tincture**-antiinflammatory, useful immediately after injury to speed recovery. For internal (caution, use drop-doses) and external use. For soft tissue injuries such as sprains.
5. **Black cohosh tincture**-skeletal muscle relaxant. Useful for strains, back pain, voluntary muscle pain, and some headaches. Do not use during pregnancy.
6. **Echinacea tincture**-immune strengthening tonic, useful in the early stages of colds and flus. Valuable to stimulate innate immunity, especially immediately after bites, stings or wounds. Large doses may be helpful. Also for allergies and food poisoning
7. **Ephedra tincture**-bronchodilator and decongestant. May be helpful in asthma. Caution, stimulant action, may raise blood pressure, heart rate and cause headaches. For allergies and difficulty with breathing due to bronchoconstriction.
8. **Eyebright tincture**-antihistamine-type action, for allergies.
9. **Goldenseal tincture**-antimicrobial, disinfectant. Useful for killing a number of infectious agents. Internal and external use, for colds, food poisoning, wounds, infections.
10. **Immune combination tincture**-a combination of immune-boosting herbs to strengthen immunity, especially as a preventative. May include Echinacea, Astragalus, Reishi, Oregon graperoot and Osha. To help prevent colds, viruses, infections.
11. **Kava kava tincture**-sedative, good for frayed nerves and relaxing after a hard day. For pain, stress and trauma
12. **Licorice root**-antiinflammatory, moistening. Useful for internal mucus membrane inflammation. For allergies, dehydration, diarrhea, indigestion, pain, dry coughs and sun overexposure.
13. **Lobelia tincture**-bronchodilator, to ease breathing from allergic asthma reactions. Also a relaxant. For allergies, asthma, pain, stress, trauma.
14. **Meadowsweet tincture**-antiinflammatory, all purpose and well-tolerated. Especially useful for digestive inflammation but also for congestion, injuries and headaches. Larger doses are often useful.
15. **Oregon graperoot tincture**-antimicrobial, antiprotozoal. Useful for killing a wide range of infectious agents. Large doses may be useful. For viral and bacterial infections, diarrhea, food poisoning and wounds.

16. **Osha tincture**-antibacterial for sore throats, respiratory viruses and allergies. Wide range of antimicrobial uses. Useful in combination with other antibacterials.
17. **Pain formula**-a combination of sedative and anodyne herbs to cover a few bases in one medicine. Herbs include wild lettuce, passionflower, hops, valerian, skullcap, kava kava, Jamaican dogwood and California poppy. For pain, trauma, and shock
18. **Peppermint spirits**-digestive aid for nausea, stomachaches, indigestion. Reduces sense of pain in stomach. Use in small doses, as it is prepared from an essential oil.
19. **Propolis tincture**- antiseptic wound covering for skin and oral mucosa. Stickiness helps adhere bandages to skin. For viral and bacterial infections, sore throats and wounds.
20. **Ragweed tincture**-antihistamine-like action for allergic (histamine) reactions such as hives, hay fever; food, drug and insect allergic responses.
21. **Skullcap tincture**- sedative, nervine, pain reliever. Good with skeletal muscle pain. Well-tolerated and useful in a wide variety of situations with pain and anxiety. For pain, shock, stress, trauma
22. **Tobacco raw herb**-drawing (spit) poultice, anodyne. Used externally for insect bites and stings.
23. **Valerian glycerite**-for those who cannot use alcohol. See Valerian tincture
24. **Valerian tincture**-sedative, hypnotic, anodyne, nervine. A very useful sleep aid. Contradictory effects common, test individuals for reaction. For pain, stress, trauma and sleep.
25. **Wild lettuce tincture**-sedative, relaxant, anodyne. Good for pain with anxiety. For pain, stress, trauma
26. **Willow tincture**-antiinflammatory. Useful for a number of inflammatory conditions including headaches and pain.
27. **Yarrow**-antiinfective, antiinflammatory. Makes an excellent soak. It is commonly found growing in the U.S. Learn to recognize yarrow in its colonizing leaf form when not in flower. Wounds, inflammation, infections.