Herbs for First Aid:  
Trauma & Wound Care  
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Proclaimer: Helping people in first aid circumstances is serious business and one should know their capabilities as they get involved. Herbal medicine and its practitioners have been effectively treating people in these situations since there have been injuries to treat. This handout encourages people to help out whenever possible, and to learn the intricacies of herbal first aid practice. One should wholeheartedly hone their skills, know how and when to ask for help and to take the time to study with knowledgeable persons. For your sake and particularly for the patient’s sake, learn your basics and how to do the least amount of harm while lending a hand.

First aid situations have a habit of foisting themselves upon us at unpredictable moments and so you may find yourself involved, no matter what your skill level may be. So seek opportunities to learn this eons-old craft whenever possible. The service of being a calm, sensible, knowledgeable person in these often chaotic and painful situations is a gift to offer to our communities.

Practical and Safety Considerations
1) In order to learn herbal first aid, always carry an herbal first aid kit with you. This will transform theory into practice as well as helping out your community.
2) Level-headedly assess any trauma situation for its potential seriousness. Decide your priorities and seek or send for help if warranted.
3) Be very cautious when moving anybody who has suffered a fall or accident. If they have a spinal or neck injury, moving them can worsen their injury considerably.
4) If working with other people’s blood, saliva, pus or other bodily secretions, protect yourself by wearing disposable gloves.
5) After initially testing a remedy and finding it acceptable, increase dosage cautiously while supervising their condition and tolerance.
6) Before administering any tinctures containing ethanol, ask the patient if they have any allergies/strong reactions to alcohol. If they cannot consume alcohol in any volume figure out other ways to administer medicines
7) Test remedies for acute pain situations with the a one-drop dosage
8) Learn and practice wound wrapping techniques
9) If possible, ask the patient if they have any herbal medicine preferences and if they have allergies or strong reactions to any medicines.
10) While choosing your remedies, consider the various herbal categories from which to draw your herbal medicines.
11) The stronger remedies such as Aconite or Henbane should only be used by experienced hands.
12) When entering a trauma situation, try to find a competent person to assist you or run for help if needed.

13) Individual adverse reactions to pain relieving herbs are common. When initially administering herbs internally start with a one-drop dosage and check for reactions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name- Botanical Name List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aconite – Aconitum spp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloe – Aloe spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arnica – Arnica spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barberry – Berberis spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belladonna – Atropa belladonna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black cohosh – Cimicifuga racemosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue vervain – Verbena hastata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calendula – Calendula officinalis</td>
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<td>California poppy – Eschscholtzia</td>
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<td>Canadian fleabane – Conyza canadensis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catnip – Nepeta cataria</td>
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<td>Cattail – Typha latifolia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chickweed – Stellaria media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinquefoil – Potentilla spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conifer resins – various</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cow parsnip – Heracleum spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Echinacea – Echinacea spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garlic – Allium sativum</td>
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<tr>
<td>German chamomile – Matricaria recutita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghost pipe – Monotropa uniflora</td>
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<td>Ginger – Zingiber officinalis</td>
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<td>Goldenseal – Hydrastis canadensis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henbane – Hyoscyamus niger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaican dogwood – Piscidia piscipula</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kava kava – Piper methysticum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon balm – Melissa officinalis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobelia – Lobelia inflata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallow – Malva spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marijuana – Cannabis spp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshmallow – Althaea officinalis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preparations and Applications

Acupressure | Exercise | Poultice
Aromatic | Inhalation | Powder
Balm | Liniment | Salve
Bath | Massage | Smoking blend
Compress | Oil | Wash
Dressing | Ointment | Tea
Essential oil | Plaster | Tincture

Combination Formulary

Teas
- **Anti-infection Tea** – Chaparral, Cedar, Echinacea, Yerba mansa, Redroot, Goldenseal
- **Nervine Tea Blend** – Lemon balm, Skullcap, Oatstraw, German chamomile, Passionflower
- **Nutritive Blend** – Marshmallow, Goldenrod, Slippery elm, Avena, Nettles

Oils and Salves - generally in a base of extra virgin olive oil. Salves also contain beeswax
- ** Arnica/St. Johnswort Oil**
- ** Big Kitty Salve** – Essential oils of Camphor, Tea tree, Eucalyptus, Cajeput, Wintergreen, and Cinnamon
- ** Bruise Salve** – Arnica, St. Johnswort, Calendula, Vitamin E
- ** Garden Salve** – Calendula, St. Johnswort, Sage, Cleavers, Chickweed, Nettles, Comfrey, Vitamin E
- ** Skin Salve** – Red clover, Chaparral, Goldenseal, St. Johnswort, Calendula, Sage, Tea tree essential oil
- ** Trauma Oil** – St. Johnswort, Arnica, Valerian, Extra virgin olive oil, essential oils of Tea tree and Wintergreen, Vitamin E

Tinctures and Liniments - Tinctures contain ethanol and liniments contain isopropyl alcohol
- **Antiseptic Tincture** – Propolis, Myrrh, Goldenseal, Witch hazel
- **Arnica Liniment** – Arnica
- **De-Stress Tincture** – Damiana, Oatstraw, St. Johnswort, Vervain, Rosemary, Lavender, Valerian
- **Pain Relief Tincture** – Passionflower, Meadowsweet, Valerian, Motherwort, St. Johnswort
- **Peppermint Spirits** – Peppermint essential oil, Ethanol
- **Staph Dismissed Tincture** – Chaparral, Licorice, Propolis, Witch hazel
- **Tooth and Gum Tonic Tincture** – Yerba mansa, Echinacea, Goldenseal, Rhatany, Myrrh, Selfheal, Vegetable glycerine
- **Un-Headache Tincture** – Feverfew, Skullcap, Blue vervain, Chamomile, Valerian
- **Wound Liniment** – Myrrh, Goldenseal, Cayenne
**Essential Oils**
- Clove bud
- Eucalyptus
- Lavender
- Tea tree
- Wintergreen

**Non-Herbal Items**
- Ace bandage
- Activated charcoal
- Antiseptic wipes
- Aspirin
- Bandages
- Butterfly bandages
- Candles
- Clay
- Cold pack
- Disposable gloves
- Duct tape
- Eye cup
- Flashlight
- Gauze pads
- Headlamp
- Hot water bottle
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Irrigating syringe
- Lancet
- Magnifying lens 10x
- Matches/Lighter
- Microscope 30x
- Povidone-iodine
- Razor blade
- Salonpas patch
- Soap
- Steri-strips
- Surgical tape
- Tweezers

**General Categories**
- Adsorbent
- Analgesic
- Anesthetic
- Anodyne
- Antihistamine
- Antiinfective
- Antiinflammatory
- Antimicrobial
- Antispasmodic
- Antipruritic
- Antiseptic
- Anxiolytic
- Astringent
- Circulatory stimulant
- Demulcent
- Emollient
- Hæmostat
- Hypnotic
- Nervine
- Rubefacient
- Sedative
- Skeletal muscle relaxant
- Smooth muscle relaxant
- Soporific
- Trauma aid
- Vulnerary

**Definition of Categories**

**Adsorbent** – Capable of attracting and absorbing foreign material

**Analgesic/Anodyne** – Relieves pain

**Anesthetic** – Produces a partial or complete loss of nerve sensation

**Antihistamine** – Reduces the effects of histamine in the body

**Antiinfective** – Helps to prevent infection

**Antiinflammatory** – Counteracts or reduces inflammation

**Antimicrobial** – Inhibits or kills microorganisms and their replication through various mechanisms

**Antipruritic** – Relieves or prevents itching

**Antiseptic** – Inhibits putrefaction by destroying microorganisms

**Antispasmodic** – Relieves smooth muscle spasms

**Anxiolytic** – Reduces anxiety or nervousness

**Astringent** – Contracts tissue and reduces discharges

**Circulatory stimulant** – Excites circulation (locally or systemically)

**Demulcent** – Soothes irritated tissue
Emollient – Soothing and softening to tissue
Hemostatic – Arrests the flow of blood
Hypnotic – Induces sleep
Nervine – Nourishes and treats nervous system disorders
Rubefacient – A counter-irritant, stimulates localized blood flow and reddening of the skin
Sedative – Calms and allays excitability; sedatives range from mild relaxing agents to stronger sedating action
Skeletal muscle relaxant – Relaxes muscles of the musculo-skeletal system
Smooth muscle relaxant – Relaxes smooth muscles
Soporific – Produces a deep sleep
Trauma aid – Helps people recover their psychic/emotional balance after trauma
Vulnerary – Aids recovery of tissues from wounds

A Few Words about Pain Remedies

In herbal medicine, there are many categories and therapeutic approaches in addressing the relief of pain. Each of these groupings may focus on a specific issue such as individual tolerance to pain remedies, different types and location of pain, specific indications for individual botanicals and what extent of sedation one anticipates or desires. To sum the above up, administering pain remedies can be tricky business. To learn the subtleties of the differentiations, experience is one of the finer teachers along with research and networking with other practitioners. The more attuned the clinician is to understanding the often distinct properties of herbal anodynes and sedatives, the finer their skills will be at ascertaining the proper remedy at the proper time with the proper dosage. One way to begin this process is to learn the therapeutic categories of pain relief such as which remedies act as antispasmodics, skeletal muscle relaxants, or antiinflammatories, or which medicines are strongly sedative compared to those that are pain relieving without altering cognition.

Another important consideration when dispensing pain-relieving agents is to realize that people have substantially different reactions to them. Valerian is a good example: perhaps 1 in 20 people have an opposite reaction from Valerian than the one they were hoping for...instead of inducing relaxation, the Valerian excites them, making relaxation more difficult. Dosage too 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 with a teaspoonful.

One way to test for individual reactions is to initially employ a single drop (one-drop dosage) or less (diluted in water) to check for individual responses. Especially when people are in pain, they can feel subtle differences, either helping or worsening their pain, with a minute dosage.

Many herbal remedies fit into a number of therapeutic categories. Searching to find the remedy that fits within a few categories for the specific situation you are treating will help increase the chance of finding a salutary medicine.
Categories of Pain Remedies
*These medicines are found in the Combination Formulary

General Pain Remedies

Aconite
Belladonna
Big Kitty Balm*
Black cohosh
California poppy
De-Stress*
Epipactis
Ethanol

Anesthetics
Cayenne
Clove bud ess oil

Antispasmodics
Belladonna
Black haw
Crampbark

Sedatives
California poppy
Epipactis
Ethanol
Hops

Skeletal Muscle Relaxants
Black cohosh
Kava kava

Wound Protocol

1) Determine seriousness of wound.
2) Stop excessive bleeding – use hemostatics.
3) Clean thoroughly – check for any extraneous matter that may cause infection or prevent the wound from healing.
4) Use pain relieving herbs and preparations.
5) Apply antiinfectives and astringent botanicals.
6) Use herbal antiinflammatories if necessary.
7) Dress the wound. Use clean gauze. Do not wrap too tightly.
8) Check regularly and change dressing as needed.
9) If wound becomes infected, clean and débride and probe for foreign material. Redress.
10) If infection spreads (especially with fever) seek assistance.
11) Treat wounds promptly to help prevent and arrest infection and scarring.
### Other Notes
1) While tinctures with alcohol they contain, are often admirable antiseptics, they discourage tissue repair.
2) Do not apply Comfrey initially to a wound, especially if it is deep or liable to infect. The superficial skin growth that Comfrey initiates can allow infection to proliferate underneath.
3) Learn to apply butterfly or other helpful bandaging techniques.
4) Be aware that many serious infections are spread by blood. Use disposable gloves if in doubt.
5) Know when and when not to use salves or other ‘greasy’ applications. They are often useful on the outside, reddened area of a puncture wound, while antiseptics are used directly on the puncture itself.
6) If using salves, use a clean applicator to remove the salve from its jar to avoid contamination.

### Categories for Wound and Injury Remedies
*These medicines are found in the Combination Formulary*

**Adsorbents**
- Activated charcoal
- Charcoal
- Clay
- Gauze

**Antiinfectives (includes antiseptics & antimicrobials)**
- Antiseptic Wash*
- Myrrh
- Tea Tree essential oil
- Oak
- Tree resins
- Oregon graperoot
- Urine
- Osha
- Witch hazel
- Propolis
- Wound Liniment*
- St. Johnswort
- Yarrow
- Staph Dismissed*

**Antiinflammatories**
- Aloe
- Ginger
- Spiraea
- Arnica
- Licorice
- St. Johnswort
- Calendula
- Meadowsweet
- Turmeric
- Chickweed
- Poplar
- Willow
- German chamomile
- Pussytoes
- German chamomile
- Pussytoes

**Astringents**
- ‘Tea’
- Lady’s Mantle
- Rose
- Blackberry root
- Oak
- Witch hazel
- Canaigre
- Potentilla
- Yellow dock
- Geranium
- Rhatany
- Yerba mansa

**Circulatory Stimulants**
- Bayberry
- Ginger
- Rosemary
- Cayenne
- Prickly ash
- Wild ginger
**Hemostatics**  
Canadian fleabane  
Cayenne  

**Rubefacient**  
Big Kitty Salve*  
Camphor  
Cayenne  

**Trauma Aid**  
Anemone  
Blue vervain  
California poppy  

**Vulneraries (includes Emollients)**  
Aloe  
Arnica  
Calendula  
Castor oil  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hemostatics</th>
<th>Rubefacient</th>
<th>Trauma Aid</th>
<th>Vulneraries (includes Emollients)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian fleabane</td>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Topical heat</td>
<td>Aloe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayenne</td>
<td>Shepherd’s purse</td>
<td>Wound Liniment*</td>
<td>Arnica</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yarrow</td>
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<td>Calendula</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Castor oil</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yunnan Paiyao</td>
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<td>Comfrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubefacient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Garden Salve*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Kitty Salve*</td>
<td>Friction</td>
<td></td>
<td>St. Johnswort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor</td>
<td>Mustard seed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Slippery elm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayenne</td>
<td>Tiger balm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plantain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes topical application.