

The Herbalist Street Medic
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Street medicine refers to the health care offered at protests, demonstrations, rallies, and similar events. These are generally urban situations, sometimes planned well in advance and other times springing up spontaneously. They may last for just a few hours or be encampments that last for weeks.

This handout is geared for 'on the ground' practitioners, meaning those herbalists who are in the fray of the protests, whether walking with the demonstrators or in a clinic set up for the event.

Herbalists can offer a valuable service in these situations, as herbal medicines can be helpful as primary and adjunct treatments. Individual medics should know their skill limitations and pass along patients to more knowledgeable persons if the situation is beyond them or calls for a different treatment modality. It is helpful to have a variety of healthcare practitioners to assess and treat. Working together is a boon for the patients as well as other staff.

It is common for street medics to need medical care themselves. This is because they may not be distinguished from other protesters and can also be hurt during a demonstration. It is also important to realize that many street medics at these events are new to practicing medicine and may have difficulty adjusting to their new role and situations.

The herbalist first aid bag should include numerous medicines to help out the protesters as well as other medics. These situations can be stressful and throw off people's diets and sleep patterns. So, as well as dealing with injured protestors, you will also be working with stressed-out medics. A cool head and critical thinking go a long way in these circumstances.

Treatment protocol conditions range from being in a stressful environment (which may induce anxiety and insomnia), injuries, asthma, gastrointestinal disturbances, and exacerbations of pre-existing health conditions.

Another consideration is that within urban environments, many useful herbal medicines and other supplies are commonly found in supermarkets and shops. These include Turmeric for inflammation, Cayenne as a warming agent, Fennel for indigestion, and rubbing alcohol as an antiseptic wash.

It is important to consider preventative and post-event care. Preventative personal care means bringing along all the medicines (pharmaceutical and other) that are important to you, as well as items of comfort, such as favorite snacks or a favorite pillow. Also, consider having a support network for after-care. This includes medicines for both physical ailments, such as injuries, as well as medicines for emotional health.

Common Health Conditions

- Allergy
- Anxiety/Stress
- Asthma
- Cold/Frigid
- Cold/Influenza
- Dehydration
- Diarrhea
- Digestive disorders
- Emotional crises
- Exacerbations of pre-existing conditions
- Infections
- Injuries
- Insomnia
- Pain
- Skeletal muscle pain
- Soft tissue injuries
- Sun exposure
- Trauma
- Wounds

General Medicine Considerations

1. The majority of the herbal medicines listed below are tinctures (plants in an alcohol medium). There are a few reasons for this. They are convenient, as they are ready to go with no further preparation required. As a concentrated plant medicine, less is generally needed. And they are easily dispensed for immediate use and can be put into a container to be given out for later use.
 - There are a few disadvantages. The main one is that some people cannot drink alcohol. For this reason, it is helpful to have a few of the most common remedies in glycerin, capsules, tea, or other non-alcohol forms. Tinctures are also strong-tasting, dissuading some people from taking them.
2. As you prepare for any event, consider what medicines would be most helpful in the situations you will be in.
3. Ask folks if they are on any medications. This can be especially important if they have forgotten to bring their essential pharmaceuticals or if they are vomiting and cannot hold down their medicine.
4. Ask if there is any medicine that has helped with their current health issue. This can save time if you can obtain the medicine, whether herbal or pharmaceutical.
5. Keep a backstock of medicines at a nearby location to refill in case any of them break or get lost.
6. Have 'to-go' bottles so folks can take their medicines with them. 1 oz plastic bottles with caps are a good size. Write on the bottle what is in it so that the medicine can be refilled later.
7. When giving medicines to go, write and let the patient know how much (quantity) and how often (frequency) to take their medicines. Ask them to repeat this to make sure they understand the directions. This is important with stronger herbal medicines.

Tincture Considerations

1. Before giving anyone a tincture, let them know it has alcohol in it. For some people, no amount of alcohol is acceptable internally. Since many people do not know what tinctures are, it is helpful to say something such as, "I would like to give you this tincture. Tinctures have alcohol in them, is that okay for you?" Folks may be puzzled by this question, but those who do not drink alcohol for health or religious reasons will appreciate you asking.

2. Below are approximate dosages for using these tinctures. There is a lot of individuality when it comes to how much of a specific medicine an individual should take. Ask if they previously tried herbal medicines and if they are sensitive to any medicines in general.
3. For medium to larger tincture dosages, it is helpful to dilute the medicines in water or other fluid before administering. You can also offer a water chaser.
4. Initially, try small doses of a medicine to see if they help with acute conditions such as pain or allergies. Sometimes, one can see/feel an immediate effect, which can help decide which medicines are most helpful and figure out how much of a specific medicine to use.
5. The below guidelines are recommendations for safety reasons and to guide those newer to administering herbal medicines. It is helpful to initially work with someone more knowledgeable to gain a finer understanding of how to use these medicines.
6. Be cautious when using medicines for anyone pregnant. Consult if unsure.
7. The term 'plateau' is used here to mean a medicinal effect has been reached from a tincture, and more does not make the situation better. For example, someone takes 5 drops of Lobelia for their asthma and finds some relief. They then take another 5 drops and feel better yet. They then take another 5 drops, and there is no further change. They have reached their plateau dose.
8. Loading dose is a term that describes how much you may initially give of a specific medicine. It is often larger than later doses as you are looking to effect a more significant change. For instance, if you give activated charcoal for a gut infection, your first dose might be 1 teaspoon (in water), whereas future doses might be ½ teaspoons.

Tincture Calibrations

Below are some basic calibrations describing approximately how many milliliters (ml) and drops are in a **half full dropper** of the three most common sizes for dispensing tinctures. A half dropper full is being used here as a measurement, as it is difficult to fill a dropper at the top.

- 1 oz dropper-½ full is about 1 ml (about 20 drops).
- 2 oz dropper-½ full is about 1 ml (about 20 drops). Yes, it is the same as a 1 oz dropper.
- 4 oz dropper-½ full is about 1.5 ml (about 30 drops).

Tincture Dosage Key

- **Low dose**-these medicines often work well at lower dosages. With a few of these, larger doses may have an adverse effect. Approximately 5 drops is a useful starting dose, with more given as needed until a desired effect or a plateau is reached.
- **Medium dose**-these medicines are relatively safe, and medium to larger doses can be taken. The plateau is often reached earlier than with *large dose* botanicals. ½-1 ml is usually a good loading dose.

- **Large dose**-these tinctures are very safe and often work best in larger doses. The loading dose is often around 1-3 ml, and more is taken as needed. Many immune tonics, such as Echinacea, fit into this category, so you would not be looking for a plateau response, as their function is not seen immediately.

Tinctures

1. **Anemone** (*Anemone spp*)-low dose. For panic and acute anxiety. A useful trauma and panic attack remedy.
2. **Chaparral** (*Larrea tridentata*)-low to large dose. For internal and external bacterial, viral, and protozoal infections
3. **Echinacea** (*Echinacea spp*)-medium to large dose. Immune system medicine, useful for viral and bacterial infections and as a preventative.
4. **Ephedra** (*Ephedra species*)-low dose. For asthma, allergies, and a decongestant. This tincture can raise blood pressure and cause agitation. Use cautiously.
5. **Eyebright** (*Euphrasia spp*)-medium dose. Antihistamine-type tincture for allergic reactions. See Ragweed for details.
6. **Immune combination tincture**-a combination of immune herbs for infections and as a preventative.
7. **Jamaican dogwood** (*Piscidia piscipula*)-medium to large dose. Useful general pain remedy. Combines well with other pain remedies. Also helpful for insomnia and menstrual cramps.
8. **Kava** (*Piper methysticum*)-low to large dose. For pain, sleep, and as a sedative. Good for frayed nerves and relaxing after a hard/busy day.
9. **Lobelia** (*Lobelia inflata*)-low dose. Asthma remedy as a bronchodilator.
10. **Meadowsweet** (*Filipendula ulmaria*)-medium to large dose. General antiinflammatory but especially for digestive tract inflammation and pain.
11. **Oregon graperoot/Barberry** (*Berberis spp*)-medium to large dose. Helpful for a wide range of infections, including viral, bacterial, and protozoal.
12. **Osha** (*Ligusticum porteri*)-medium dose. Respiratory viruses and sore throats.
13. **Pain formula**-low to large dose. A combination of sedative and pain-relieving herbs for various pain and trauma.
14. **Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*)-medium to large dose. A nerve tonic, useful when feeling overwhelmed.
15. **Lousewort** (*Pedicularis spp*)-medium dose. A skeletal muscle relaxant, especially for back, neck, and shoulder pain.
16. **Propolis**-medium dose. Useful internally and externally. Antiseptic wound covering and for throat infections.
17. **Ragweed** (*Ambrosia spp*)-low to medium dose. Antihistamine-like action for hypersensitivity allergic reactions such as hives, hay fever, and insect stings. This is not a substitute for injectable epinephrine (such as an EpiPen).
18. **Silk tassel** (*Garrya spp*)-low dose. For smooth muscle pain such as menstrual or digestive cramps.

19. **Skullcap** (*Scutellaria spp*)-low to large dose. Sedative, relaxing, stress, and pain relieving. Also good for skeletal muscle pain. Works well in combination with other similar-acting plants.
20. **Valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*)-low to large dose. Sedative, pain relieving, relaxing, and a beneficial sleep aid. Start with a very low dose to look for any adverse reaction, such as agitation or restlessness, as they are not uncommon.
21. **Willow** (*Salix spp*)-large dose. An antiinflammatory for soft tissue injuries (sprains, etc.) and other inflammatory problems.
22. **Wild lettuce** (*Lactuca spp*)-low to large dose. Sedative, pain relieving. Good for a wide variety of physical pain.
23. **Wild yam** (*Dioscorea spp*)-medium to large dose. Smooth muscle relaxant, especially useful for digestive cramps.

Other Medicines

1. **Activated charcoal**-Drawing agent is internal for digestive infections and external for infected wounds.
2. **Chamomile herb** (*Matricaria recutita*) tea. Soothing, relaxing, and for GI upsets. Well-liked.
3. **Lavender essential oil** (*Lavandula spp*)-burn medicine (dilute).
4. **Licorice root** (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis, G. glabra*)-antiinflammatory and moistening for internal mucosal conditions for the digestive and respiratory system.
5. **Osha honey** (*Ligusticum porteri*)-for sore throats and coughs.
6. **Peppermint spirits**-Low dose. Digestive aid for nausea, stomachaches, and indigestion.
7. **Salve**-external applications for a number of skin conditions, including infections, burns, and rashes. Helpful to have a few types for different situations. Also helpful to have small containers so people can take the medicine with them.
8. **Slippery elm** (*Ulmus rubra*)-powder as a demulcent for sore throat and digestive upsets.
9. **Tobacco** (*Nicotiana spp*)-spit poultice for insect bites and stings.
10. **Valerian glycerite** (*Valeriana officinalis*)-for pain and insomnia, can be used for those who cannot ingest alcohol.
11. **Yunnan paiyao** (Patented Chinese medicine)-hemostat to help stop bleeding.

Supplies

1. **Bands aids**-to cover small wounds.
2. **Disposable gloves**-to work on wounds and avoid infection and contamination.
3. **Dressings**-an assortment of wound coverings.
4. **Elastic bandages** (ACE bandage, Sports wrap, etc.)-Used for soft tissue injuries such as sprains and strains.
5. **Face mask/Bandana**-for protection when looking in people throats.
6. **Flashlight and Headlamp**-to work in low light and checking throats.
7. **Rubbing alcohol**-for washing infections.

8. **Self-adhesive bandages** (Vetwrap, Coflex, and other brands). These are thinner than elastic bandages and useful for holding wound dressings in place.
9. **Small plastic containers**-to give patients medicines to go.
10. **Tape**-an assortment of sizes and types to hold wound dressings in place.
11. **Tweezers**-for splinters and similar.