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Health

Arnica 30C, Vitamin C with Bioflavonoids, Apis Gel, Tee Tree Oil

# Natural to the Rescue!



by Cindy Matthews and Angela MacNeil, ND

"Where's the first aid kit?" I yelled, holding my cut and bleeding finger above my head.

"Oh, I think Dad took it on his fishing trip," my son answered.

Every once in a while, we find ourselves in a situation that requires first aid, whether it is to soothe the irritation of an insect bite or to relieve the pain of stiff and sore muscles.

For those of us who grew up before the advent of over-

the-counter products (OTCs), our families used a myriad of remedies. As a child, I suffered from high fevers and recall my mother carefully wrapping my wrists and ankles with torn sheets containing a plaster of vinegar, flour and herbs. Most of us can probably remember similar treatments and the jury is out as to whether or not they worked. However, there are some *commonly known* first aid measures that can be used in place of OTCs for those who seek more natural first aid treatment.

## Bruises

Bruises are caused by bleeding under unbroken skin surfaces. Tiny blood vessels break, blood leaks into the surrounding tissue and slight swelling may occur from blood entering new spaces. The injury to tissues causes the discoloration and because the extent of bruising depends partly on how fragile the blood vessels are, you can minimize

bruising by increasing antioxidants in your diet. Vitamin C and bioflavonoids can help to prevent bruising by strengthening capillaries. Note: Bruising can be caused by factors other than trauma or local injury, so, if you have a tendency to bruise easily, consult a qualified health professional.

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Cold Water Compress	Soak a towel in cold water and wrap around ice. Apply gently to bruised area.	Cold reduces swelling, constricts capillaries near the skin surface, restricts blood flow which reduces blood released from broken capillaries.
	Arnica 30C	Take 3 pellets under tongue every 30-60 minutes for up to 4 doses per day.	Arnica speeds healing.
Secondary Treatment	Traumeel or Arnica cream	Apply to bruised area (do not apply to broken skin).	These stops pain, act on first stages of inflammation cascade; optimize process of recovery.
Follow-up Treatment	Arnica 30C	Take 3 pellets under tongue 2x per day for up to 5 days until bruising is reduced. Discontinue when symptoms improve.	It provides relief from pain and speeds healing.
	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2-4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	These promote formation of collagen in skin. As an antioxidant it prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin as it can cause stomach irritation).

## Scrapes and Abrasions

These cause injury to the surface layer of the skin. White blood cells (immune cells) migrate to the area and bleeding may occur. A scrape will start to resolve by forming a clotted area or scab, followed by the scab falling off. It is important to

check the scrape daily and seek medical attention for signs of infection. Seek medical attention immediately with any of the following: increasing pain, redness, swelling, red streaks from the injury site, foul smelling pus or fever.

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Calendula and hypericum	Clean cut or scrape with gauze soaked with calendula and hypericum, 5 drops of each in 1 cup of water.	These promote healing, relieve pain and prevent infection.
	Calendula cream	Apply calendula cream, cover with sterile dressing, change as needed for 2-3 days	It promotes healing, reduces healing time and improves the quality of healing.
Secondary Treatment	Arnica 30C	Take 3 pellets under tongue every 30-60 minutes for up to 4 doses per day.	It reduces swelling and speeds healing.
	Vitamin E oil	Use topically to promote healing after 2-3 days if scrape is healing and no sign of infection is present.	It promotes healing and reduces scarring.
Follow-up Treatment	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2-4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	It promotes formation of collagen in skin. As an antioxidant, it prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin as it can cause stomach irritation).



## Heat Exhaustion

This condition is a result of a loss of fluids that affects circulation. Signs of dehydration include headache, dizziness and blurred vision. Because heat exhaustion affects circulation to vital organs (brain and heart), it is important to seek immediate

emergency medical attention; move the individual out of heat, treat individual for shock by elevating feet to move blood to vital organs and replace water and salts using fluids.

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Remove individual from heat source	Move to a shady and cool place.	Cools down affected person.
		Treat for shock by laying individual down with feet elevated.	Redirects blood flow to vital organs.
		Make individual sip salt water (1 tsp salt in 1L water) until medical assistance available.	Replaces lost water and salts.



## Insect Bites (mosquito, spider or fly)

These are characterized by a red area surrounding the bite. Bites can be uncomfortable, itchy and swell because the immune system recognizes the anticoagulant that the mosquito injects or black fly secretes as foreign. It may take several days or even a couple of weeks for healing to occur.

The speed at which bites heal depends on one's nutritional status. Check the insect bite daily and seek medical attention for infection, increased pain, redness, swelling, red streaks leading away from the injury site, foul smelling pus, fever, chills or swollen glands.

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Cover up	Wear protective clothing. Ensure shirts are and pant openings are closed.	This prevents insects from gaining access to skin.
	Citronella oil	Apply undiluted citronella oil to small areas of exposed skin. For larger areas, use 7 drops mixed in 1 tsp of carrier oil (apply every 30-60 minutes).	Smell repels mosquitoes, fleas and ticks.
	Tea Tree Oil	Apply undiluted tea tree oil to small areas of exposed skin; on larger areas use 7 drops mixed in 1 tsp of carrier oil.	It acts as a natural insect repellent.
	Thiamine (vitamin B1) skin patch containing 75 mg thiamine (i.e. Nosquito patches)	Remove backing and apply patch to clean, dry, and hairless skin at least two hours before protection is needed.	Thiamine works to create an invisible protective "barrier."
Secondary Treatment	Witch hazel	Apply compress of witch hazel (1 tsp of witch hazel on gauze)	This has astringent properties (shrinks and constricts blood vessels); provides relief from skin irritations.
	Aspirin	Apply to bite area.	It helps relieve itch, swelling, sting, or burning of bites.
Follow-up Treatment	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2-4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	This promotes formation of collagen in skin. As an antioxidant, it prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin as it causes stomach irritation.)



## Insect Stings (bees, wasps, hornets)

Venom injected by insects can be very painful and usually results in redness and swelling around the site as the body mounts an immune response. An insect sting may heal more quickly depending on one's nutritional status. The potential of allergic reactions to the venom can be life-threatening.

Allergic reactions could lead to the following symptoms: swelling of the throat, hives, difficulty breathing, rapid pulse, dizziness, paleness, weakness, headache, fever, abdominal cramps, vomiting and redness spreading from the area. Seek immediate emergency medical attention for any of these reactions.

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Ice or baking soda paste	Place ice or a paste of baking soda and water on sting.	It reduces pain and swelling, has a cooling effect and, neutralizes acidity.
Secondary Treatment	Arnica 30C	Take 3 pellets under tongue every 30-60 minutes for up to 4 doses per day.	It reduces swelling and speeds healing.
Follow-up Treatment	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2-4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	It promotes formation of collagen in skin. As an antioxidant, it prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin as it can cause stomach irritation).

## Burns or Scalds

These result from heat-damaged skin and are classified according to their severity. The treatments recommended below are only suggested for first degree burns that have the following symptoms: skin is pink to red in colour, hot to touch, dry, and may be swelling.


Seek emergency medical treatment for burns with the following symptoms: • *swelling or blistering, blisters open* • *fever, nausea, chills* • *burn is bigger than size of palm* • *burn interferes with breathing* • *burn is at a skin bend* • *burn is electrical or chemical in origin* • *person is under 2 years old or over 50*

Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Cold Water Arnica 30C	Immediately place injury under cold water (not ice water). Take 3 pellets under tongue every 30–60 minutes for up to 4 doses per day.	It reduces pain and keeps the site clean.  Pain relief, reduces swelling, speeds healing.
	Witch hazel compress  Aloe vera  Vitamin E oil	Apply a cold compress soaked in cold water and add 1–3 tsp of witch hazel. Apply gel from the inside of an aloe vera plant.  Break open a 200–400 IU vitamin E capsule and apply liquid to the burn.	This has astringent properties, reduces skin irritation, inflammation; creates barrier against infection. Helps new skin cells form, hastens healing, provides essential nutrients to promote healthy tissue growth, provides pain relief, reduces inflammation/blistering, kills bacteria and foreign organisms. This has antioxidant properties, moisturize and soothe, antibiotic properties, infection prevention.
Follow-up Treatment	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2–4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	Promotes formation of collagen in skin; antioxidant, prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin; causes stomach irritation).

## Sprains and Strains

These are injuries to ligaments (sprains) and muscles (strains), typically caused by overuse or trauma. There may be bruising, swelling, pain around or loss of use of a joint or in the muscle. Working through an injury such as a sprain will exacerbate and lengthen time for healing. Seek immediate

medical attention with any of the following symptoms: excessive swelling, loss of function in a joint, subject can't stand or walk, joint or limb looks deformed, wound around the joint, lingering severe pain or severe blow to neck, chest, abdomen, back, groin area with significant discoloration from internal bleeding.



Treatment	Remedy	Instructions	Rationale
Primary Treatment	Follow the RICE guidelines: • Rest • Ice • Compress • Elevate	<b>Rest</b> —The first 24–48 hours is considered the critical treatment period. Activities should be curtailed. Gradually use injured extremity as tolerable and avoid activities causing pain. Use splint, sling or crutches as necessary. <b>Ice</b> —Use during the first 48 hours post-injury. Ice sprain or strain 20 minutes at a time every 3–4 hours. Use bag of frozen vegetables or ice pack. Do not exceed 20 minutes. Wrap ice in damp towel soaked in 10 drops of arnica tincture. <b>Compress</b> —Use compression when elevating a sprain or strain in early treatment. Using an Ace bandage, wrap area by overlapping elastic wrap by one-half of width of wrap. Wrap should be snug but avoid cutting off circulation. <b>Elevate</b> —Keep the sprain or strain higher than the heart if possible. At night, elevate with pillows.	Rest prevents further damage.  Icing constricts blood flow, reduces swelling and deadens pain receptors.  Application of pressure will reduce the effect of any internal bleeding or swelling that may result from the injury.  This reduces swelling and assists the cardiovascular system to return blood from the injury to the heart.
	Arnica 30C	Take 3 pellets under tongue every 30–60 minutes for up to 4 doses per day.	It reduces swelling and speeds healing.
	Traumeel ointment or gel	Apply to sprained/strained area (do not apply to broken skin).	These stop pain; act on first stages of inflammation cascade; optimize process of recovery.
Follow-up Treatment	Vitamin C with bioflavonoids	Take 500 mg vitamin C 4x per day for 2–4 weeks in tablet, capsule or powder form.	This promotes formation of collagen in skin. As an antioxidant, it prevents bruising (don't exceed 4000 mg if pregnant; don't combine with aspirin as it can cause stomach irritation).

First aid need not be intrusive, costly, unnatural or unpleasant. As always, it is advisable for individuals to consult with a qualified health care practitioner before using any products. Take this list with you and discuss it on your next visit!

For a printable PDF copy of the above table, go to [www.openmagazine.ca](http://www.openmagazine.ca) and click on First Aid Tips.\*

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