



Homeopathy for Summer First-Aid

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Summer is here and with it the potential for sunburns along with bug bites and stings. Homeopathy to the rescue, the remedies working rapidly to relieve pain, speed healing, and prevent infection. In addition, homeopathic remedies are safe, gentle, non-toxic, pleasant tasting, and without side effects. The underlying principle of homeopathy involves taking a substance that can cause symptoms similar to those that a person is experiencing in illness, thus following the Law of Similars or “like with like.”

SUNBURN

- ***Urtica urens***. Indications for use are redness and intense burning heat with a violent itching or a stinging, pricking quality. The burnt skin resembles a rash with little white bumps. This remedy originates from Stinging nettle.
- ***Cantharis***. The skin is red with very painful burning, rawness, and smarting, and is better from cool applications that the person doesn't want to take off. This is our main first-aid remedy for any type of burn.
- ***Causticum***. This remedy is for more serious burns that blister and ooze or for the ill-effects of old burns.

Topical applications can be very soothing to a burn:

- Aloe vera plant. Peel off the outer thin layer of one of the leaves, applying the gelatinous interior directly to the burn.
- ***Calendula*** or ***Hypericum*** tincture diluted in water, 1 to 10 parts. Apply cool compresses to the sun-burned skin, refreshing them frequently as they warm up against the skin.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Sun exposure during very hot weather can also bring on the added risk of heat exhaustion, when a person becomes dehydrated from lack of water, excessive sweating, overexertion, and/or consuming alcoholic beverages. Symptoms include pallor, cold and clammy skin, excessive sweating, increased pulse and breathing, weakness, dizziness, nausea, headache, and muscle cramps.

- ***Veratrum album*** corresponds to the above common symptoms of heat exhaustion.
- ***Cuprum metallicum*** may be indicated if muscle cramping is predominant.
- ***Magnesium phosphoricum*** is indicated when abdominal or leg cramps predominate.
- ***Gelsemium*** is characterized by dullness, dizziness, and drowsiness. The face is hot and dusky red, the head is congested, with a feeling of emptiness or weakness in the stomach, along with the characteristic nervous, shuddering chill. The person is worse with motion and wants to lie down quietly.

SUNSTROKE/HEATSTROKE

If heat exhaustion goes untreated, heatstroke may follow, which is a life-threatening condition in that the body cannot regulate its own temperature. Sweating may cease, and the body temperature can rise to 40°C/104°F or higher, with a rapid and strong pulse.

Sunstroke presents with dry skin, a hot head, and a severe headache. The person may be vomiting, confused, convulsing, or unconscious.

If you suspect heatstroke, simple measures to provide additional comfort and rest should be taken before you even select a homeopathic remedy. Move the person to a cool place, remove clothing, and sponge down with cool water. Administer the indicated remedy while awaiting medical assistance.

Knowing the symptoms of the following remedies will help you to differentiate between them.

- ***Belladonna***. Characteristically, of sudden onset, with a hot and flushed-red face, while the rest of the body (or just the hands and feet) is chilled or cold. The severe, throbbing, right-sided headache is worse from jarring, motion, light, or noise, and better from cold applications or bending the head backward. The pupils are dilated, and the person seems to be in a stupor.

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Homeopathy for Summer First-Aid continued

- **Glonoinum**. Presents with a violent, pounding, or throbbing headache, with visible pulsation of the carotid artery along with a bounding pulse. The headache is worse from applying cold water and bending the head backward, and better from elevating the head. The skin is hot and dry, with a flushed, bright-red face and bulging eyes. There is a heavy, confused, drowsy state, with vertigo and dizziness as well as frequent urination.
- **Carbo vegetabilis**. The person becomes weak and faints or collapses as a result of the heat exhaustion. He is cold and clammy, with marked nausea and diarrhea after exposure to heat and sun. Needing air and wanting to be fanned are the guiding symptoms to the use of this remedy.
- **Natrum carbonicum**. A good overall remedy if there are no clear modalities, and often works when others don't. Sensitive to sunstroke, and for repeated sunstroke or the chronic effects of sun exposure. Severe headache from the least sun; weakness after walking in the sun; confusion and vertigo after exposure to the sun.
- **Gelsemium**. A flushed face and headache, with the characteristic trembling and weakness.

Rest for at least 24 hours after sunstroke or heat exhaustion. Hydration and electrolyte replacement to replenish fluid levels internally are very important. And because of increased susceptibility in the future, special attention should be paid to keeping the head covered. Prevention is the best cure. Stay in the shade during the most intense heat of the day, drink plenty of water, moderate your exercise routine, and avoid alcoholic beverages.

BEE/WASP STINGS AND INSECT BITES

- **Ledum palustre** is the main remedy for puncture wounds from insect stings and spider bites as well as a good, first choice for any kind of bite (including a dog or cat bite) that burns, itches, and stings. The site of the sting is bluish in colour with hard, white swelling that feels cold to the touch. The person is usually chilly but better from very cold applications, which is unusual, and therefore, the guiding symptom to use of this remedy. Topical *Ledum* (prepared as above) relieves itchy mosquito bites.
- **Apis mellifica**, derived from the honey bee, is another frequently indicated remedy, when there is tremendous red puffy swelling at the site of the bite, along with a burning, throbbing, stinging sensation. The person is hot and restless, worse with heat, and relieved by cold applications and cold air.
- **Carbolic acid**. For an allergic or anaphylactic reaction and collapse following a bee or wasp sting, with marked swelling and a choking feeling. The person is usually covered in hives, with a swollen face and tongue. Call 911.
- **Caladium** for intensely itching flea, fly, and mosquito bites with no other major complaints. For inflammation and infection from every mosquito bite.
- **Urtica urens** for urticaria (hives) caused by allergic reactions to insect bites and jellyfish stings, characterized by burning, prickling, and itching pain, which is better from constantly rubbing the area.
- **Vespa**. A very useful remedy for a wasp sting followed by severe stinging, piercing pain, along with staring into space, convulsions, and loss of consciousness.

Usually **Ledum** and **Apis** will take good care of the majority of insect bites and stings. The homeopathic community generally reserves treatment to those with serious bites or systemic reactions to the bites.

POTENCY AND DOSING

Give one dose of a 30C potency (usually 3 pellets, unless the bottle instructions indicate otherwise) of the remedy and wait. Correctly prescribed remedies work fast, and you can often see an effect a few minutes after the first dose. One dose is usually sufficient to begin the process of cure, and as long as the person continues to improve, there is no need to give another dose unless the symptoms return. If you observe a partial improvement after the first dose, your patient may need one or two additional doses given in frequent (10-30 minute) intervals. If the first dose did not work, but you are certain that it is the indicated remedy, you may repeat it again. If there is then no improvement, consider another remedy. Be prepared for those summer emergencies that can be easily handled at home with the aid of a few homeopathic remedies available in most health food stores. And enjoy your summer despite the critters that share it with us.

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