

BEATING THE BUMPS, BRUISES, AND BLECHS, naturally.

Your primer for a well-stocked
NATURAL FIRST-AID KIT

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Every parent knows that light medical treatment is part of the gig. Although over-the-counter pharmaceutical medications and ointments can help to briefly alleviate discomfort, they may do little to improve recovery, and can even *interfere* with the healing process! For instance, even when all you want to do is ease your child's pain, using acetaminophen can end up suppressing a helpful fever. Whether it's a mild scrape, an upset tummy, or a simple cough, it's smart to have a few supplies available to ensure a safe, natural, and speedy recovery for your little one. Keep in mind, a first aid kit isn't meant to act as a replacement for medical attention; if in doubt, always see your health care provider first! But for the normal bumps, bruises, and stings that seem to go hand-in-hand with childhood, a solid first aid kit is the perfect thing to have at the ready!

Want some more info on pain management? Wondering when to worry? Check out our [Infant Illness guide](http://www.ecoparent.ca/infant_illness) available online at www.ecoparent.ca/infant_illness

TOPICAL CREAMS, GELS, AND OINTMENTS

Calendula cream — Made from the marigold flower, calendula cream is one health product that is as close to magical as they come. Apply to superficial wounds (scrapes, burns, stings, rashes, and anything itchy) to alleviate inflammation and irritation, prevent infection, and promote skin healing. Look for a product that contains the highest percentage of pure calendula as possible for maximum benefits. Other helpful ingredients include comfrey (*Symphytum*) and plantain (*Plantago*).

Caution: Do not apply calendula cream to skin wounds deeper than a superficial scratch; it works so well that it can cause the upper skin to heal before the deeper tissue, potentially trapping germs.

Arnica cream or gel — Another close-to-magical product. Apply to unbroken skin for minor bumps, bruises, sprains, and strains. Homeopathic arnica (30C) can also be taken orally for the same purpose; most minor wounds will benefit from 2 pellets under the tongue, two to three times per day until resolved.

Caution: Do not apply arnica cream over any open wounds or broken skin.

Aloe gel — Apply to skin to alleviate mild burns and irritation. You can purchase aloe gel, making sure it contains mostly aloe, or you can keep a plant in your home, cut a chunk off, and swipe on some gel straight from the source. Kids love looking after plants that they can use!

HERBS FOR HEALING

Dry or fresh herbs can be consumed as teas or brewed and added to bath water. Make a tea using one teaspoon of dried herbs (or one tablespoon of fresh herbs) to one cup of water. For leafy herbs (all the ones listed below except for licorice), pour boiling water over the plant and let steep 10-15 minutes. Tough herbs made from the roots of plants, like licorice, are better prepared by simmering in water for 20 minutes or so. Double the concentration of herbs

to make a strong infusion for the bath. They can also be used to make compresses for advanced-level home first aid! All the herbs listed below are safe for children in the short term; try a quarter to a half cup at a time. Teas can also be blended with fruit to make smoothies or popsicles.

Fennel — For stomach upset, indigestion, and gas (also try anise, caraway, or peppermint).

Chamomile — For stomach upset and anxiety/nervousness; can help with sleep (also try lemon balm or passionflower).

Catnip — For agitation, and can help reduce a mild fever (also try yarrow or peppermint).

Licorice — With a little honey, very helpful for alleviating a mild cough or sore throat.



Chamomile



Licorice Root

FIRST AID FROM THE KITCHEN

Our kitchen is a treasure trove of healing goodness. Everyday kitchen staples you probably already have on hand can help alleviate cold symptoms, ease nausea, and help fight infections!

Garlic — A potent all-round antimicrobial plant. Simply crush and apply to minor skin infections, eat raw for colds and flus, or infuse into olive oil for earaches.

Caution: Straight garlic can be irritating to the skin, so test in a small area, monitor closely, and consider diluting in something else like olive oil or honey (see below).

Honey — A tasty antimicrobial, and soothing to irritated throats. Add to tea or take straight-up (a half teaspoon at a time) for sore throats and cough. Apply to minor skin infections (consider adding crushed garlic!).

Caution: Due to the risk of botulism, honey should only be consumed by children over the age of 12 months.

Sea salt — Antiviral, antimicrobial, and cleansing. Add one teaspoon to one cup of water and use to gargle, or use as a nose and sinus rinse inside a child-specific spray bottle or neti pot. Can also be used to flush a wound.

Ginger — An excellent anti-nauseant, without the sedative effects of pharmaceutical varieties. Slice finely and simmer in water (follow instructions for tough herbs, above).

Grapefruit seed extract — Not as common as the previous items, but worth having, this extract is a potent antimicrobial that has a powerful taste and packs a wallop! Add five drops to a half cup of water and use as a throat gargle (add some salt too!), or swallow to prevent, or treat, the stomach flu. Be prepared with a glass of water—this stuff is intense!

ESSENTIAL OILS

Essential oils are highly concentrated and are created through a process called distillation, which pulls the oil from the plant and separates it. The resulting oil is an incredibly powerful essence of the plant, retaining the inherent beneficial qualities that can aid in healing. Keeping a few essential oils on hand, especially those that serve multi-purpose functions, can be a great way to round out that first aid kit!

Please keep in mind, essential oils can be irritating, and should always be diluted *before* applying to skin. (Start with 5% essential oil to 95% carrier oil. Studies have shown that oils can be safely and effectively used in concentrations as high as 50%, but discuss appropriate dilutions with your ND or healthcare provider before applying to the super sensitive skin of little ones.) And as always, avoid use in pregnancy and with infants, and do not take internally.

For more on the essentials on essential oils, check out ecoparent.ca/essential_oil_essentials



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Peppermint — Inhale to alleviate nausea and car sickness; dilute and apply topically for skin infections (ensuring that you avoid eye area).

Tea Tree — Excellent all-purpose anti-microbial; dilute and apply topically for skin infections.

Lavender — Anti-microbial and alleviates itchy skin; dilute and apply topically. The diluted oil can also be applied to the temples for anxiety, nerves, or headaches.

ACUPRESSURE POINTS

You may not know it yet, but you already have healing tools in your house that you don't need to run out and buy or grow. Your own caring touch can help many minor aggravations!

Acupressure points have been used for thousands of years to impact the function of the organs they influence. Press firmly and regularly with your thumb; you can also attach a small bead to a piece of tape and apply it over the point. The points below (except for Yin Tang) can be found on both sides of the body. When your child is feeling unwell, acupressure is a lovely way to connect and provide some hands-on TLC.

On the hands — The LI-4 point, located between the thumb and first finger, at the highest point where the muscle holds together the finger and thumb. Pressing on this point is helpful for any kind of pain, particularly headaches. It's also useful for digestive concerns, such as constipation.

On the forearms — The PC-6 point, located on the inside of the wrist, is beneficial to alleviate anxiety or nervousness, and can help with sleep; it also is useful for nausea...and hiccups! To find this point, simply lay three fingers across your child's wrist, starting at the base of the palm. You should notice the two tendons running parallel up the arm. Beside your index finger, and in between those two tendons, is the PC-6. Apply pressure there.

On the face — Try Yin Tang. Found between the eyebrows, this is a lovely point to soothe an anxious or wound-up child. Press or stroke this point with your child's head on your lap, or on a pillow.

Here's the thing: kids get hurt and kids get sick. This is an expected part of childhood (and parenthood!), and how you respond can have a huge impact on your child's developing resilience. When they see you calmly assess the situation and take practical steps to help them feel better, they learn that they can cope with a bit of discomfort. Expanding your repertoire of first aid strategies that don't suppress your child's natural healing mechanisms means a more comfortable and resilient kid, and that means everything to us parents, doesn't it? •

Be prepared.

START YOUR NATURAL FIRST-AID KIT OFF RIGHT!

Having a well-stocked first aid kit is a must for all the bumps, bruises, and blechs that come with having kids! (Psst! All of these goodies are great for grown-ups too!)

1) TRADITIONAL MEDICINALS

Taking your medicine has never been so tasty! Traditional Medicinals ensures quality, medicinal teas by testing for chemicals and heavy metals. 99% organic, and non-gmo, each compostable tea bag is filled with pharmacopoeial-grade herbs (which means the tea has power!). Peppermint tea is safe for children two and up, chamomile for six and up. US friends: TM carries Just For Kids®, teas perfect for your pint-sized progeny.

www.traditionalmedicinals.com

2) BOIRON

Boiron's Calendula Cream is an herbal superhero! With anti-inflammatory properties, calendula helps in the healing process of cuts and wounds. Anti-viral, paraben-free, and fragrance-free, it's also great for chapped, dry skin.

www.boiron.ca | www.boironusa.com

3) EO HEALING

EO Healing's Start It Right Kit has taken the guesswork out of which essential oils, the unsung heroes of any first aid kit, to keep on hand. Complete with a few key essentials and a carrier oil, ready-made for dilutions, these 100% essential oils will certainly be used over and over again! (As always, consult with your ND or healthcare provider before using essential oils.)

www.eohealing.com

4) ALL TERRAIN

Protect those boo-boos with Neon Kids bandages from All Terrain. GMO-free, latex-free, gluten-free and 100% sterile, they're flexible, great for kiddos, and totally fun! Check out All Terrain's complete line of natural products — perfect for your next adventure!

www.allterrainco.com

5) AVOGEL

Beat those bruises with A.Vogel's regenerative Arnica Cream! Featuring ingredients like organic arnica, comfrey, and chamomile, this 100% vegetarian and cruelty-free cream is paraben-free and totally natural! A.Vogel also carries a huge line of kid-friendly wellness products from allergy relief to echinacea!

www.avogel.ca | www.avogelusa.com

