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Milk & Honey Herbs  
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## The Winter Herbal Medicine Cabinet

### To have on-hand for the Winter

- Fresh Ginger Rt
- Fresh Garlic
- Onion
- Fresh and/or dried culinary herbs
- Elder Flower (*Sambucus canadensis*)
- Yarrow Lf + Fl (*Achillea millifolium*)
- Peppermint Lf (*Mentha piperita*)
- Honey (raw, local)
- Fresh Lemons
- Sea Salt
- Neti pot
- Wild Cherry Bark Syrup or Tincture (*Prunus serotina*)
- Calendula Tincture (*Calendula officinalis*)
- Medicinal Mushrooms- Chaga, Reishi, Shitake, Maitake
- Astragalus Rt slices (*Astragalus membranaceus*)
- Elderberry Syrup
- Goldenseal Tincture (*Hydrastis canadensis*) - organically grown NOT wild-crafted
- Echinacea Tincture (*Echinacea purpurea*)- organically grown NOT wild-crafted
- Myrrh Tincture
- Valerian Tincture (*Valeriana officinalis*) and/or California Poppy Tincture (*Eschscholzia californica*)
- Fire Cider

- Herbal Cough Syrup and/or Herbal Cough Drops
- Essential oils– Trees (Eucalyptus, Spruce, Fir, Hemlock, Pine)
- Boneset Tincture (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
- Marshmallow Rt Powder (*Althea officinalis*)
- Herbal Chest Rub

## Recipes

**Elderberry Syrup** (from local herbalist Brittany Wood Nickerson of Thyme Herbal in Amherst)

6 Tbs. fresh elderberries or (4 Tbs. dried)

1 tsp. fresh ginger root

2 cups water

1/2 cup raw, unrefined honey

1/4 cup brandy or apple cider vinegar (optional)

**Directions:** Combine elderberries, ginger and water in a saucepan and simmer on low until the liquid volume reduces by half (to about 1 cup) to make an elderberry decoction. Strain berries and ginger from decoction and measure your liquid. Don't worry if you have a little less or a little more than exactly 1 cup. As long as you are within about a half a cup range this recipe will work just fine. If you have significantly too little liquid, simply put the berries and decoction back in the pot, add some more water and reduce it again, keeping an eye on it to be sure you don't reduce it too much again. If you have too much liquid, just keep on reducing! Add ½ cup of honey and brandy or apple cider vinegar (optional). Mix until the honey dissolves and all ingredients are combined. Stored in refrigerator will usually last for up to 3 months and even longer with addition of brandy. It works well to put the mixture in a mason jar with a lid and shake it until it is dissolved. To make an alcohol free syrup try raw, unrefined apple cider vinegar instead of the brandy. You can also add some fresh squeezed lemon juice to this recipe. Lemon juice is high in vitamin C and also acts as a preservative.

**Uses:** Antiviral, cold and flu preventative, immune-stimulant. As a preventative for cold and the flu take about 1 tsp 3-4x a week mixed in water, tea or straight. If people around you are sick, take it more often, at least once a day, with a dropperfull of echinacea tincture added. If you feel you are coming down with something or are already sick, take it 1 tsp 2-3x/day with 2 dropperfulls of echinacea tincture added. Elderberry syrup will not only ease the symptom of a cold or flu, it will also lessen the duration of the sickness entirely.

\*\*\*\*You may also use the ratios in this recipe to make a **Basic Cough Syrup Recipe** and just common respiratory herbs instead of the Elderberry (although remember, Elderberry is a great respiratory herb too!). A nice cough syrup recipe would be the following:

Wild Cherry Bark (Prunus serotina) – 1 part

Mullein Lf (Verbascum thapsus) – 1 part

Elecampane Rt (Inula helenium)– 1 part

Marshmallow Rt (Althea officinalis)– 1 part

Orange Peel (Citrus sinensis)– ¼ part

Water, Brandy, Honey and just use the same proportions for water, brandy and herbs as given in the recipe above!

Other nice additions might include Common Violet (Viola odorata) and Ginger (Zingiber officinalis). Be Creative!

## **Fire Cider**

1 Quart Organic Apple Cider Vinegar

¼ cup Fresh Horseradish grated

½ cup Fresh Onion, chopped

1/8 cup–1 head Fresh Garlic (to taste) chopped

½ cup Fresh Ginger grated

1 small cayenne pepper (or about 1 tsp)

**WARNING!** Do not touch your eyes or any other mucous membrane after making this unless you wore gloves!

**Directions:** Chop-up all the ingredients and combine with the apple cider vinegar in a jar. Cover the top with wax paper (since the vinegar will corrode metal) and then put the lid on over that. Let sit 4–8 weeks, shaking often. Strain and store out of direct light, will last at least a year. Other nice additions include burdock root and for spices– oregano, thyme, sage, rosemary, cumin, coriander, fennel and honey.

**Uses:** Antiviral, antibacterial, anti-fungal, expectorant, immune-stimulant, decongestant, liniment, cardiovascular tonic. Nearly every ingredient is antibacterial, and garlic and ginger additionally are antiviral, making this mixture a natural antibiotic! Fire Cider increases your white blood cell count and stimulates immune response. It is also a respiratory aid and will help break-up congestion in the lungs. To help soothe a painful, drier cough or sore throat, add honey and about 1 tsp fire cider to a cup of warm water and drink as a tea, 2–3 cups/day while symptoms persist. Also very helpful for sinusitis and allergies to relieve sinus congestion, sinus headaches and copious mucous discharge. Also a circulatory stimulant, both internally and topically as a liniment for bruises, strains and

injuries. Fire Cider is also a cardiovascular tonic for high cholesterol and to prevent arteriosclerosis, and for heart health in general. As a general tonic to prevent cold and flu as well as its many other uses, take about 1 tsp 1-2 x/day mixed in water or straight. If you are coming down with a cold or flu or already sick, increase dosage to 1/2-1 shotglass of Fire Cider anywhere from 1-5x/day, diluted or straight. Since this formula is so hot and spicy in nature precaution should be taken for those with chronic heartburn, acid reflux, gastric ulcers, IBS, Crohn's Disease, sensitive stomach. Stop taking 2 weeks before and after surgery because of blood-thinning effects.

## **Ginger- Lemon-Honey Tea**

2-3 tbsp Fresh Ginger, chopped

Juice of 1-2 lemons

Honey (local, raw) to taste (~2 tbsp)

1 Quart Water

**Directions:** Easy. Chop-up the ginger as fine as you can. Place in a 1 quart mason jar and cover with boiling water just about to the top. Add the fresh-squeezed lemon and honey, mix and let steep at least ½ hour minimum. Strain (or don't strain, also nice to chew and eat the ginger!) and drink through-out the course of the day to lessen the duration of a cold

**Uses:** Antibacterial, antiviral, respiratory aid, decongestant , immune-stimulating, diaphoretic, anti-inflammatory. Excellent remedy for a cold that presents with a painful sore throat. Also has expectorant properties and will help soothe a cough while also promoting the production of mucous from the lungs, helping to break-up congestion. Very warming, comforting and soothing for a cold. Excellent remedy for the very early signs of a cold, take with lots of echinacea! For best results add 3-5 dropperfulls of echinacea tincture to each quart.

## **First Sign of Flu Tea**

Equal Parts:

Yarrow

Peppermint or Chocolate Mint

Elder Flower

**Directions:** Make a simple infusion (classic tea) of the mixture of above herbs. Use about 2 tsp herbs: 1 cup water, pour boiling water over the herbs, cover and let sit for about 5–10 minutes. Strain and drink!

**Uses:** Antiviral, diaphoretic, antibacterial, digestive aid. Excellent remedy to take at absolute first sign of a cold or flu. At first sign of sickness and especially if you are running a low-grade fever and have the fuzzy head, headache, aches and pains, a cold sweat and chills, make the tea and run a hot bath. Make the bath as hot as you can tolerate, get in and bring in a cup of very, very hot tea and drink it in the bath as hot as you can stand. Soon you will start to sweat. Once you have been in and sweating for about 10 minutes and the bath begins to cool, get out. Staying warm, dress in the warmest clothes you can, get under lots of covers, go to sleep and sweat that cold out! In the morning you should feel much, much better. Also excellent to take if the cold or flu has already taken hold

## **Chest Rub Recipe**

Bee Balm Flower Infused-Oil (Monarda fistulosa or M. didyma)

Violet Fl + Lf Infused-Oil (Viola sp)

Ginger Rt Infused-Oil

Beeswax, grated (about 1 tsp beeswax: 1 oz of oil)

Essential Oils- Eucalyptus, Lavender, Spruce, Fir, Pine

Combine oil in desired proportions. Heat very, very gently on the stove, just for a minute or two... you do not want the oil to start smoking. Remove from heat. Then, for every ounce of oil added, add about 1 tsp of grated beeswax and stir until completely dissolved. For a softer rub add less oil, for a harder one add more. Chest rubs tend to be harder in consistency, while salves tend to be more soft- it's really up to personal preference. Pour into container (glass) and let cool. It's that easy! This is a very basic recipe, from here let your imagination run wild and experiment! Some other additions might include Vitamin E Oil, Shea Butter, Coconut Butter, Honey and more!

## **Basic Tincture Recipe**

Dried Echinacea Rt (organically grown)

100 proof vodka (50% alcohol) or 80 proof brandy

For a fresh tincture the ratio by volume is 1part herb: 2 parts menstruum (the liquid part of the tincture)

For a dried tincture the ratio by volume is 1 part herb :5 parts menstruum

Stick your plant material in a jar and cover with the appropriate amount of alcohol. If the herb is fresh chop it up a completely as you can, most dried herbs come in a “cut and sifted” form. Let the plant material extract 4 weeks minimum and as long as a year or even a decade if you like (in most cases)! Then strain out, store in an amber glass jar or in any glass jar just out of direct sunlight, since this can degrade the medicinal properties. Enjoy for practically ever, since tinctures, being mostly alcohol, have a virtually limitless shelf-life, making them an extremely practical way to preserve medicine.

## **Basic Infused–Oil Recipe**

Herb

Oil (olive oil, almond oil, sesame, jojoba, etc..)

Same ratios as the tincture recipe. The only difference is that if you are infusing dried herbs in oil the mixture needs to be heated for a prolonged period of time to extract the properties. The ideal way to do this is in a crock pot on low for 4–5 hours, although a double–burner on a stove top could work as well. Also, when making fresh herb oils, fill the oil all the way to the top of the jar so there is less chance of mold occurring because of less air. The place your oil on a towel, because some overflow may occur as it steeps! Also, steep oils for about 2 weeks or even less to avoid chance of mold.

## **Fever Management**

Fevers are our body's nature immune response against foreign pathogens. Instead of taking an aspirin and suppressing your body's immune system, support that fever in fighting off the pathogen! The range of what is and isn't a safe temperature ranges greatly from individual to individual, however here are some basic guidelines:

- 100–102 F (37.8–39 C) Low grade fever
- 102°–104°F (39 – 40°C) Mild fever: beneficial
- Over 104°F (40°C) Moderate fever: causes discomfort, but medically considered harmless

- Over 105°F (40.6°C) High fever: higher risk of bacterial infections
- Over 106°F (41.1°C) Very high fever: important to bring it down
- Over 108°F (42.3°C) Dangerous fever: fever itself can harm brain

Remember, these are only **basic guidelines**, everyone's “normal” body temperature is different. The only way to truly safely manage a fever is to know the warning signs that a fever is climbing too high, since temperature is only one quantitative measurement that needs to be combined with other qualitative measurements.

Here are some warning signs that a fever is too high:

- Seizure or convulsions
- Unresponsiveness or difficulty awakening
- Difficulty breathing with bluish lips
- Purple or blood-colored spots or dots on skin
- Not alert when awake, incoherent
- Any difficulty breathing
- Great difficulty swallowing fluids or saliva, stiff neck
- Bulging soft spot in an infant
- Confusion or deliriousness
- Age under 12 weeks with fever above 100.4° F (38.0° C) rectally
- Extreme irritability, inconsolable crying in children
- Inability to move an arm or leg normally
- Any sign of dehydration (very dry mouth, no urine in more than 8 hours, etc.)

It is up to each of us to find our own level of comfort when treating ourselves and our families with herbal medicine. Fevers can be a scary thing but the point to understand is this: A fever is a sign of a healthy immune response and care should be taken to support the fever and keep the person comfortable while the fever runs its course. Remember: Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate! To bring down too high of a fever, a lavender compress on the forehead and back of the neck is helpful, as are herbs containing salicylic acid, such as meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), willow (*Salix alba*), Sweet Birch (*Betula lenta*) and wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), and medical attention when necessary.