

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

# Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**<sup>®</sup>  
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 41: Natural Remedies for Back to School

Hi, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama," podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. Did you know that the word drug comes from the Dutch word, "Droge," which means dry or too dry which is in reference to how ancient healers and physicians would use dried plants as medicine. Also, the World Health Organization estimates that up to 80% of the world's population still uses herbal medicine. In fact, 7,000 compounds used in modern medicine are derived from plants. In today's episode, I'm gonna be talking about natural remedies and getting your home ready for cold and flu season with natural remedies that you can make in your kitchen.

But first, I wanna send a quick thanks to the sponsor of this episode, a cool new company I found called Oxy Bump. And they make a natural remedy product that I discovered a few months ago and have been using since then. So it's called Oxy Bump and this is a natural homeopathic and oxygen nasal spray. And from what I've read, two women founded this company after reading about the benefits of oxygen and opening an oxygen bar in Canada that allowed people to get the benefits of oxygen themselves. And of course, oxygen therapy or hyperbaric therapy is used for people who have diabetes or other conditions that can cause infection in the limbs. And so they opened this oxygen bar in Canada and then went on to found a whole line of oxygen therapy products, including drops, and now, this nasal spray. So I use this nasal spray when I'm traveling to avoid getting sick and so far, it's worked like a charm. So I just wanted to share about them.

As I mentioned, this episode is gonna be about natural remedies. And if you've been around my blog much, you know that I'm a big fan of natural remedies and use them often in my home. As a disclaimer, I will say I'm not at all opposed to conventional medicine, I think it absolutely has a time and a place. It actually saved my life with my birth of my third child and it saved my husband's life when his appendix burst. But I also don't think that every single, tiny illness is necessarily a cause to call in the big guns of conventional medicine. And I like to have some natural remedies on hand at home so that if there's a minor illness that I can handle myself, I'm able to provide comfort to my family and offer them some relief of the symptoms or help them recover more quickly without always having to turn to antibiotics or other drugs.

So again, definitely not saying not to use those things, just sharing some helpful alternatives I've found for minor illnesses. And of course, we're soon gonna be embarking on to cold and flu season. Unfortunately, we're still in the thrills of summer and it's hard to think that's gonna come so quickly but it will.

So I wanna share just the natural remedies that I always keep in my home and in my kitchen. And there's a lot more than this but I'm giving just a short list of ones that I have always keep on hand. And the first is arnica tincture which I've been using for probably a decade, although I used to buy it and now I can just make it. The recipe is on the site and I'll also have it in the show notes here. But this is made from the flowers of the arnica plant. And this tincture has amazing benefits for any kind of external problem like bruises and sprains, strains, muscle soreness, especially if it's used quickly after an injury. So I always keep arnica on hand for if I work out too hard or I end up with any kind of small injury or bruise. Arnica is excellent for that and I always just keep it in a tincture, but I've also, recently, been making lotions and salves with arnica as well. And those are great because they prolong the benefits on the skin.

Another one I always keep on hand that you probably already have in your kitchen is hydrogen peroxide. So it's not just first-grade needs although I keep it on hand for that too. A few drops of it, diluted, in each ear whenever I feel an ear infection coming on is a great way to often more that off altogether or just be the recovery of it. And of course, you would definitely not wanna do that if you had an eardrum that had burst, you would wanna be able to check that before putting anything in the ear. Another remedy I've used for ear infection is homemade garlic oil where you warm some olive oil on a stove, just set a very low temperature

and put some raw garlic in there, one clove of raw garlic with about a quarter to a half a cup of olive oil. Let it warm just for about 5 to 10 minutes to let the garlic kind of entuse into the oil. And then let it cool to about skin temperature. And I put that in the ear with a cotton ball, and the garlic being so naturally anti-bacterial, often, helps ear infections really quickly.

Another thing I keep on hand as a natural remedy but it really is more a preventative is vitamin D3. Because there are so many studies showing the benefits of vitamin D for preventing illness or for speeding recovery and even correlating good vitamin D levels with reduced risk of many kinds of cancers and, of course, just as correlation which obviously does not equal cause but in the winter, we typically get a lot less vitamin D than we do in the summer because we're not exposed to vitamin D from the sunlight. So in the winter, we supplement vitamin D3. And again, that's something you would wanna ask a doctor about or, possibly, have a blood test to see if you're deficient in it before doing. But for our family, that's one thing that has helped a lot.

Another one that you might already have on hand and that we use often is vitamin C. So of course, you probably already know much about the benefits of vitamin C and how it packs a really powerful punch against illness. I've even read advanced cases of people who were dying from different versions of the flu and used a high IV doses of vitamin C to make a recovery. Obviously, you're not gonna do that at home but vitamin C is water-soluble, so it's much more difficult to overdose on than a lot of other vitamins and supplements. So I keep a natural powder of vitamin C on hand all the time. And if anyone seems to be getting sick, I start giving it to them in either capsules or in juice or in tea every hour or so until they start feeling better.

And the great thing about vitamin C is it kind of tells you when you've had too much. So if you reach what's called del tolerance which is when it starts to cause digestive disturbance, that's when you would back off the dose slightly and just maintain a dose smaller than that. So vitamin C is a great natural remedy that we always keep on hand.

Another sure thing I keep on hand in various forms is peppermint. And I keep that as the essential oil, as a sav, and as an herb or a tincture and we use it in different ways. So this the loose-leaf herb is excellent for calming tea and it's a stimulating herb or even a cooling herb so it's great for like digestive problems and also for fever. I've also used peppermint leaf to infuse different liquid oils like olive oil or almond oil and then make those into a lotion or sav. And that's a great rub that can be used on the chest if there is any kind of respiratory problem or on sore muscles. And then I also diffuse peppermint essential oil at times when anyone over the age of one is suffering from any kind of respiratory problem. And I do that, definitely, diluted because peppermint is so strong but it's also very effective.

Another favorite of mine, I make a tincture, an alcohol-based tincture with peppermint leaf, fresh ginger, and fennel seeds. And that is the most effective remedy I've ever found for heartburn, nausea, and stomach flu. So of course, check with your doctor but I've used that effectively in all my pregnancies at the beginning of pregnancy to ward off morning sickness and it's worked really well.

Another favorite herb at our house is chamomile. And this is my favorite herb for children. And I typically just keep that loose-leaf herb around, I buy it by the pound, it's very inexpensive that way. And I know it doesn't taste great and it's soothing and calming and relaxing, but a warm chamomile tea can help soothe colic, digestive problems, anxiety, and sleep issues. And so it's great to you just at night, it's something wonderful to get the kids even if no one is ill just to help improve sleep.

Now, another herb, of course, spice that I keep in the kitchen is actually pepper, is cayenne. And I keep it in tincture and powder form. So I think we've never had to use it yet but an herbal expert told me one time that for bleeding that won't stop, just powdered cayenne can be rubbed into the wound. And of course, that would sting really badly, but it helps the bleeding stop. So definitely, I've never had to use that but cayenne also increases the effectiveness of any herbs that it's taken with. So it's great to use it cooking or to add to tinctures in small amounts to increase the effectiveness of the other herbs you've added.

Another great natural remedy to have on hand is aloe vera. Most people have already are familiar with this in gel form, maybe having used it after a sunburn, but this is a great immediate treatment for burns. So you can keep the fresh plant on hand if you have it available in your area or you can keep a gel that does not have any additives in it. And as we keep those on hand for that and also as a base for things like "My home-made baby weight," formula and for different hair products. And my husband even uses that on its own as a hair gel.

Probably my favorite cold and flu herb that I always keep on hand is elderberry. So elderberries are little, tiny berries that have gotten really popular lately as a prevention for the flu. And I've been using them for probably a decade now. And I make my own syrup with just pure elderberries, dried elderberries, cinnamon, and honey, and you can add ginger as well. And it tastes great, it's an easy one to get the kids to take. And so we take it in small doses every day during cold and flu season. And if any of us get ill, we take a larger dose until we feel better. It is important to note that the leaves and stems of the elderberry plant can contain chemicals that are harmful, so you wanna make sure that you got your elderberries from a trusted source and that there are no leaves and stems included. And also, it's better to use dried elderberries for that reason.

So another wonderful herb and remedy is lavender. And this is considered a calming, soothing, and relaxing herb, and it also smells wonderful, so it's often used in beauty products. And I keep lavender essential oil around for any kind of wound treatment. As soon as it's been cleaned effectively, I put lavender oil directly on it. And that's also great for pain relief and for insect bites, but it's one of the fewest essential oils that I consider gentle enough to use directly on the skin. So I use that for sick children who are feeling low to help them feel better and, again, for any kind of wound.

For any respiratory problems, I always keep Eucalyptus tincture on hand and also the loose-leaf herb. So this is great for anything with coughing or lung irritation or throat irritation. And I use a tincture rubbed on the feet or on the chest as a way to...like almost a natural vapor rub to open up the sinuses and help breathing. And of course, any kind of breathing problem at all or respiratory problem can become serious. So that's not what you wanna play with and that's not what I would say you should just treat naturally, especially if you think it could potentially be serious. But for minor coughing that's associated with the common cold, eucalyptus is wonderful. And it's naturally anti-bacterial and anti-viral, so it's really effective in helping the body build the immune system as well.

Another one I keep on hand is a salin train. Actually now, I've switched that to Oxy Bump because it's so effective. It has the added homeopathic remedy as well. But that is a great decongestant for kids and it's gentle enough even for little babies. In fact, my pediatrician once recommended just putting a drop of salin into a baby's nose when they're congested, it helps dry up the nose and avoid the problems that can come from that.

Red raspberry leaf is another great one to have on hand. In fact, this is probably one of my most used herbs because it is incredibly nutritious. It has a huge nutrient profile and it's great for the body, but it's especially

good for any kind of female problems and for hormone balance. So it's often recommended during pregnancy because it can strengthen and tone the uterus and also for nursing moms because of the added nutrients. And the best part is it tastes very similar to regular black tea. So it's an easy switch to make to reduce your caffeine intake and also to up your nutrient levels. So I drink that daily pretty often.

I also keep ginger on hand, both in capsules and fresh ginger root, because the capsules are the most potent, natural remedy for stomach difficulties. So even just a simple tea made out of fresh ginger is great for nausea or digestive problems. And a lot of people also use that for heartburn or indigestion as well. Ginger also just taste great added to any recipe. So it's wonderful to have on hand.

And just to give you an idea of how we would probably use all of those things that are raw, I always said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In fact, I'm sure people, of course, for thousands of years before me but for illness prevention, it's incredibly true. So in short, if you are supporting your body and giving it the nutrients it needs for proper immune function and hormone function, you're less likely to get sick in the first place. And if you've listened to any of my previous podcast, you know I'm a big proponent of getting enough sleep, eating a nutrient-rich diet, and reducing stress levels. And those all go a tremendous way toward preventing illness.

But try that we might, occasionally, pretty much everyone comes down with something and so there's a lot of natural options that I just mentioned that I keep on hand. But if an illness hits, some things that I always kind of turn to immediately are raw garlic. And I usually just mince up a couple of cloves of garlic and floated in a little glass of water and drink it. And I've noticed if I'm sick enough like say something with any kind of coughing or nasal thing, I don't even smell anything so I don't even notice the taste but that's excellent for any kind of illness. And pregnant women and children have to be careful with consuming too much. But a couple cloves of garlic a day can be really effective for fighting an illness.

Also, hot liquids. I keep a lot of herbal teas, especially with red raspberry and chamomile at the first sign of an illness. Because most illnesses are not that dangerous but dehydration is very dangerous and it's much harder to stay hydrated when you're ill and your body also has an increased need for fluids. So that's one that I turn to immediately. And doctors have been saying that as long as I've been doctors, rest and lots of fluids. And so that's one of the things I turn to.

I also turn to cinnamon because it's good for more than just stabilizing blood sugar. It's very antiviral and antiseptic. So when any of us get sick, I mix about a tablespoon of honey and a teaspoon of cinnamon to make a very spicy and effective, almost like a cough syrup that helps. This could also be made into a tea if you prefer that.

Also from the kitchen, using some of the herbs I talked about a minute ago, I often make a face steam for any kind of respiratory illness. And this, basically, is where I boil a couple of cups of water in a large pot and then add thyme, rosemary, and oregano, about a tablespoon of each, just the dried herb that you probably have in the kitchen for cooking, and then I cover that for about five minutes with a lid and then I remove the lid from the pot and put my face directly over the pot and cover it with a towel. Of course, be careful not to touch the pot with your face but that's still creating a lot of steam, and so I breathe in the steam. And that helps loosen up the sinuses and commonly coughing or congestion.

Also, I mentioned already, but like rest is incredibly important. So if anyone gets ill, they get an automatic pass

to rest, read books, relax, and sleep. I've mentioned several herbs already but to add a couple more, especially that I use in tinctures for children. One is nettle. And some doctors say that this is the only herb that's needed for on this treatment. It contains a whole lot of different vitamins and trace minerals and it also helps the body stay hydrated and flush anything that may be foreign to the body. So I use that in a tea with red raspberry leaf and alfalfa and that's a very immune-supporting and illness-recovering.

Also, yarrow is great for children. It's great also for flu and fever. And a lot of herbalists will recommend using within a tea or a tincture as soon as an illness starts coming on. And it will often ensure the illness less than 24 hours. So again, if you have that in your house, when illness strikes, you can just start making a tea that includes yarrow and it really helps speed recovery.

I already mentioned chamomile but I'll mention it again just because I use it so often with children and I use it in tea form, tincture form, and especially, just at night to help the children sleep well.

Catnip is another traditional cold and flu remedy. Of course, it's well known for its ability to make cats act a little strange but it's a great herb for children because it can help with relaxation and it also soothes the stomach. So it's often included in tinctures as well.

Let's see, I also use some unusual natural remedies if the illness seems to be more severe. So coconut oil is high in lauric acid and it's thought to dissolve the lipid coating around some viruses and make them more susceptible to attack by the immune system. So if someone is sick, I tend to mix coconut oil into a tea, herbal tea that I mentioned, in the blender. If you just mix it in, you'll have oil floating on top which is usually the most unappealing thing to someone who's already ill. But if you put it in a blender, it creates kind of a creamy, frothy tea that's really nourishing and good. And you can also add that to bone broth, if you prefer, but just a couple tablespoons a day of coconut oil is often enough to help the immune system fight whatever illness is there.

Another strange one that I got, ironically, from an Amish friend of mine when I was out there one time, it's so rare to get good advice from them because it's not like I can just call Amish friends, but they use garlic and onion on the feet at night. And I thought this was the strangest remedy but it works incredibly well. And the basic idea is to slice an onion and also some cloves of garlic and place them over the bottom of the person's feet and then wrap the foot in cheese cloth and then something waterproof like a peel or cloth or even saran wrap if that was all you had, and then leave it overnight. And the theory is that onions and garlic are shown to help the body heal, they boost the immune system, and even just being on the skin, the body's able to use those properties.

And other people claim that having the onions around will help absorb toxins. I don't know what the scientific reason is for sure but I just know that it's been effective. Although the one modification I would recommend is to wrap the entire onion and garlic mixture in cheese cloth and then put that on the bottom of the foot because it can be really irritating to the skin if you put an onion and garlic directly on the feet.

Another one you probably already have in your fridge is apple cider vinegar. And at the first sign of illness, even digestive illness, I'll start adding a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in water, and then repeating that hourly or so until the illness disappears. And that's because apple cider vinegar can help kill viruses and bacteria in the body, and it also increases stomach acid production so it can help the body fight an illness.

So I know that's been a lot of remedies in a row, but I'll kinda give you just a checklist that I keep on hand for when any of us get ill. And I actually would recommend any moms out there, make an actual checklist of the natural remedies you have in your home and laminate it, and keep it somewhere that you remember where it is because I found out first hand. I do great if any of my kids get sick or my husband gets sick, I just kick into mom mode and get all the natural remedies out. But if I get sick then my husband will ask me, what do you need? What can I do? And I don't remember any of the natural remedies because I'm not feeling well. So making a checklist is a way to make sure that you get the benefit of your own natural remedies if you happen to get sick.

So if me or my husband or any of my children starts to get ill, this is kind of the pattern that I follow. First of all, not that we eat most of them, anyway, but I remove all white foods: so dairy, grain, sugars, etc., and switch to a diet of mostly bone broth, vegetable soups, and herbal teas, very nourishing things. I also, if there's any kind of upper respiratory thing or ear infection, will put the diluted 3% hydrogen peroxide in the ear. I also use raw garlic in water, like I mentioned, followed by cinnamon and honey. And I do that a couple times a day. I then use my chamomile, yarrow, and peppermint tincture to help soothe the symptoms and then alternate that with a nettle, red raspberry leaf, and alfalfa tea.

And then we also use elderberries syrup every couple of hours during the course of the illness along with vitamin C and apple cider vinegar. And if it's a serious enough illness, I'll make the coconut oil tea as well. I use that a couple times a day as well. And then the onions and garlic on the feet during sleep. And there's recipes for all these on the website and I'll make sure that they're all linked in the show notes. But those have been such a lifesaver for us and I wanted to share them with you.

And I know a lot of people often wonder, you know, are herbal remedies really effective and is it worth the time to make them and isn't it better just to go with conventional treatment? And like I said, I have, definitely, a lot of respect for conventional medicine and I think there is an absolute time and place for it but for some things like the common cold, there just aren't answers with conventional medicine and that's where natural remedies can really shine because there are so many reasons that...natural medicines have been around for thousands of years and they work in ways that we don't, we are just starting to understand even though we've been using them for years.

In fact, herbal medicine is the basis of modern medicine. For instance, aspirin was originally from willow bark and morphine was originally from the opium poppy. And even today, I've heard of doctors recommending turmeric or white willow or curcumin or other substances in conjunction with medical treatments to make them more effective. And as I mentioned at the beginning, 80% or four fifths of the world population still uses inexpensive herbal remedies. And even though we've lost some of our wisdom about that, I feel that we can bring that back and still benefit from it.

And some of the reasons that you might wanna turn to natural medicine when it's a minor illness is that herbs will work with nature and with our bodies and not against it because herbs are...because they're plants and they're a holistic substance, they work to enhance our natural physiological functions and defensive healing reactions. So they don't just target a specific illness or virus or symptom but they help to support the body. So over the long term, this can give us...it can build vitality and build the immune system, whereas long term use of more harsh medicines that just target a specific part of the body can wear the body down.

Herbs are, in general, has gentler, safer, and have fewer negative side effects than traditional medicine. And of

course, herbs can be very powerful and if you have a serious illness or any health condition, you would wanna check with the doctor before using any of them. But the negative side effects of many pharmaceutical drugs cause thousands of unnecessary deaths every year. And so herbal medicines follow more of the hypocratic oath of "Do no harm," because they support the body in a gentle way. And part of why they do that is they have a nutritive value that synthetic drugs lack. So no drug that you can take, no pain killer, no antibiotic is going to rebuild your body. It's not gonna nourish you. It may fix a problem and, thank goodness, they do that they're wonderful to have, but only whole foods and herbs can build the body. In fact, many herbs are considered super foods and their nutrients are better absorbed than even some natural vitamins. Herbs are just a great way to build your body even if you aren't ill.

Also, while herbal medicine can sometimes be slower than conventional medicine, they typically tend to work very well. So you may not get the immediate relief from a headache from a natural remedy that you would get from an aspirin, although I definitely know people who get more relief from peppermint than from Motrin but they tend to work well. So they take longer to work than synthetic drugs but they help address the root of the problem, too, because they're nourishing the body. So while synthetic drugs will give you a quick fix, it's often accepted because over time, they can be masking a deeper problem or wearing down the body.

Also, it's interesting to note that there are herbal therapies that are still unequal by synthetic drugs and I think we're gonna see a lot more scientific research in this, hopefully, in the next few years as we now are unfortunately encountering super bugs and resistant forms of bacteria that don't respond to conventional treatment but we still know that there are natural substances that they respond to. So I hope that we're gonna see a lot more research on that.

Also, herbs are gentle for the liver in most cases, while a lot of different pharmaceuticals can be really harmful to the liver. In fact, many herbs are considered hepatic protective, meaning, they protect the liver and benefit the liver. And whereas any synthetic substances has to be processed by the liver to be removed by the body and over time that can stress the liver. That's even...even some generally considered safe substances like Tylenol carry a warning about the liver for that reason.

Also, herbs are beneficial where conventional medicine sometimes fall short for the immune system because, obviously, our immune system is vital for overall health and for avoiding illness. But for the only response that conventional medicine has especially for people with allergic autoimmune reactions is to suppress the immune system completely, both good and bad, and of course that impairs the body's ability to fight infection. So herbs are able to offer what's called immune-modulatory activity and this is, basically, helps the body's natural immune system relearn how to fight the right thing over time and to rebuild the body's health.

So there's so many reasons to at least give natural medicine a try and again, to repeat the disclaimer, it's not meant to be a replacement for conventional medicine in our modern medicine as it is wonderful, especially, for trauma and acute illness and any kind of injury, they excel at that. Or like I said, I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for the C-section I had with my third child for placenta previa, but not every common cold or little bruise or paper cut needs the intervention of modern medicine and that's where us, moms, having herbal remedies on hand, in your house, in your kitchen can be so vital.

So anyway, thanks for listening. I hope that this has inspired you to build your own natural, herbal apothecary in your home and to prepare for a cold and flu season, especially if you wanna use some herbal remedies like tinctures. This is an excellent time to start because many of them take four to six weeks to make properly and

that gives you plenty of time to get them started and finished, hopefully, before any illness strikes your house at all. So thank you so much for listening. If you want any more detail on anything I've mentioned, there will be links in the show notes. Also, if you would like to get my free "Seven Simple Steps for Healthier Families," guide, you can go to [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com) and subscribe to the newsletter there and I'll send it to you right away. I'd also love it if we could stay in touch on Facebook, [facebook.com/wellnessmama](https://facebook.com/wellnessmama) or on Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest @wellnessmama.

And also a huge thanks, again, to the sponsor for this episode, Oxy Bump. As I mentioned, they're such a unique company that I've recently found. And combining oxygen and homeopathics in a nasal spray which is an incredibly effective delivery method because it's much easier for your body to absorb that very efficiently when it's in intake through the nose. And so they're combining the benefits of oxygen and homeopathic. So they now have several different formulations, I believe there's one for sore throat, one for allergies, just an overall preventative one. And these have gotten really popular, especially in airports or places where people travel because they can be really helpful for avoiding illness in the first place. And that's obviously a lot easier to pick something up when you're traveling. But since it's also a gentle and noninvasive, it's great for children, and especially for children who are just starting school. That's a great way to help them avoid getting sick during cold and flu season or picking up anything at school or if someone in the family gets sick to healthily avoid everyone else getting sick as well.

So big thanks to Oxy Bump for sponsoring this episode. And if you wanna check them out, you can go to [wellnessmama.com/go/oxybump](http://wellnessmama.com/go/oxybump) and you'll find out information about them there.

So as always, thanks for listening. And I'll see you next time.