

Doctor-Approved Home Remedies

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Head-to-Toe Healthy

The All-New Doctor-Approved Home Remedies That Cure Back Pain, Headaches, Insomnia and Much More

By PAMELA BOND

for Prevention

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Home remedies are a staple of natural medicine. They are cheap and fast, often work just as well as a drugstore fix, and may be as near as your spice cabinet, refrigerator or laundry room. To update your arsenal, we asked seven experts to share their latest discoveries, from headache panaceas to simple solutions for stiff backs, indigestion, charley horses and more. Here are their surprising, patient-tested contributions.

Dry, Tired Eyes

Infuse a bag of chamomile tea in 4 to 6 ounces hot water, cool in the fridge for at least 20 minutes, then apply as a compress on eyes for 10 minutes, until it comes to room temperature. Chamomile has a mild anti-inflammatory effect.

The Expert: Paul S. Anderson, ND, associate professor of naturopathic medicine at Bastyr University

Bad Breath

Drink up to 1/4 cup pure aloe vera gel dissolved in about half a cup of water or apple juice. Aloe vera contains an anti-inflammatory compound called B-sitosterol that soothes acid indigestion, a common cause of bad breath.

But go easy; in large doses, aloe vera can work as a laxative.

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The Expert: New York–based herbalist Letha Hadady, DAc, author of *Healthy Beauty*

For more health tips, check out the latest issue of *Prevention*, on shelves now!

Nasal Congestion

Irrigate the nose with contact lens saline solution, using a Neti Pot. Or try putting a few drops of eucalyptus oil on the floor of a hot, running shower and inhaling the steam that accumulates. (Note: The room may be too hot for children.)

The Expert: Benjamin Kligler, MD, MPH, research director at the Continuum Center for Health and Healing in New York City

Less–Than–White Teeth

Combine 1/2 teaspoon baking soda with 1 or 2 drops of peroxide. Brush on, let sit for a few minutes, then rinse (don't swallow) and ta–da enjoy your once–again pearly whites.

Baking soda serves as a safe, light bleach. A baking soda and salt mixture can also restore the shine of dingy teeth as effectively as it polishes your pots and pans; just dip a wet toothbrush into 1/4 teaspoon baking soda and sprinkle with up to 1/8 teaspoon salt.

However, the peroxide recipe is safer for people on no–salt diets.

The Expert: Letha Hadady, DAc

Mild Heartburn

Combine 1 teaspoon powdered glutamine, an amino acid, to fuel gastrointestinal tract cells and cool inflammation; 1 probiotic capsule to introduce good bacteria to the gut; and 1 teaspoon herbal marshmallow or slippery elm powder to coat and soothe the digestive system. These ingredients are available at health food stores.

Mix with 6 to 8 ounces yogurt or applesauce (to get everything down) and take one or two times a day for 8 to 10 weeks.

The Expert: Paul S. Anderson, ND

Mosquito Bites

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Rub liquid laundry detergent on the spot and let dry. The liquid soothes the skin, dries the bite to reduce irritation, and seals the area from outside irritants.

The Expert: Paul Lyons, MD, associate professor of family and community medicine at Temple University School of Medicine

Restless Legs Syndrome

Drink a 6–ounce glass of tonic water each night before bed until symptoms go away. Tonic water contains quinine, which stops repeated muscle contractions.

The Expert: Paul Lyons, MD

Charley Horse

Use your thumb to apply pressure to the middle of the calf for 30 seconds. "When you release, the cramp should have subsided."

The Expert: Ben E. Benjamin, PhD, author of Listen to Your Pain

Corns

Soak the area for 10 to 15 minutes, and then apply an exfoliating scrub of water and either salt or brown sugar (3 parts sugar/salt to 1 part water). This will remove dead skin.

The Expert: Doris Day, MD, clinical assistant professor of dermatology at New York University Medical Center

Headaches

Try do–it–yourself acupressure. Feel along your trapezius, the large muscle that runs from the high point of both shoulders and joins your neck. Use your thumbs and index and middle fingers to squeeze the muscle just below where it attaches to both sides of your neck. You'll be releasing "trigger points," tiny muscle spasms that can cause neck tension and are a common cause of headaches. Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute or have a friend do it for you.

Alternatively, try massaging one or two drops of peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) oil into the same trigger points and the lower neck.

"Peppermint oil relaxes muscles in spasm."

The Expert: Benjamin Kligler, MD, MPH

Sore Throat

Mix together a clove bud, which is antiseptic and fights infection, with 1/4 teaspoon powdered ginger (or 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger)

Doctor-Approved Home Remedies

and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon the latter two because of their anti-inflammatory properties.

Infuse the tea in 2 cups boiling water, and for every cup, stir in 2 teaspoons soothing and sweet raw honey. Sip throughout the day until your throat settles down.

The Expert: Paul S. Anderson, ND

Dandruff

Douse it with a cup of antioxidant-packed green tea, which will naturally exfoliate dry flakes without dehydrating skin. Steep two bags of green tea in 1 cup hot water for 20 minutes to overnight. Once it has cooled, massage the strong tea into your scalp.

The Expert: Letha Hadady, DAC

Pimples

Treat them with tea tree oil and witch hazel, both of which have antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. As soon as you feel a pimple forming, dot either tonic on the area twice a day for 2 or 3 days.

"Never use rubbing alcohol because that only dries out and irritates skin without having any effect on the bacteria that cause acne."

The Expert: Doris Day, MD

Sunburn

Take a lukewarm bath with 1 cup added ground oatmeal (grind it with a mortar and pestle; instant oatmeal works fine), 1 cup whole milk, 2 tablespoons honey and 2 tablespoons aloe vera gel.

Oatmeal is anti-inflammatory, honey is antiseptic, milk's proteins and fats soothe skin, and aloe numbs pain. "Afterward, moisturize with a cream containing hydrating shea butter and aloe."

The Expert: Doris Day, MD

Diarrhea

Drink a cup of chamomile tea. The herb has an antispasmodic effect that stops contractions in the lower intestine.

The Expert: Evangeline Lausier, MD, assistant clinical professor in medicine at Duke Integrative Medicine in Durham, N.C.

Doctor–Approved Home Remedies

Flatulence

Sip 1 cup hot water steeped with 1 teaspoon caraway seeds, which stifle the enzymatic action that causes gas.

The Expert: Evangeline Lausier, MD

Warts

Clean the area. Then cut a piece of duct tape to a size slightly bigger than the wart. Apply the duct tape to the site and rub into place.

Every 3 days, remove the tape and file down dead skin with a pumice stone or nail file. Repeat until the wart disappears. Chemicals in the tape suffocate and kill the wart. Studies show this method works as well as other treatments.

The Expert: Doris Day, MD

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