

Herbalism-Herbal Remedies

Since children have a higher metabolic rate, and good underlying energy in most cases, herbs which stimulate the circulation are generally to be avoided. Herbal teas are one of the most suitable forms of treatment. With stronger preparations such as infusions and decoctions, it is sensible to work on the principle of reaching an adult dose at age 16; hence, a child of 8 will be given half the dose, and at 4 only quarter the adult dose. This can be achieved either by reducing the amount of herb used in the preparation per given amount of water, or by reducing the amount of the preparation given to the child.

Some of the most suitable remedies to give as teas to children are:

Catmint(*Nepeta cataria*): For nasal congestion and catarrh, repeated colds or blocked ears; of special benefit if there is a tendency to get feverish and restless with a respiratory infection or catarrh. Both this and Peppermint(*Mentha piperita*) have a slight underlying bitterness, which indicates their usefulness too in picking up the appetite after a feverish illness.

Chamomile(*Chamomilla recutita*): For most digestive upsets, from stomach pains to indigestion, the effects of over eating, flatulence and diarrhoea. As a mild relaxant, it is a valuable remedy for calming children who get irritable and cross when they are ill, or who find it difficult to get to sleep. Do not make a tea of Chamomile too strong, in the hope of knocking the child out at night, as it can have the opposite effect at an overdose level and make them more stimulated, or irritable!

Elderflower(*Sambucus nigra*): This is the best temperature regulator in feverish illnesses; give a hot tea when the child's temperature is too high and it will induce sweating, so cooling the system, It is very helpful in feverish colds and flu, and will help to relieve catarrh as well.

Lemon Balm(*Melissa officinalis*): This is a wonderful herb for gently aiding relaxation, at the same time acting as a digestive and nervous tonic. It is very helpful in convalescence, and makes a refreshing cold drink in summer; make a tea, ideally from the fresh leaves, and after infusing for a few minutes strain and keep in the refrigerator. It will keep for 2-3 days, and a slice or two of lemon can be added for extra flavour and additional benefit.

Lime Blossom(*Tilia europaea*): For tension headaches, mild digestive upsets and colds/flu with aching in the limbs. A tea of Lime Blossom at night can induce a calm and restful sleep.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*): This is one of the best remedies for trapped wind, nausea and indigestion from rich or heavy foods, Another area where Peppermint is excellent is in the early stages of a cold, with fluctuating temperatures and nasal congestion.

Many of these teas may be blended together(although Chamomile and Peppermint seem to be better kept apart) for extra benefit, and can be used, suitably diluted, for infants- sometimes it is best to add 5 ml(1 tsp) to a bottle of their normal juice or water.

Actually preparing your own infusions can become part of the healing process.

Picking herbs can be fun for children too.

A posy of fresh, sweet-smelling herbs was called a tussie-mussie or nosegay in Elizabethan times and was used to ward off foul odours and potential germs.

About the Author

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