



Summer First-Aid, Naturally

Nothing can spoil summer fun like bug bites, sunburns and scrapes. While you can't avoid every summer mishap, you can minimize your risk and be prepared with natural treatments.

Malia Curran, a Whole Foods Market nutritionist, says the best way to prepare for, prevent and soothe summer ouches is by assembling an all-natural first-aid kit for summer.

"People generally spend more time outdoors in the summer, so having a natural first-aid kit ready can help take care of those minor injuries," said Curran. "Fortunately, there are natural options for taking care of everything from bug bites and motion sickness to scrapes and strains."

Secrets of Suncare

Mineral-based or physical blockers reflect rays from the skin with minerals such as titanium oxide and zinc oxide. These provide protection from UVA (the rays that burn) and UVB rays (the ones that age skin). Sunscreen should be re-applied every few hours.

If you do get a burn, consider natural remedies like:

* Peppermint oil, calendula oil or St. John's Wart extract, which help reduce body heat and promote a healthy inflammatory response in the skin. Adding a few drops to lotion or a cool bath will ease the burn immediately.

* Witch hazel or green, white and black brewed and cooled teas, which promote skin healing and a healthy inflammation response because of the tannins they contain.

* Lavender essential oil diluted in water or carrier oil, vitamin E or avocado oil, all of which promote skin's healing.

Bye-Bye Bugs

One way to prevent bug bites is to take B-complex vitamins and eat garlic and onions, which make skin less appealing to mosquitoes. Applying diluted essential oils like lemongrass, evergreen and eucalyptus to skin and clothing disguise body scent and ward off mosquitoes, while lavender, basil and geranium essential oils help keep biting flies away. Skin experts also recommend natural DEET-free insect repellents which are safe for kids.

When treating bug bites, try these natural remedies:

* Crushed oatmeal bath, which

soothes skin and promotes healing.

* Crushed basil leaf or extract and topical clay, which soothe itching and stinging pain.

* Ledum, a homeopathic medicine derived from wild rosemary, can be used for swelling and apsis for stings.

Ready Relief

For relief from minor cuts, burns, scrapes and splinters during the summer, stock an all-natural first-aid kit with tea tree oil or witch hazel to clean and soothe painful skin. Lavender and calendula ointments also promote healing and a healthy inflammation response in the skin.

Soy sauce can ease the pain of a burn and help prevent it from blistering. Comfrey ointment or a comfrey compress will also help heal skin, while a slippery elm compress may help dislodge splinters.

As part of its "Be Good to Your Whole Body" campaign, Whole Foods Markets is offering in-store lectures and podcasts with tips on putting together your own all-natural first-aid kit. Check with your local store for upcoming events.

To learn more about natural first aid, visit www.wholefoodsmarkets.com.

—Courtesy of Family Features
Source: Whole Foods Markets

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