Great Grandma Revisited
First-Aid Remedies

By Relic

Summertime: scrapes, bruises and burns - how they do go together. With kids around, they're just a part of living. First aid kits are the order of the day: a spray for this, a lotion for that, and an ointment for something else, and plenty of Band-Aids on hand for decoration! Deciding which one to use can be confusing.

Great Grandma had her herbal remedies that usually did the trick. Her favorite was comfrey, only she called it knit-bone and used it for almost everything. There is a substance in comfrey that causes healthy cells to multiply rapidly while dissolving the bad cells. Modern-day science calls this substance allantoin.

In those long ago days there was another important herb. Great Grandma couldn't afford it, even if she could have found it. The medicine plant (aloe) was worth its weight in gold and precious gems. Only the wealthiest could afford to import it. A single fleshy piece held against a wound would stop heavy bleeding and act as a local anesthetic. Burns vanish if you can apply it quickly enough.

We have the best of both worlds. Comfrey and aloe are both inexpensive and easy to get. Combined into one herbal remedy, they do a beautiful job.

Witches Brew

8 oz. young tender comfrey leaves
8 oz. aloe vera gel
20 oz. petroleum jelly

Melt petroleum jelly in a glass or porcelain bowl over hot water. Heat to 100' - 102'. no hotter and
no metal!

Mince comfrey leaves and add to melted petroleum jelly. Hold at above temperature for 20 minutes (Allantoin is extracted at this temperature from comfrey, while metal destroys it.)

Strain through cheesecloth. Stir in aloe gel. Whip in blender for creamier appearance. Pour into jars... it's ready to use. Note: Makes a great face cream, too! (a little bonus)

Multi-purpose Cure
(muscular to respiratory)

Oh... ouch! Pity the poor aching back whenever its spasms are having spasms. Just a nagging backache or tennis elbow is bad enough, but those spasms can leave a person rigid with pain.

The doctor can give you muscle relaxants and pain pills... unless the spasms strike at night or on the weekend, as they usually do. What's really needed is a quick and easy-to-make home remedy.

Great Grandma was lucky enough to have friends among the Indians. They gave her the following herbal recipe to ease the discomfort of aches, strains, joint pain and even colds.

Pine and Pontico

8 oz fresh pine needles
24 oz bear grease (yuk) or 24 oz petroleum jelly
8 oz dried pontico (English name: Wormwood) or 24 oz fresh pontico blossoms

Dissolve the petroleum jelly in a LARGE pan over low heat. When it starts to simmer, add the herbs
and stir frequently. Watch closely as it burns easily. Simmer gently for 20 minutes; strain through cheesecloth or an old nylon (clean, of course.) This can be used warm or cold.

If using dried pontico, it can most easily be kept from burning by preparing in the top of a double boiler. When using fresh blossoms, which are much more potent, use your largest jam pot. This decoction will foam up and over and through your stove if you don't (the voice of experience!).

Spread the ointment on whatever part is hurting and (if possible) crawl into a nice hot bath for half
an hour or so, then go to bed and stay really warm until morning... Try it.... You'll like it.

This same treatment, with the Pine and Pontico rubbed on your chest, back and throat helps get rid of cold and flu symptoms. Works great in a vaporizer, too!

An Old Cure for Poison Oak

Once upon a time, a long time ago... that's a fitting way to start; it's been half a century or more since
that little girl was visiting her great grandma's farm.

The family had come out from the city to get some raw poison oak honey to give her older brother to
immunize him against poison oak. A teaspoon a day will do the trick and what a pleasant, inexpensive way to avoid the tortures of poison oak! You might want to try it as honey butter on your morning toast.

Honey Butter

Whip 1 cup of honey into 1/2 cup of butter. Store in covered container in cool place.

That was all very well, but it didn't seem fair to that three-year-old child that her great grandpa had three hives of bees and her papa had none; she helped herself to two handfuls from a hive for him! Big brother (seven) to the rescue was badly stung. Great Grandma to the rescue and the sting
was quickly gone.

To Remove Poison From Bites and Stings

Pull a bit of plantain (a common weed that grows most everywhere); mash it and hold it on the sting.
In seconds, the poison is drawn from the sting and the pain is gone.

Now, 50+ years later, her three times great-grandchildren don't even come inside with their assorted stings. They hunt up a plantain weed on the lawn or the nearby garden and do it themselves. Ouches turn ouchless in a hurry with plantain.