

Treating Kids Naturally:

Sally Mathrick

NATURAL THERAPIES
for home management of minor
ailments in infants and children



Medical disclaimer

This information should be used as general health advice only. The intent of this book is to educate and empower parents to manage their children's first-aid health issues at home.

It does not replace the need for professional medical and health advice. The information is not complete, and does not cover all diseases, ailments, physical conditions or their treatment, and should not be used in place of a call or visit to a qualified health professional. Sound Medicine specifically disclaims all responsibility for any liability, loss or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the information in this guide.

This book is written from a natural health perspective, based upon the understanding that there is a healing power in nature. The information aims to support, stimulate or make way for that natural healing to occur.

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*“Children ...
born and reared in harmony
with the law (of nature)
will be the future
masters of the earth.
They will need neither
gold nor influence to
win in the race of life -
their innate powers
of body and soul
will make them victors
over every circumstance.”*

Lindlahr, Nature Cure 1912

Father of Naturopathy

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About the author

Sally Mathrick is a university-trained naturopath. She has practiced since 2003 as a natural health practitioner, taking an intergrated approach to working with general medical practitioners, osteopathic doctors, psychologists and other health professionals to support natural healing. Sally resonates with children, and is considered a 'child whisperer' by some. She is passionate about caring for the environment, and understanding the links between the health of the planet and humans. Her driving desire is to support people realise their whole health, thereby creating more health across the globe.

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Introduction

Little ones get sick. It's a fact. It is also true that natural remedies can gently support the body to resolve many of these illnesses, lessening the child's suffering and nurturing immune development at the same time.

Natural therapies provide gentle, effective options for treating common childhood illnesses. These can often be the first approach to treating minor ailments, or they can be used alongside pharmaceutical preparations. This ebook is a general guide to some of these therapies.

Natural remedies can be loosely defined as medicines that have not been manipulated or changed by human processing. Natural remedies include foods, herbs, water applications, even care and attention. Mineral salts (aka colloids), nutritional and herbal supplements and homeopathic remedies are also considered natural remedies. While they have undergone some alteration, they still maintain their natural chemistry. Pharmaceutical medications on the other hand usually contain synthetic chemicals, which have proven, specific actions in the body.

Although homeopathy is a natural remedy, it is a different approach to natural healing and has its own section later in this book.

Common ailments and suggested natural therapy

Infants and children will succumb to different ailments as they grow and as their immune systems develop. Once they attend child care or school, they have an increased exposure to a range of viruses which can cause illness. These unpleasant interruptions can be managed gently – in the home – with natural therapies, or a combination of natural therapies and over-the-counter pharmaceutical medicines.



Dehydration

Dehydration is a major concern with infants and children during illness.

The best indicator of dehydration is dark urine or scanty urination. If a child's urine becomes darker than normal, more hydration is required. Keep track of how often they are urinating. Other signs of dehydration are cracked or dry lips and lethargy.

Obtain professional support if your child:

- * is not drinking, or
- * cannot keep fluids down, or
- * passes small amounts of dark urine, or
- * has stopped urinating altogether.

Natural approaches to Dehydration

- Provide access to a sippy cup of water.
- Give the child a wet flannel cloth or ice blocks to suck on.
- Dilute fruit juice with water; use 30% juice to 70% water. Never rehydrate with full-strength fruit juice. Offer diluted juice ice blocks.
- Do not approach the child with fear, pressuring them to drink. Be supportive and ensure drinks are available. If in doubt, don't hesitate to call for professional advice.



Digestion

The digestive system is often disrupted in the first years of life. Little ones are close to the ground and generally explore with their mouths, so it's common for them to be exposed to microbes or other compounds that can challenge healthy gut function. There's a balance to achieve between microbe exposure to help build resilience, and adequate hygiene levels to prevent infection from pathogens.

Children accumulate toxins more readily than adults. This is because their body's detoxification systems are too immature to manage toxins appropriately. However, their digestive system, also called the gastrointestinal tract (GIT), has a phenomenal capacity for rapid healing.

Therefore, be mindful of the types of chemicals your child is exposed to. Many new carpets, mattresses and furnishings are treated with dangerous synthetic chemicals, such as formaldehyde and fire retardants.

The only way to reduce unnecessary exposure to these is by allowing carpets and soft furnishings to off-gas. This can take some time, and is best done by airing outside.

Cleaning products like ammonia and anything containing 'fragrance' should also be avoided, and kept away from babies in particular. These contain a chemical class known as phthalates, which interfere with healthy hormone function. Avoid using plastics, particularly with hot foods and drinks. Never use scratched plastic crockery.

Avoid using insecticides in the house altogether – eg fly sprays, cockroach baits.

Avoid feeding your child foods that have been sprayed with agricultural chemicals. Choose certified organic or spray free foods, or follow the "Clean Fifteen" and "Dirty Dozen" guidelines set out by Environmental Working Group (ewg.org). At the least, wash or soak all fruits and vegetables before consuming.

Ailments of the digestive system include Diarrhoea, Colic, Constipation, and Worms.

Diarrhoea

Mild diarrhoea can be the body's way of clearing the digestive tract. Avoid the temptation to block this natural healing process. Diarrhoea may be due to an intolerance to specific foods. These often include wheat, soy, citrus, dairy or other foods eaten too regularly. Consider your child's diet in relation to food intolerances and seek professional advice if concerned.

Natural approaches to managing Diarrhoea

- Firstly, ensure adequate hydration. If diarrhoea lasts longer than a few hours, consider adding electrolyte salts to the child's water or water/juice to avoid dehydration. These are available from the pharmacy. An alternative is pureed banana mixed with ground, soaked almond meal, a pinch of whole sea salt and water. This provides needed electrolytes. Vegetable or miso broth can be helpful (so long as there is no soy allergy from the miso).
- Yoghurt with live cultures can be helpful; mix it with grated apple and cinnamon to support gut function (so long as there is no dairy allergy). To calm their gastro intestinal function, add in a teaspoon of slippery elm bark powder, available from health food shops.
- Psyllium husks - mixed into yoghurt or over fruit salad - will firm up the stools, whilst supporting cleansing. Use from 1 to 5 teaspoons. Ensure extra water is drunk with this mix.
- Add the contents of a quality probiotic capsule to drink or food, and take as per instruction on the packet. These vary in quantity of colony forming units (c.f.u.) and types of bacterial strains they contain. Generally, strains of *Acidophilus bifidus* and *Lactobacillus bulgaris* can be helpful. LGG strain is well evidenced for managing diarrhoea, as is the yeast, *Saccharomyces* spp.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for diarrhoea*

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhoea comes on rapidly • Diarrhoea comes on after a fright • Child is restless • Child is very thirsty 	Aconite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning diarrhoea drives child out of bed • Soils the bed • Acrid stool • Red anus 	Sulphur

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Colic (stomach ache)

Colic is a pain in the stomach caused by intestinal spasms as a result of wind or an obstruction. Colic generally starts and stops abruptly. There can be incessant crying from agonising pain, and then suddenly, all is fine.

Natural approaches to Colic

- Try to feed from one breast only during each feed. This ensures more balanced milk delivery. Swapping breasts during feeding can result in too much 'first course' milk which is high in protein and milk sugars, and not enough of the second stage fat-rich 'main course'. A high proportion of the sugary milk can cause wind and disrupt digestion. If mothers are only establishing breast feeding, use a milk pump to extract the unused breast milk, to help maintain supply and avoid mastitis.
- Add the contents of an infant or child appropriate, multi-strain, probiotic capsule to the drink or food. This may be continued for a week or more.
- Strong herbal teas (infusions) made from peppermint, chamomile, fennel and ginger all calm digestive function. Ensure you use quality herbs and brew for 3-5 minutes. Add these to the child's bottle or if you are a lactating mother, drink them in abundance so they can flow into the breast milk.
- 'Iberogast' herbal formula, sold by Floridis (in Australia) is well evidenced and very effective for treating a range of digestive issues and is safe for babies in small doses (discuss with your health professional if unsure). Or your local herbalist can prescribe and dispense a personalized blend.
- Lay the infant on the right side after burping, to ensure trapped wind is less likely to get stuck.
- A hot water bottle wrapped in a towel or a warmed heat pack placed over the tummy can help ease pain for some.
- Reflect on what foods were eaten prior to the stomach ache. Try to identify any foods that might be disturbing the gastric tract. Often these are onion, garlic, milk products or other food stuffs that cause intolerances, in either the infant or feeding mother's diet. Remove these from the diet for a period to see if the colic resolves or continues.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for colic*

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbearable pain • Child only quietens with constant patting and carrying • Pain worsens at night • Worse for warm applications such as heat pack or hot water bottle 	Chamomilla
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain is relieved by pressure and warm applications of heat pack or hot water bottle 	Mag phos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colic occurs after mother consumes rich, heavy foods • Onset after eating ice-cream or fruit • Sour smelling stools • Pain is worse in the evenings 	Pulsatilla
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has explosive temper 	Sulphur

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Constipation

Constipation is when a stool doesn't happen regularly and easily. From a naturopathic perspective, 'healthy regular' means having a stool one to three times a day. Remember, infants and children need to find their regularity rhythm, which can be helped along with a wholesome diet high in plant foods. With constipation, stools may be pebble-like, cause pain when passing, or require straining and pushing.

Natural approaches to relieving Constipation

- May be relieved by diet: add a few teaspoons of olive oil to meals; include a few prunes, ensure adequate plant fibres are consumed (vegetables and fruit), avoid excess meat and dairy and drink sufficient water. Consider the dietary choices that may be contributing to the constipation.
- A traditional constipation remedy is a mix of grated apple, cinnamon, raw honey, ground up linseeds (1tsp) and yoghurt.
- Soak linseeds in water for six hours, then strain and have your child drink the soak water, or add it to diluted juice.
- Lactulose is a semi-synthetic laxative that works by osmosis - drawing water into the bowel - and it is most useful if there are hard and dry stools. Lactulose is available from the pharmacy.
- Keep in mind that nervous tension and issues associated with toilet training may result in constipation.
- Add the contents of an appropriate probiotic capsule to drink or food for a week or more.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for constipation*

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, hard stool, often followed by liquid faeces • Stools often need to be physically removed • Particularly appropriate if child desires eggs 	Calc Carb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely large, hard stools after great straining • Partial expulsion but remainder of stool recedes into rectum • Stools often covered with slime 	Silica
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent unsuccessful desire for stool; • Hard, knotty stools: child is fearful on account of pain; • Itching and burning of the anus, which is often red; • Worse at 11am; feeling weak and needing food at this time. 	Sulphur

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Worms

Worms are common in kids.

Three indications of worms:

1. itching bottoms
2. itching noses
3. regular picking of the nose



Natural approaches to Worming

Nurture a healthy environment in the gastrointestinal tract to dissuade worms. Provide a diet of vital, whole foods and encourage your child to wash hands regularly, particularly before eating. Wash all fruits and vegetables prior to eating.

Other approaches include:

- Avoid deep fried foods;
- Reduce sugars;
- Regularly consume natural live yoghurt and fermented foods;
- Sneak garlic into foods;
- Drizzle fermented apple cider vinegar over food and add to drinks (if possible);
- Eat pepitas (the kernels of pumpkin seeds);
- Add the contents of a probiotic capsule into drink or food.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for worms*

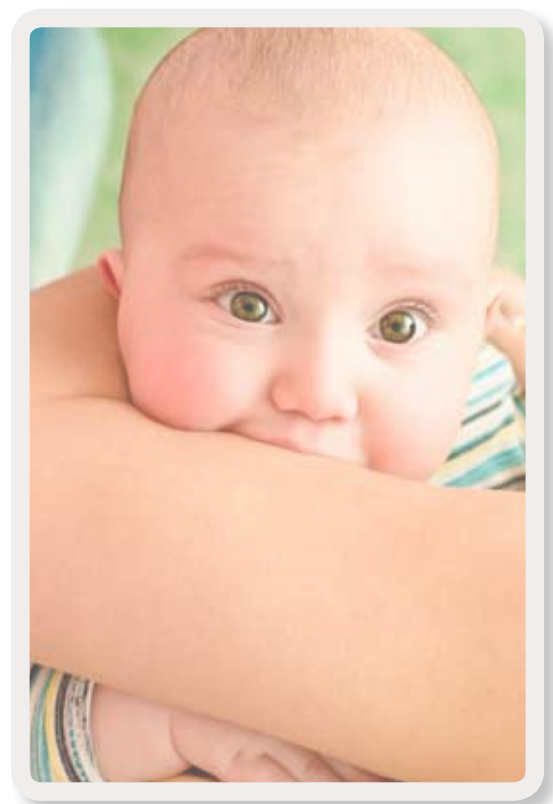
EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly appropriate if child desires eggs; • Child tends towards constipation 	Calc Carb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent worms • Stools often covered with slime 	Silica

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Ear, nose, throat

In normal childhood development, the ears and sinuses are narrow and prone to infection leading to ailments such as earache, sinus problems, sore throat and teething. Aim to strengthen your child's immunity (See Section 2). Also consider diet and possible foods that may trigger inflammation due to intolerances. Removing these may help minimize aggravation and inflammation in these areas. Keep in mind that food intolerance may also cause a wide range of other symptoms, such as mood swings, gastrointestinal problems and so on. A food diary can be helpful to track patterns and identify problem foods.

There are many great herbs that reduce inflammation in the ear, nose and throat, so speak to a qualified herbalist.



Earache

Have earache checked by a professional if there isn't a quick resolution, particularly, if there is discharge. Hearing loss and great pain can result from poorly managed earache.

Natural approaches to treating Earache

- Never poke around in an infected ear;
- Keeping the area warm with a moist flannel or warmed heat pack may help relieve pain;
- A few drops of breast milk inside the ear may help infants;
- 3-5 drops of olive oil infused with garlic dripped into the ear at night is a traditional approach to resolving infections;
- Mullein-infused oil dropped in ear is an excellent preventative medicine, especially after swimming.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for earaches*

If the child is in acute pain, 6C* remedies can be dosed every 15-30 minutes until relief is achieved or change is noted. If there is no relief within an hour, consider providing pharmaceutical pain relief.

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throbbing pain;• Pain that is worse for warmth;• Flushed face with dilated pupils.	Belladonna
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If Belladonna is indicated, and doesn't work.	Ferr Phos
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Screaming because of the pain, unless when being carried.	Chamomilla
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressurised pain;• Child is weeping;• Earache improves when outdoors;• Changeable symptoms and moods.	Pulsatilla
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earache comes on quickly, or after being outside in a cold wind;• Earache comes on when the child is fearful;• Child is restless.	Aconite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earache happen regularly;• Earache is on the left side.	Sulph

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Sinus problems

Sinus problems can be due to the enlargement of the adenoids, the glands that lie behind the nose and which are part of the lymphatic system. Enlargement of these can lead to nasally speech, problems breathing, cough (from post nasal drip) or ear problems.

Natural approaches to managing Sinus problems:

Problems could be as a result of lowered immune function or food intolerance. Simply eliminating dairy foods for a few weeks can alter the condition enormously.

- There are specific pressure points on the face that can be massaged gently to alleviate sinus congestion.
- Inhaling essential oils, such as eucalyptus and peppermint, can decongest sinuses.
- Yarrow, elder and peppermint herbs blended and infused as a tea can help clear congestion in the sinuses.
- It is best to seek a trained wholistic health professional for comprehensive care.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for sinus problems*

You could try a few different remedies, four times a day for 1-2 weeks:

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinus is obstructed; • Child is always hungry; • Feels faint mid-morning; • Dislikes baths. 	Sulphur
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swollen adenoids occur after vaccination; particularly in thin children with large heads; • A tendency to sweaty feet. 	Silica
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blockage clears or improves when outdoors. 	Pulsatilla

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Sore Throat

Sore throats are often due to a bacterial infection, or are an indication of being run down, or can be the result of too much yelling and screaming. In the latter case, use soothing remedies like quiet time, and a chamomile tea with a teaspoon of raw honey. For a bacterial infection, support immune function overall and use approaches listed below.

Natural approaches to treating Sore Throats

- Have your child suck on propolis lozenges, which are made from a bee product and available from many health food stores;
- If child can gargle, gargle regularly on very salty water or a strong sage infusion;
- Drink plenty of fluid – water, hot lemon, grated ginger and honey in hotwater, sage tea.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for sore throats*

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden sore throat, particularly after being exposed to cold winds; • Throat is inflamed or red raw; • Burning thirst and fever. 	Aconite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry inflamed, burning throat, red and swollen tonsils, fever. 	Belladonna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation starts with hoarse voice • There is also redness and ulceration. 	Ferrum phos

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Teething

Teething is a developmental milestone that can cause great pain and discomfort. Sometimes children sail through without any fuss at all. Teething can be associated with diarrhoea, mood swings, fever and sleeplessness. The wide range of symptoms means that many different remedies might suit.

Natural approaches to managing Teething

- Giving the babe something to bite against can help cut the teeth. However, ensure it isn't made of toxic chemicals or full of refined sugars (for example don't use a plastic teething ring or sweetened cereal biscuit). Amber bracelets, made from a resin, are often used to cut teeth on.
- Ice cold teething rings can help, so keep them in the fridge.
- Chewing on a large wedge of lemon might suit some babies.
- Tissue salts can be very supportive too. Consider using Calc Phos (C.P.)
- Add some chamomile tea to their bottles, to help relax and reduce inflammation.

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for teething*

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful teething; • Teeth slow to come through; • Diarrhea, sweaty head, sour smell; • Stubborn. 	Calc Carb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red painful gums; • One cheek red and the other pale; • Child is very irritable; • Stool may appear as chopped spinach. 	Chamomilla
Slight fever.	Ferrum phos
For use as a "homeopathic aspirin" for pain and slight fever.	Mag Phos

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

Skin & allergic reactions

Skin issues and allergic reactions, like eczema or hives, are best dealt with by a trained holistic health professional. Often, they will consider all aspects of the child's health history and treat internal functioning, rather than only treat the skin with a lotion or ointment. Treating with only topical lotions can suppress the symptoms, but not resolve the condition.

Natural approaches to treating Skin Disorders

- Identify any foods that may have triggered the reaction. Common irritants include wheat, milk, soy and some nuts.
- Identify any chemical culprits, such as washing powders used on bedding and clothes.
- Nurturing healthy digestive flora can help to prevent eczema and allergic responses in some children.
- Anti-inflammatory remedies, such as the spice turmeric, can be used in cooking to reduce allergic reactivity.

Fevers

A normal body temperature is 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). Take temperature via the rectum or the mouth. Underarm temperature recording is generally slightly lower than the other two methods. Take the temperature every two hours for safe monitoring.

The danger of constant high temperatures (over 39.5 C/103 F) includes convulsions and subsequent damage to the brain as a worse case scenario. Consider baby Panadol or junior paracetamol if a high fever is not responsive to homeopathic remedies or natural approaches.

From a natural health perspective, fever is a sign of active immune development and the immune system learning to fight infection and eradicate pathogens. Naturopaths encourage supporting a child through a fever, by providing love and attention.

Natural approaches to managing a Fever

- Sponge down with a damp cloth if temperature rises above 39 C/102 F;
- Ensure infants are not over-dressed;
- Give them a tepid bath;
- Provide ample fluids - see dehydration advice;
- If the child has an appetite, provide soft, easily digested foods;
- Breast feeding an infant will support immune development greatly. Mothers can eat foods that contain nutrients to support immune function (see Section 2: Immune supports).

Key homeopathic remedies to consider for fever*

Key fever homeopathic remedies, can be given up to three times an hour, up to 10 doses

(see chart opposite)

EVIDENT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	REMEDY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever comes on suddenly; • Fever comes on after exposure to a cold wind or a chill and/or the child has had fright; • Fever associated with cold sweat or icy coldness of the face; • Child is thirsty; • Skin is hot and dry; • Child is red-faced; • Pressing headache; • Child is restless and anxious; • Fever often results in perspiration. 	Aconite
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High feverish state; • Flushed face; • No thirst; • Skin is burning and steaming hot; • Feet are cold; • Throbbing headache; • Sweating when body is covered; • Often pupils are dilated. 	Belladonna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden onset with swelling in the throat; • No thirst; • High fever yet feels chilly. 	Apis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This remedy is appropriate if there is a low-level infection. 	Ferrum Phos Also available as a tissue salt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid rising temperature; • Great heat and profuse sweating; • Where sweating doesn't bring down temperature. • Pulse is abnormally rapid • Great soreness of the body • Complaints of bed being too hard 	Pulsatilla

*See homeopathic chart and guidelines for usage (p 39) for other possible remedies

*In a 6C homeopathic remedy, the remedy substance has been diluted and succussed six times, leaving just an infinitesimal amount of the initial substance in the remedy. See Section Three for more details.