

# Kitchen to the rescue

Here are some commonly used ingredients from your pantry that can be used as first aid

■ By David Lincoln

**T**hink of a first aid from your kitchen and you may instantly recall your grandma's push for it. Every grandma must have narrated at least one folklore about kitchen ingredients coming handy for every ailment. And who would argue with advice that grandmas

## Honey

Busy kitchens are the most likely places where accidents of minor burns and scalds occur considering one is surrounded by sharp knives and stoves. However, it also is the best room to be in, in case of an injury. The very first thing to do when one happens to get a minor burn is to pour cool water directly over the burn until the pain subsides. Then, as long as it is not too serious, the best substance to use is honey. Cover the burned area with a thin coating of pure honey. If it blisters, resist the temptation of bursting them.

**Caution:** An old wife's tale is to put butter on burns. But it is unwise to do so because it can cause more damage. Applying any other kitchen substance on the burn other than honey and cool water can worsen it.

Whilst at the sink, a tip to remember is that even for minor cuts the best solution is to wash it under running water and then apply direct pressure for about 5 – 10 minutes to stop any bleeding. Kitchen paper roll can be used to halt profuse bleeding but remember to discard the first couple of sheets. In fact, any clean towel or other sterile cloth can be used for this purpose. If the cut is deep, do not wash under water. In-

stead bind it tightly with a towel and keep pressure on it. Seek medical help immediately.

It may come as a surprise to many, but common products that are found in the kitchen could be safely used as a first aid for many minor ailments and accidents. Plus, some foods and spices on most kitchen shelves could help you alleviate the symptoms of

many minor disorders that afflict us.

But first a disclaimer: this is about first aid and minor ailments only. If in any doubt at all, please consult your healthcare advisor. Assess every ailment and injury and seek medical help according to its severity.

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Honey is the one product that is full of anti-viral and anti-bacterial qualities. It has been used for many years to treat all sorts of ailments, both external and internal. The honey found in the tombs of Egyptian Pharaohs after thousands of years was still in pure form proving that it is almost impossible for bacteria to form on the surface.

One could use a teaspoon of honey in a glass of warm water with the juice of a small lemon to help relieve sore throats. Dissolving a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a tumble of warm water, and gargling with the solution helps relieve throat infections.

For other bruises or sprains that require a cold compress, an easier and less messy way than using ice is to use a small packet of frozen peas wrapped in a towel and applied directly on the affected area. This helps reduce swelling and pain. The pack can then be refrozen for future use.



## Fresh garlic

Recent studies indicate that the efficacy of fresh garlic could be similar to antibiotics. Consuming fresh garlic is beneficial because it has the power to regulate blood pressure as well as strengthen the body's defenses against allergies, and viral infections like common cold and influenza. Garlic helps loosen plaque from the artery walls and helps regulate your blood sugar levels. Garlic is also very good at killing and expelling parasites such as pin worms from the body. Minor ear infections can be treated by wrapping a small piece of garlic in tissue paper, and carefully inserting it into the ear. Pain will almost immediately reduce and the infection will start to clear up, it is preferable to leave it overnight for best results.

Garlic can heal the pain caused by insect bites, like those of centipedes. The juice of fresh garlic mixed with salt can be applied to bruises, sprains and ringworms. While most people swear by breath mints to eliminate the bad breath often associated with garlic, a natural solution is to consume a little lemon juice or sucking on pieces of lemon.



David Lincoln, B. Sc., MD, is a master trainer of NLP, a trained clinical psychologist and a Naturopathic doctor with over 40 years of experience of working with people at all levels. He has been living in India since 2005.

## Cinnamon

There is plenty of research that supports cinnamon's blood sugar lowering properties. You can make some powder from cinnamon sticks and put it in some blank pill capsules and take 1 – 2 twice a day.



## Turmeric

Turmeric is often referred to as the 'aspirin' of Asia. This bright yellow-orange powder used in curries, has more healing power than many other spices. It has been used for centuries in ayurvedic medicine to heal wounds and treat inflammatory illnesses like arthritis as well as many other health problems. Made from the powdered root of a plant closely related to ginger, turmeric contains curcumin, a compound that is both, a powerful anti-inflammatory and an antioxidant. It's also non-toxic.



## Baking soda

Besides being a key ingredient of cakes and cookies, baking soda comes in handy for many skin conditions. One teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in a glass of water can help neutralise excessive stomach acidity and flatulence. The juice of half a lemon, mixed with one teaspoon of baking soda and warm water, can help ease minor headaches. Drinking this mixture every 15 minutes can reduce the pain drastically. Did you know that baking soda can also be used to brush your teeth? It is a natural tooth whitener and reduces agents that cause bad breath.

## Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar is another well-known health aid and weight loss catalyst. In fact all vinegars are useful for first aid purposes. Vinegar can fight dandruff and soothe bee stings, sunburns, sore throats and itching from mosquito bites. When consumed daily with warm water, it can relieve pain from arthritis. It can hasten recovery from colds if taken with warm water and honey. It can remove warts and corns if applied directly on a regular basis. You could use it to clean your dentures as well.

