

NATURAL REMEDIES TO MANAGE BUG BITES AND STINGS

We feel pain and itching sensations from bug bites and stings due to irritants left behind in the skin after the bite/sting. The immune system identifies the irritant left under the skin and responds with inflammation and histamine release. There are several natural remedies which provide anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and anti-itch effects. Many of these remedies also draw out the irritants that are left under the skin leaving less behind for the immune system to react to.

When you have a bite or sting, remember to limit scratching the bite to avoid infection at the site. In the case of a sting, ensure the stinger is removed prior to applying a topical treatment.

Note - The following remedies are for uncomplicated bug bites or stings with no associated allergy, fever, or risk of serious infection.

PLANTAIN LEAF (PLANTAGO MAJOR)

Plantain is a common weed found in many environments throughout North America. You may find it near sidewalks or pavement, on the roadside, or in the backyard, garden or park. Look for a wide, oval shaped leaf with five to nine conspicuous veins. Each vein runs down the length of each leaf. When you break the stem, you will see fibers which resemble the fibers found in celery. Mature plants will have small greenish-brown flowers with purple stamens.



How to use Plantain for bug bites or stings? Crush the leaf by rolling in between your fingers. Apply to the affected area. Cover with a full leaf, gauze or bandage until you find relief from the bug bite/sting. If itchiness or inflammation begins to return, use a fresh leaf and repeat above steps.

Note – Chickweed can also be used in the same way to soothe and heal bug bites/stings.

ALOE LEAF

Break aloe leaf and rub the inside gel directly to the bite. Enjoy the soothing, cooling and healing effects provided by this remedy.

CHAMOMILE TEA BAG

Soak a tea bag in water and apply to the bite. The anti-inflammatory properties will help ease the pain and swelling while the anti-microbial effects will help reduce chances of infection. Chamomile tea bags will help speed up the healing process.

Note - Chamomile may cause allergic reactions in people sensitive to plants in the Asteraceae family. These reactions, however, are extremely rare.

OATMEAL COMPRESS

What you need:

½ cup oatmeal
1 clean sock
1 rubber band

Directions:

Fill the sock with oatmeal and attach around the faucet, securing with the rubber band. Fill the tub with the water that runs through the oatmeal sock. Soak for 10-20mins. The anti-itch properties from the oats will help to sooth and heal your bug bites.

You can also use the sock as a poultice or loufa moving it over the affected area (s).

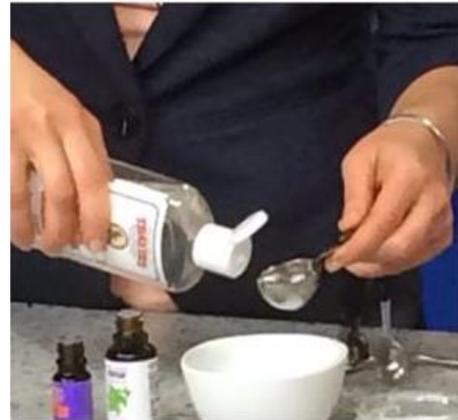
This remedy is also highly recommended for children with eczema, rashes or irritated, inflamed skin.

HOMEMADE ANTI-ITCH CREAM

What you need:

2 TBSP - Witch hazel liquid extract/astringent
1 tsp - Baking soda
2 tsp - Bentonite clay or green clay
1 tsp - Fine sea salt
5 drops - Tea tree oil
5 drops - Peppermint oil

Optional – Add 1 tsp of vegetable glycerine for smoother consistency



Directions:

Mix all ingredients together and apply directly to the bite or sting. Repeat every few hours as required. This soothing remedy effectively draws out the substance causing the itch and provides anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory effects. Start using it as soon as you can after the bite or sting. This remedy can be kept in the fridge in a small jar for approximately 1-2 weeks.

Tip – Keep dry ingredients in a small jar in your first aid kit at home. When you need to use it, just add the liquid ingredients. Water may also be used instead of witch hazel if this is all you have available.