

'Tis the season to be jolly...

"...but sometimes it can be hard with all that life throws at us around this time of the year" says homeopath and oil therapist, Bobby Fox. Here she takes a look at how some of the remedies from her first aid box can help spell out a happy and healthy Christmas.

C

Is for colds

The Christmas break is often when we succumb to the common cold. Taking the homeopathic remedy, Aconite, at the very first sign of a sniffle or shiver can often stop the cold in its tracks. It is especially good where there is frequent sneezing with a nose running with clear, hot-feeling mucous and a patient who is thirsty and feels worse in a stuffy room. It's difficult in the run-up to Christmas, but try to rest up for the first day – it often pays dividends – and tuck yourself up with...

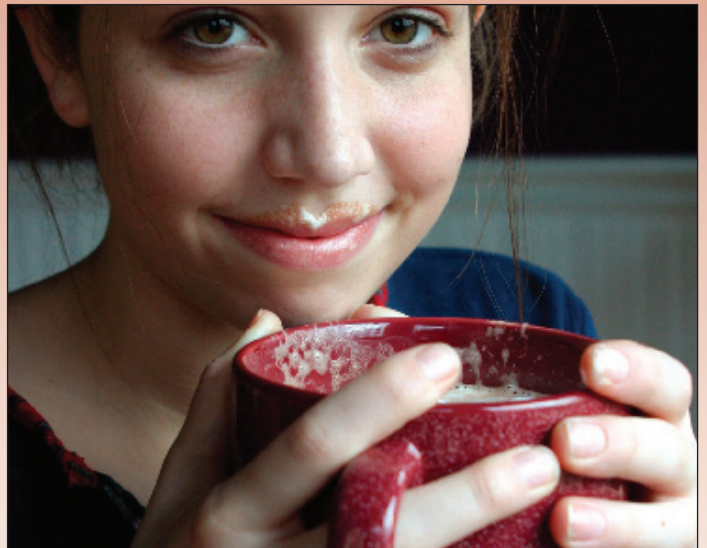
h

Is for hot toddy

You may find you already have all the ingredients for this traditional recipe in your cupboard. If not, they are easy to source and store, ready for when you need them:

- 1/2 oz fresh ginger, sliced
- 1 cinnamon stick (2 if very achey)
- 3 cloves
- 1 teaspoon crushed coriander seeds
- 1½ pints of water

Bring all the ingredients to boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes, then strain and add some honey and freshly squeezed lemon juice to taste. You can add a jot of whiskey too - strictly for medicinal purposes, of course. Drink it while it's still hot. It's important to wrap up warm and rest after this one as the ingredients encourage the body to sweat and you don't want to end up chilled on top of everything else.



r

Is for room sprays

The shops are filled with a vast array of products to make our homes smell fresh and clean - pot pourri, candles, sprays, plug-ins... Unfortunately, many of these contain synthetic ingredients which can cause more problems than they solve. Often patients complain of headaches or respiratory complaints, the start of which can be traced back to when these products were introduced into the home. How much nicer to use a natural alternative which smells great and actually does you some good at the same time. Essential oils are ideal for this – as well as smelling lovely, their natural chemical make-up means that not only can they have antibacterial and/or antiviral activity, but also help lift your mood or relax you in a way that synthetic fragrances are simply unable to do. To make your own spray, just add half a dozen drops of your chosen essential oil to 300mls of warm water in a mister bottle. But remember, if they're in the air, you will be breathing them in, so it's worth buying the best quality essential oils you can, and if they're organic so much the better. A nice blend for Christmas is Pine, Cinnamon and Mandarin. The Pine is a very good respiratory oil and it cleans the air and helps stop the spread of coughs and colds when people come to visit. Mandarin is a lovely gentle oil with a very uplifting, cheering quality.



i

Is for indigestion

Oh dear, overdone it again. Well, that's Christmas! If you feel a heaviness in the stomach and chest a couple of hours after eating rich food, having a few drinks and polishing off some chocs and a couple of coffees (your average Christmas then), try some Nux Vomica. It helps the liver recover and reduces that feeling of nausea and maybe feeling cold and irritable. Great for hangovers too! If you have a bloated abdomen, feel full of wind and are better after belching then Carbo Veg may suit you better.

S

Is for scalds and burns

With all the extra activity in a Christmas kitchen, this risk is increased. If the skin still stings and burns after your usual rush to the cold tap then, assuming it is not an area so large that it warrants a trip to casualty, try bathing the area in tepid water containing one drop of Lavender oil and take some homeopathic *Urtica Urens*. Add Lavender, or HyperCal tincture to any future bathing water and take more *Urtica Urens* if the pain returns.



t

Is for tantrums

Children can often become over-excited at Christmas time. They just cannot calm down and sleep is impossible – they're 'tired but wired'. Homeopathic *Coffea* helps settle this down. Some children become very irritable and as soon as they get what they wanted, they no longer want it. Some homeopathic *Chamomilla* can bring calm and smiles all round, without any harmful side effects.



m

Is for massage

Get one! Before Christmas, after Christmas, or both. Not only can it help reduce muscle tension and induce a more relaxed state, but it can also stimulate the lymph system thereby boosting your immunity.

a

Is for accidents

Arnica is probably the best known homeopathic remedy. It has a special affinity to muscles and soft tissue and is our main remedy for shock and trauma of any kind, and also over-exertion. Take it for any kind of bruising or whenever there is a bruised feeling to any part of the body – ideal for busy toddlers with lumps and bumps from knocks and falls.

S

Is for stress

Stress can manifest itself in all sorts of physical conditions – headaches, digestive problems, skin eruptions – and an experienced homeopath can help with an individual prescription. In the meantime, there are some remedies which may help you cope with symptoms of anxiety. For instance, if your nervous anxiety makes you feel trembly and you can't speak or think properly, *Gelsemium* may help you feel better. If you control your anxiety by forever tidying up and you are restless and maybe worry about your health, then try *Arsenicum*. Feeling very apprehensive or agitated before an event, and perhaps panicky in a crowd or enclosed space look for *Argentum Nitricum*. And don't forget, *Rescue Remedy*, a flower remedy combination made by Bach is great to keep handy and can be used in any situation you find stressful.

Homeopathic remedies are safe for use by everyone. There are usually several remedies for each ailment and they are differentiated by different symptom pictures. The remedies suggested here are those most commonly used in common conditions and are readily available from most high street chemists. If you do not respond to them, then it may be that you need a remedy with a slightly different symptom picture, or a more tailored prescription from a homeopath. Details of qualified and insured

homeopaths, bound by a code of ethics, are available from the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths, tel: 08700 736339, www.a-r-h.org
Essential oils are concentrated extracts from plants and should usually be diluted in a vegetable oil or other carrier before use. Tolerance levels vary for children and adults. Bobby Fox runs homeopathy clinics, and homeopathy classes for beginners, in Whetstone, North London. She can be contacted on 020 8211 3653. ☺