



Daniel I Newman, M.D., N.D., M.S.O.M.

8301 NE Hazel Dell Ave.  
P.O.B. 65759  
Vancouver, WA 98665

TEL 360-696-3800  
FAX 360-696-0906  
[www.rising-health.com](http://www.rising-health.com)

## Sprains, Strains & Automobiles: A First Aid Primer – Part I

Particularly in good weather, I am likely to find patients traipsing into the emergency department with fewer illnesses and more injuries. Sprains, strains, cuts, bruises, bites, stings, burns, fractures, and poison oak are just some of these common maladies. Many people have the mistaken notion that while natural medicine is useful for the prevention and treatment of chronic conditions, when it comes to trauma, or acute or emergent situations, one must turn to conventional medicine. Nothing could be further from the truth. While there are certainly conditions for which conventional emergency medicine is the treatment of choice (such as most acute cardiac events), for the majority of common first aid situations I have found that complementary medicine offers safe and effective treatment choices.

I will focus in this article on those First Aid interventions that you can do at home. Many of the conditions I will discuss respond very well to acupuncture and / or Chinese herbs, but since you can't implement these on your own at home, I will not be stressing their importance below.

In Part I this month, I will focus on homeopathic treatment alternatives. Homeopathy involves the use of substances prepared in such a way as to emphasize their energetic properties, while minimizing their material concentration (and therefore the potential for side effects). A detailed discussion of how to take and store homeopathic remedies is beyond the scope of this article, but may be downloaded free from my website. ([drdanielnewman.com](http://drdanielnewman.com) → Handouts → Homeopathic Remedy Instructions).

Arguably, the homeopathic shining star for the **initial treatment** of blunt trauma (**contusions, abrasions, most lacerations, and fractures**) is the remedy made from the leopard's bane plant: ***Arnica montana***. Arnica is available in topical and oral (sublingual pellet) forms. The oral form is generally stronger and hence more effective. (If you do use the topical form, do not put it on an open wound, as it may be toxic). The key with Arnica is to use a high enough potency. While some people will respond to lower potencies (such as 6C, 6X, 12C, 12X, 30C and 30X), many folks, such as yours truly, get no beneficial effect at all from these over the counter strengths, but require prescription potencies (like **200C, 1M, 10M, or CM**) to garner a good therapeutic response. The dosage is **3-4 pellets** under the tongue for an **adult, 1-2** for **small children**. Lower potencies may be taken every hour or 2 for pain relief as needed, while higher potencies can be used every 4-6 hours (200C), up to every 12-24 hours (1M or higher).

The effects of Arnica can be profound and dramatic. A friend and colleague of mine was riding her bicycle on the streets of Portland a couple of years ago, when she was struck by a car and fractured her pelvis. She took a dose of 1M Arnica on the scene, and required no pain medication either in the ambulance or the emergency room. Her fracture had healed to the point that she could walk without crutches within 3 weeks. About 4 years ago I had oral surgery that included a bone graft that was harvested from my chin with an auger (about as much fun as it sounds!). I took Arnica 200C every 4 hours beginning immediately after the surgery, and never had to use the Percocet prescription I was provided (or any other pain medication, for that matter).

A **basic homeopathic first aid kit** should have not only Arnica, but also the following other remedies, in at least **30C** and preferably **200C** potencies as well:

- **Aconite** (also known as *Aconitum napellus*, or Monk's hood) is perhaps second only to Arnica in its importance as a first-aid homeopathic remedy. It is used for **emotional shock**, and is the first remedy to administer after an accident where the victim appears stunned or freaked out. It is best used in high potency, **1M** or above.
- **Rescue Remedy** is technically not a homeopathic remedy, but rather a **Bach flower remedy**. It is similar to Aconite in its use, as a first aid for **emotional shock** or **anxiety**. It has a more rapid onset of action (almost instant), but a shorter duration. It may therefore be administered prior to (or in lieu of) Aconite. It is available widely as a liquid; dosed **1-5 drops under the tongue** as often as necessary.
- **Ledum palustre** is to **puncture wounds** what Arnica is to blunt trauma. If someone steps on a nail, or is punctured by the fangs of an animal (including snakes), this is the first remedy to reach for. It is also the initial remedy for the localized pain from **insect bites** and **stings**.
- **Apis mellifica** is the remedy to use for **allergic skin** manifestations, such as **hives**, with itching, redness, and heat. Thus, if someone begins to develop such a reaction from an insect bite or sting, or contact with an irritant (such as **poison oak**), or the itchy redness from a **first degree burn**, this is the first remedy to try.
- **Carbolic acid**, in at least a **200C** potency, would be the remedy to use for the more severe allergic manifestations of **anaphylaxis** or **angioedema**: swelling of the mouth or throat, difficulty breathing, wheezing, dizziness and / or tachycardia (from impending shock). Because this is a life threatening condition, carbolic acid should be viewed as an urgent temporizing measure; if it does not immediately abort the attack, the administration of adrenaline (epinephrine), which can be life saving, should not be delayed. All people who know they are susceptible to this condition if triggered by food, insect stings, or whatever, should carry self-injecting syringe kits (such as the **Epi Pen**) in multiple locations such as car, home, and purse. If such a kit is not readily available, or if the individual has not responded to the injection, 911 should be called without delay.

- **Cantharis** is a good choice for the initial treatment of **second degree burns**, where there is blistering and burning pain. **Urtica urens** (nettles) can be useful for this as well. Both of these can also be effective for **urinary tract infections** where there is burning pain.
- **Staphysagria** is the remedy of choice for **sharp clean lacerations**, such as those from razor blades, knives, and glass. (It is also the remedy of choice for ‘honeymoon cystitis’: bladder infection with urgency and frequency, especially when brought on by increased sexual activity).
- **Hypericum** (St. John’s wort) is especially helpful for injuries with **nerve pain**, such as falls on the **coccyx** (tail bone) and crush injuries of the **fingers**. It may be given following Arnica.
- **Symphytum** (comfrey) can assist the healing of fractures, and I have found that administration of a **200C** dose **once daily** for **3-5 days** can cut fracture healing times by 25-50%! In fact, it is so effective in promoting bone growth that **it should never be administered until the bone has been set**, or it can anneal the bone with improper alignment, requiring re-breaking for proper reduction. Arnica should generally be used as the initial remedy prior to reduction.
- **Silica** (or silicea) can help bring **foreign bodies** to the surface for expulsion or removal, such as **splinters** or **glass** shards that have embedded themselves too deeply to be seen. Since this is a gradual process, it is generally administered three times daily in the 6C potency, once daily in the 12C or 30C potency, or once only in the 200C or above potency. Since it may prompt the rejection of any foreign material from the body, it **should not be used in the presence of surgically implanted materials such as prostheses, clips, or orthopedic hardware**, when movement or expulsion would be inadvisable.
- **Arsenicum album** is useful in the treatment of **food poisoning**, particularly where there is nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and chills. If an individual has not responded to a dose within an hour, then **Veratrum album** is a good second choice.

While the above remedies will be effective in the majority of cases, homeopathic medications are very specific in their scope of action, and there may be a situation where a different remedy is required than the ones noted above.

D.N.