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Topical Home Remedies the Easy Way

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What will you do when tubes of triple antibiotic cream is no longer as close as the pharmacy department of the nearest Wal-Mart?

With a little study and preparation, you'll make your own, of course. I have a child with numerous allergies and sensitivities, so even now, with the commercial salves readily available, I prefer the peace of mind that comes from making my own topical remedies so that I know every single ingredient contained within.

Salves and balms are very simple and can be made in a few easy steps. They have two basic components – the base and the healing herbs.

Step 1: Create a Base for Your Salve Base

- Petroleum Jelly – I'm not a fan – if you are going to the effort of using natural non-chemical products, you might want to reconsider a base made from petroleum.
- Beeswax (not good for people with pollen allergies). Also added to salves to harden the oils more easily. For two cups of plant based oil, use 1 1/2 ounces of beeswax. For smaller quantities of salve: one ounce of oil will need about 1/2 teaspoon of beeswax to harden the salve.
- Lanolin
- Plant oil (grape seed oil, coconut oil, olive oil) – these are rich in vitamin E
- Honey (has the benefit of being a natural antibiotic)

Typically, for a larger quantity of salve, you will use around 1/2 to 1 cup of oil. Keep in mind that you want to use enough oil to cover 1 inch above the herbs while they are heated. Once you have chosen your base, then it is time to select your "herbal medicinal" ingredient or ingredients. (See below for a directory of some commonly found medicinal herbs.)

Step 2: Add the Healing Herbs or Essential Oils

If you have essential oils available you can skip the step for extracting the medicinal qualities from the herbs. Otherwise, use this process to extract the healing properties of the herbs.

1. On a double broiler, stir the 1 cup of plant-based oil and herb or herbs on low heat for one to two hours, stirring often. Ensure the oil is covering the herb blend. The longer you cook the herbs in the oil, the stronger your mixture will be.
2. Alternatively, use your crockpot on a low setting to extract the medicinal qualities from the herbs. In the crock pot the process takes 3-5 hours but the mixture does not have to be tended and stirred. It takes longer to extract the healing qualities from roots than from leaves.

3. Using cheese cloth or an extremely fine mesh colander, strain the herbs from the oil. Place the oil back into the top of the double boiler and add beeswax to harden the salve. Stir until completely melted.
4. Check to see if the balm has hardened sufficiently by dipping out a small amount in a spoon and allowing it to cool. If it is still runny, you need to add more beeswax.
5. Pour the mixture into a sterile container and add essential oils or vitamin E oil (if desired), stirring well. Store in a cool dry place.
6. Always test a skin patch before wide use, and then, if there is no reaction, most salves can be used as needed several times per day.

Using the directions provided above many different salves can be created. Try some of the following combinations or refer to the [30 Most Popular Herbs for Natural Medicine](#) ^[1] for more examples of herbs that can be used medicinally.

- Aloe Vera and Vitamin E – great for burns and sunburns
- Calendula and Comfrey – soothing for rashes, burns and minor irritation
- Aloe Vera and Vitamin E – great for burns and sunburns
- Goldenseal, Comfrey and Echinacea – antibacterial
- Black Walnut, Burdock, Echinacea and Tea Tree Oil – fungal infections
- Eucalyptus oil and Camphor oil – Chest rub (like homemade Vick's)
- Arnica Flower – sprains, sore muscles and bruises
- Tea tree oil and Lavender oil – antibiotic
- Chamomile and comfrey – soothing for rashes and insect bites
- White willow bark – mild analgesic

One day you may be looking to nature for your pharmaceuticals. As well, consider planting the herbs (many of these are perennial) and/or locating places in your area where they grow wild. Do some research – find out what bounty nature provides in your locale and find out how the items can be used in your natural medicine cabinet.

For more homemade salve recipes, [click here.](#) ^[2]

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[1] 30 Most Popular Herbs for Natural Medicine: http://readynutrition.com/resources/30-most-popular-herbs-for-natural-medicine_06092011/

[2] click here.: <http://www.wildroots.com/salves.htm>

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