

Homeopathic Healthcare
George Guess, MD

Natural Treatments for Sunburn and Heat Exposure

Summer's coming. A pleasant prospect, to be sure, but one that can be to one's detriment should one's passion for being outdoors overcome common sense. Sunscreen use is a must now, not only to avert sunburn, but also to avoid skin cancer. Still, inadvertent sunburns will occur. When they do, homeopathic medicine can provide considerable relief. The common remedies for sunburn, as well as other complaints from heat (heat exhaustion and heat stroke), are described below. Have a happy and safe summer.

Topical Treatments for Sunburn

Apply aloe vera gel to the affected areas liberally; if badly burned, use a salve made of St. John's Wort (*Hypericum*) and *Calendula*. A compress of apple cider vinegar (2 parts) and olive oil (1 part) might provide relief, as can milk compresses. An external burn gel containing *Calendula* and *Urtica urens* or *Urtica dioica* can also help. An aromatherapy technique — spraying or rubbing the affected area with lavender and chamomille — is yet another soothing treatment.

Homeopathic Treatment of Sunburn

Minor or mild sunburn usually finds relief in *Urtica urens* (stinging nettle).

Severe sunburn, with intense redness and burning pain, calls for *Cantharis* (Spanish fly). If sunburn causes blister formation and restlessness, try *Causticum*.

A 30C potency of the indicated remedy, taken every 3-4 hours as needed until improvement begins is recommended.

Heat Prostration

Heat prostration and heat stroke share several symptoms in common: weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, blurred vision, irritability, and sometimes cramping muscles. In heat prostration the skin is cool and clammy, and the pulse is less than 100 and not bounding.

The following remedies often speed recovery from heat prostration. The indicated homeopathic remedy should be taken in the 30C potency every 15 to 30 minutes until symptoms begin to diminish. Persons suffering severe reactions to the heat should seek professional medical care in addition to taking the appropriate homeopathic medicine.

Veratrum album (white hellebore) is useful in most cases of heat exhaustion. There is prostration with clammy sweat, pallor, nausea, marked weakness, and sometimes rapid pulse.

Cuprum metallicum (copper) is indicated if significant cramping accompanies the above symptoms.

Carbo vegetabilis (vegetable charcoal) displays profound weakness; patients will be so exhausted they have trouble breathing and have air hunger; they may want to be fanned.

Heat Stroke

In heat stroke the skin is hot and dry, the pulse is rapid and bounding, and the body temperature is very high. The affected individual may vomit, convulse, and/or become delirious. While one awaits the emergency medical technicians, try either...

Belladonna (deadly nightshade), which corresponds to the following — burning, dry, flushed skin, dilated pupils, strong pulse; there may be a throbbing headache. The sense of heat is felt

primarily in the head. The head symptoms may be relieved by bending the head backwards, uncovering, and sitting quietly.

Glonoinum (nitroglycerine) has symptoms similar to Belladonna plus an intense bursting headache; the patient is liable to hold his head with his hands. The sensations of pulsation are felt more diffusely in Glonoinum, all over the body, than in Belladonna, more in the head. The head may feel very large. Symptoms are aggravated by bending the head backwards and applying cold water; they are made better from uncovering and open air.

Dr. Guess is a family physician and has practiced classical homeopathic medicine since 1978. He maintains a private family practice in Crozet, Virginia, near Charlottesville. He is the past editor of the American Journal of Homeopathic Medicine (a professional homeopathic medical journal) and Vice-President of the American Board of Homeotherapeutics (a national homeopathic specialty board). www.drgeorgeguess.com.