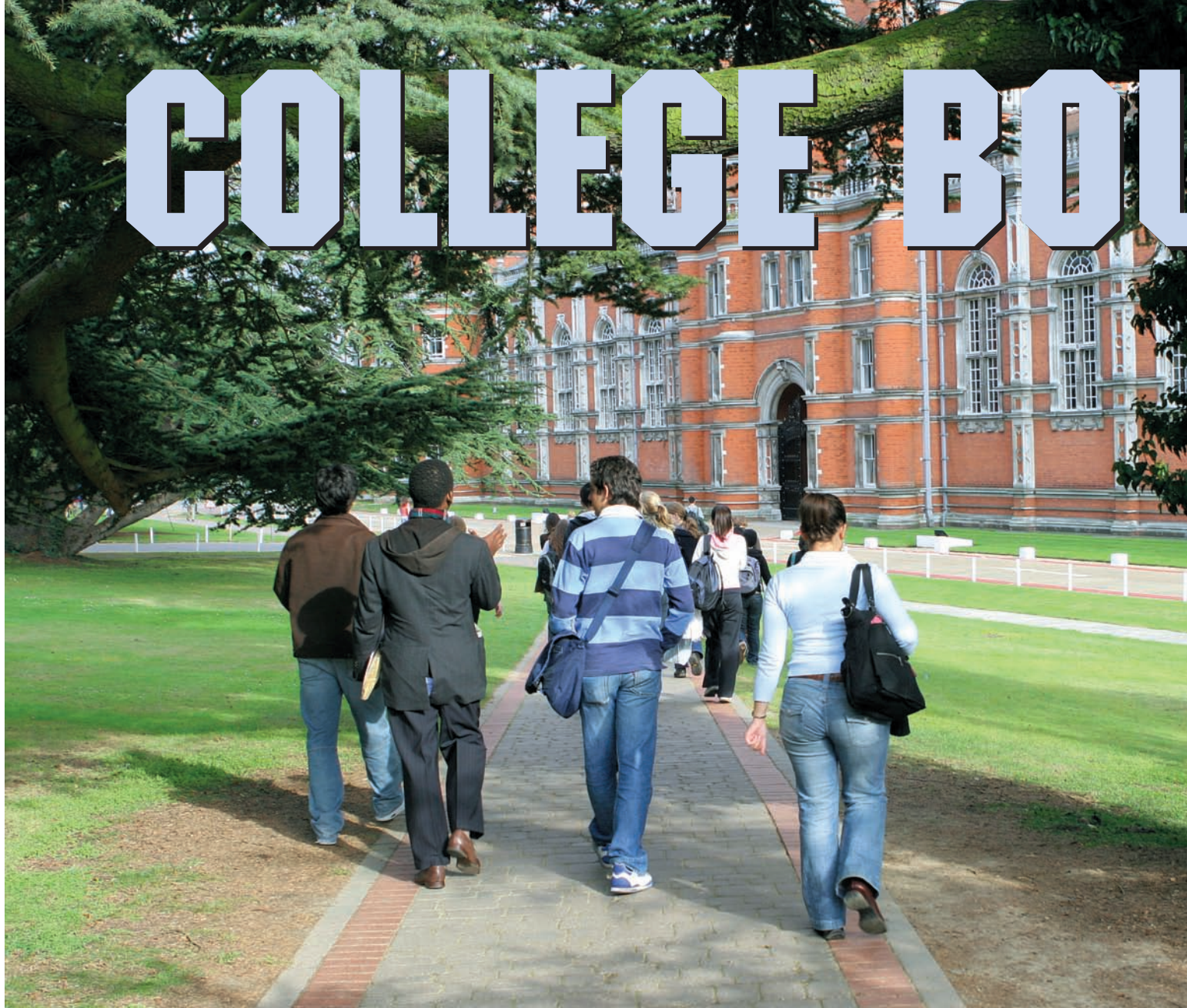


COLLEGE BOU



Pack the kids off to school with natural remedies

by AMY ROTHENBERG, ND, DHANP

WITH THREE TEENAGERS UNDER OUR ROOF AND THE COLLEGE SEND-OFF coming up very soon, I have already created a natural medicine packing list for when our kids take that big step out the front door and into dormitory living. A few years back, I hand-wrote and hand-bound three copies of a small book called *Mom's Home Remedies*—one for each child. I may publish this little ditty one day, but for now, the volumes are packed into the three small storage boxes that house my children's college-bound “natural pharmacy.”



After raising our kids with homeopathy and natural therapies, it would be odd to imagine any of them reaching for conventional medicines for the first-aid and acute health problems that are bound to arise once they are living on their own. Increasingly, they ask me for natural medicine help in order to offer assistance to their buddies for everything from menstrual cramps to headaches, allergies to poison ivy. They are *not* dispensing medicines from their school lockers, I'm happy to say—but it makes me glad to hear that they are at least *thinking* about natural medicine solutions for what ails the people in their lives.

If you, too, are getting ready to pack your teenager off to college (or perhaps on their first trip away from home), what natural medicines should you send with them?

First things first

If you know your child's constitutional remedy (i.e., the one homeopathic remedy, typically prescribed by a professional, that has helped your child's overall level of health on a number of occasions), then I would make sure you send them off with a few doses of that remedy in the 30c, 200c, and 1M potencies, just to have on hand. Should an illness arise, I would encourage

With respect to potency/strength, I prefer the 30c potency for a first-aid kit because this potency is strong enough to help and to have lasting effects for most people with acute illnesses. I would also send along the first-aid book, *Homeopathic Medicine at Home* by M. Panos, MD, and J. Heimlich, which is easy to use and covers most of the basic health problems that may arise.

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my child to consult with the homeopath who initially prescribed that remedy to see if another dose was recommended. Many times, a simple repetition of the constitutional remedy can give just the support the body needs to get over a particular injury or illness—especially if the person's physical general symptoms (body temperature, food cravings, thirst, and basic temperament) have not shifted markedly during an illness, and the symptoms of the acute illness are included in the indications for that constitutional remedy.

Being in a new situation, eating different food, and being exposed to a new set of germs are all *stressors* to the system, so it would not be unusual for a young person to succumb to illness in the first months of being away. That's why I try to see all my college-bound patients in the summer before they take off—just to check in with them and perhaps give them a dose of their constitutional remedy.

Remember the remedy kit

A small first-aid homeopathic medicine kit with a simple, easy-to-follow list of indications would be a wonderful going-away present for any college student. A variety of well-packaged kits are available for sale from homeopathic pharmacies, and since homeopathic remedies have a very long shelf life (they last indefinitely when stored under normal conditions), such a kit could become the basis of a student's future home pharmacy, years down the road.

If my son or daughter fell ill at school, I would encourage them to prescribe for their illness on as broad a basis as possible; that is, if I were supporting them by phone or email, I would try to glean information for a full homeopathic case, developing a complete profile of their symptoms on all levels—mental, emotional, and physical. That said, oftentimes, keynote prescribing (where remedies are chosen based on just a few key symptoms of both the remedy and the patient) can be helpful for first-aid and acute situations.

Essential remedies

Below, I have listed some of the remedies most commonly found in 30-remedy and 50-remedy kits on the market today, plus a few of the common indications for using these remedies. This will give you a sense of the sorts of ailments a student might try to help themselves with while living away from home.

- ✓ **Aconite** for the first signs of any inflammation, the very beginning of a cold or sore throat; it can abort or shorten the duration of an illness.
- ✓ **Apis** for swelling and redness from bug bites or poison ivy.
- ✓ **Arnica** for trauma, inflammation and bruising, and for the stronger-than-usual sports injury.
- ✓ **Argentum nitricum** for the student with stage fright or diarrhea from anxiety.
- ✓ **Arsenicum album** for an attack of food poisoning; it may also be useful for

many other acute inflammatory responses (e.g., colds and flu) where the student feels cold, wants warm drinks, has burning pain, and feels anxious.

- ✓ **Belladonna** for the first stages of inflammation where there is a feeling of heat and throbbing, usually accompanied by a fever, and where the person has glassy eyes and wide-open pupils.
- ✓ **Bryonia alba** for acute upper respiratory illnesses or musculoskeletal complaints, typically accompanied by aching, dryness throughout, constipation, irritability, and heightened thirst.
- ✓ **Gelsemium** for flus or colds that leave the sufferer wiped out, exhausted, with heavy eyelids, and perhaps a headache; also useful for anxiety before a test or performance.
- ✓ **Ignatia** for the bad sore throat that is better from eating rough food; and of course, this remedy is also useful for the inevitable first heartbreak.
- ✓ **Kali bichromicum** for sinusitis with thick discharges and headaches occurring in small spots over the eyes.
- ✓ **Lycopodium** for digestive upset, gassiness, and irritability.
- ✓ **Mercurius vivus** for upper and lower respiratory tract complaints that are accompanied by excess salivation, lots of green-yellow mucus, and excessive perspiration.
- ✓ **Nux vomica** for dietary indiscretion or overindulgence in alcohol (hangover); also for occasional constipation, irritability, and upper respiratory infection with much runny nasal discharge.
- ✓ **Pulsatilla** especially for the homesick son or daughter who cries easily and has a difficult time with separation from home (and may also have a cold with lots of bland yellow discharges).

Tailored to your child

If I knew that my child tended toward certain kinds of acute illnesses that respond to particular remedies, I would be sure that those remedies were contained in the kit. I would also include any other natural medicines that might be relevant for the young adult in need. For instance, if I had a daughter who was susceptible to urinary tract infections, I would be sure the kit contained the homeopathic remedies



KITS MAKE GREAT GIFTS

for students, newlyweds, new parents, friends, relatives...

A wide variety of homeopathic kits are available. Check out these excellent sources:

- **1-800 Homeopathy:** www.1-800homeopathy.com or 1-800-HOMEOPATHY
- **Boiron:** www.boiron.com or 1-800-BLU-TUBE
- **Hahnemann Labs:** www.hahnemannlabs.com or 1-888-427-6422
- **Hyland's:** www.hylands.com—sold via natural food and drug stores
- **Natural Health Supply:** www.a2zhomeopathy.com or 1-888-689-1608
- **Washington Homeopathic Products:** www.homeopathyworks.com or 1-800-336-1695

Staphysagria, *Causticum*, *Belladonna*, and *Cantharis*. I would also make sure she had an herbal tincture that contained botanical medicines good for the bladder, such as slippery elm and cranberry.

If I knew my son or daughter was often injured in athletic pursuits, I would be sure the kit contained *Arnica*, *Rhus tox*, *Ruta*, and *Bryonia*. I would also be sure to pack the herbs bromelain and curcumin, both excellent for reducing inflammation and preventing adhesion formation.

Essential natural medicines

Some general natural medicines I would send along with any child include:

- ✓ **Acidophilus:** This and other probiotics help keep the normal bacterial flora in balance in the digestive tract; it is also good for yeast infections in young women. I would find the kind of probiotic that doesn't need to be refrigerated.
- ✓ **Bromelain:** As mentioned earlier, this enzyme is excellent for sports injuries like muscle strains and sprained ankles; it can also help to thin mucus and reduce inflammation during an acute upper respiratory illness.
- ✓ **Charcoal tablets or capsules:** Charcoal can offer relief to the student suffering from dietary indiscretion, strong gas, bloating, or food poisoning. For the student with a sore throat, sucking on charcoal tablets (not capsules) can help to pull infection away. Make sure your child is aware that ingesting activated charcoal will cause the stool to turn black temporarily and that it's not a cause for concern.
- ✓ **Vitamin C and Zinc:** I tell my children to take Vitamin C and Zinc when starting to feel under the weather or when living in close proximity to others who are ill.
- ✓ **Vitamin-Mineral-Botanical Complex:** There are many such general vitamin-mineral-botanical complexes available that are excellent for helping bolster immune function. I like one called Vita-biotic (made by Eclectic Institute) which contains Magnesium, Zinc, Bioflavonoids, Echinacea, Garlic, Myrrh, Ginger, Cayenne, and Vitamins A, C, and B-6. I would instruct my child to take it as directed to prevent illness after exposure to others who are sick or at the first signs of feeling run down. It can also be used therapeutically for a cold, sinusitis, bronchitis, or earache. Such complexes help the body do its work of fighting illness-causing bacteria or viruses.

At-the-ready...

Most of the non-homeopathic natural medicine products listed here are available at natural food stores, so depending on where your child lands, they can likely find these supplements when needed. With the widespread use of cell phones

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and email, directions can easily be delivered should problems arise.

But a sick teenager away from home may not have the wheels or the where-withal to find these products, so it's nice to be prepared. If unopened, most of these natural medicines can remain in a dorm room for months while retaining their potency. That's why I have created a traveling first-aid kit in a small storage box that can be easily placed under a bed or on the top shelf of a closet. I have the homeopathic remedies, the book, the botanical medicines, and vitamins all packed away in this box—so it's in one place and readily available should any need arise.

Saying goodbye

Lastly, for the mothers, fathers, and siblings left behind, it's good to recognize that this transition—no matter how carefully planned for, no matter how ready both child and parent are—is a stress. We homeopaths often notice that a patient's chronic symptoms flair up in the months sur-

rounding a departure. We see stress as having potential impact on the physical, mental, or emotional body and know that each of us tends to react to stress in a patterned, almost predictable way. Scheduling a routine visit with your homeopath around such times of transition, even if things seem to be going well, is always a good idea.

It is an odd job-description, that of parent. You pour your heart and soul into the raising of your children, dedicate endless hours, broad-ranging resources, and countless moments of worry—and then, poof! Fledge them from the nest. It is the right order and the appropriate next step at some point for most families in our cul-

ture, whether it is sending a young adult off to college, work, travel, or just to live out from under the roof they have always known. But knowing that doesn't make the job any easier!

A little peace of mind

Still, packing your child off with a small box filled with a few tools and remedies to help them when illness might occur can give parents at least a tiny bit of comfort. And then, of course, when the last one(s) are off, the new phase of life begins for the parent, hopefully full of discovery and adventure, inside and out, time for reflection, and the transferring of energy into one's own interests and passions.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Rothenberg, ND, DHANP, is the mother of Sophie (17), Misha (15), and Jonah (14), and though she has relished her years raising a family, looks forward to the time when her kids are grown and off on their own adventures. With her husband, Paul Herscu, ND, DHANP, she teaches for the New England School of Homeopathy (NESH). For information on NESH and on the new Two-Year Certificate Course scheduled to begin in February 2007, or to subscribe to the online Herscu Letter, see www.nesh.com.



How Jake Beat Exam Exhaustion

by MIRANDA CASTRO, FSHom, CCH

Eighteen-year-old Jake was having a tough year in school with an extra-heavy load of courses. His dad gave him *Kali phosphoricum* 6c on occasion to help with tiredness when he was feeling particularly low, and that had helped Jake make it through. But by the end of the course sessions after studying for and taking his final exams, Jake was absolutely exhausted.

He gave himself a week to rest and eat well thinking he'd pick up quickly—but he didn't. He didn't even have the energy to go out and enjoy himself, and after a week of feeling dreadful he asked his dad if he had any other "magic pills" that could help. Jake's dad sat him down and asked Jake to describe his symptoms.

Jake said that in addition to feeling wiped out, the worst symptom was that he was suffering from twitchy legs. They would start to twitch any time he sat down, making it impossible to relax. It was even worse at night in bed because when he was dropping off to sleep, his legs would suddenly start to twitch and jerk, waking him up again. This was maddening because it meant Jake wasn't getting the sleep he needed. He said he'd lost the ability to relax. He also had a bursting headache most of the time, as if his brain cells were worn out with the stress of studying (although this was better in the fresh air), and his eyes felt strained—sore and gritty.

Jake's dad had noticed that Jake had been moodier than usual and had been particularly uncommunicative, worse than anything he'd pulled out of the adolescent hat so far. Jake's father remembered reading about a homeopathic remedy for restless, twitchy legs in people who have been under a lot of mental strain, and he rifled through his books until he found it—*Zincum metallicum*. He told Jake to take one dose of *Zincum metallicum* 30c every two hours for the rest of the day and then twice daily for a day or two at the most.

The next day, Jake felt more tired than ever—but his headache had gone, and now that he came to think about it, yes, his twitchy legs had finally relaxed. Jake's dad realized that, in relaxing, Jake's body was feeling the build-up of tiredness from the previous months and all Jake needed now were a few long, uninterrupted sleeps. Within a couple of days, Jake felt his energy and his good moods return.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Miranda Castro, FSHom, CCH, is a British homeopath who has been living happily in the U.S. since 1994. She is a Fellow of the Society of Homeopaths (UK) and has been practicing homeopathy since 1983. She is author of *The Complete Homeopathy Handbook*, *Homeopathy for Pregnancy, Birth and Your Baby's First Years*, and *A Homeopathic Guide to Stress*. She practices and teaches in Southeast Florida. Contact her at email@mirandacastro.com or on the web at www.mirandacastro.com.