

HOME REMEDIES

by
Oliver Cameron

Pitch salve

Pitch is an antibiotic, and pitch salve is a very healing concoction. You can put it on any kind of scrape, abrasion, cut, chapped skin—anything like that. I've used it on my lips when they've gotten cracked by being out in the weather too much.

You can collect pitch from pine or spruce trees. Hard pitch comes right off, and you can also scrape away the soft stuff that bleeds out of scars, which is a messy business.

The Indians make half a five gallon can at a time. I usually make it in a number of throwaway tin cans maybe four inches in diameter and five inches tall, like stewed tomato cans.

You fill a can half full and heat it up until the pitch melts. Then you stir in some Vaseline, goose fat, bear fat, or whatever kind of fat you happen to have. Start out with half and half fat, depending on type and hardness of fat. For a harder fat, use more of it.

About one eighth of melted pitch consists of little granular solids that will collect in the bottom of can, so you drain off the mixture of fat and thinned pitch while it's hot. Strain it through some mosquito netting or equivalent, and let it set up.

The consistency should be similar to mentholatum, bag balm, or Vaseline. If it turns out to be too soft, you can reheat it and add some beeswax to stiffen it. If it's too hard, add a little more Vaseline or melted fat.

I don't know how long pitch salve will keep. I'm still using some that I made several years ago. The consistency hasn't changed over the years.

I've also improvised a little bit by opening vitamin A and vitamin D capsules and mixing the contents into the salve, thinking it wouldn't hurt anything.

Pitch salve doesn't especially relieve pain, but it does protect against infection and aid the healing quite a bit. Most of the time I smear a little salve on a band aid and put that over the sore area. That's easier than trying to rub it on a tender sore.

I will also take some on a finger and spread it over an injury. It tends to dry up a little bit, but it doesn't harden on the skin. I cover it with a loose bandage, because clothing will rub on the sore and salve will get on the clothing.

While I'm on the subject, you can chew a piece of hard pitch when you have a sore throat. As you chew, the pitch will get softer with saliva and mouth heat, to where it becomes like gum. It is quite soothing to swallow that saliva or juice.

You can find pitch along trails where sleds or snow-gos have been scarring trees, and also around the edges of burls. I understand that in the old days, in the states and in Alaska too, people deliberately scarred trees to generate sap for making birch bark canoes.

When you fall a tamarack tree, sap will run out of a ring shaped area, gum up your chain, and make a mess.

I mention "lighard", which is a wood that smells of turpentine and is so deeply impregnated with pitch that you can take a two-inch piece, a quarter of an inch square, and touch it off with a match to kindle a fire. I've found only one tree in my life that contained some, and I use it very sparingly. It was a Douglas fir. The Internet returned just one hit for "lighard" this morning, from a transcription of an old-timer interview in Catoosa County, Georgia.¹

The loggers used to call that "trading wood". It's a vulgar term. If a logger wanted the favors of the cook, he would collect that kind of wood and bring it to her to start her fires with.

I mention that it was also valued for its durability when used as fence posts.

It has a lot of that impregnation, and will not rot easily. Sometimes you'll see it in stumps.

When I moved up the [Kobuk] river, I remember that an Eskimo in Kotzebue said that if I found any of that kind of wood, he would like to buy some. His parents would boil it and make each of the children drink the broth, as a means of preventing tuberculosis. I have a hunch it might very well have been effective. He seemed to think so.

When a tree bends enough, due to windstorms or heavy snow loads, something's got to give. It will stretch on one side and cause it to crack a little. There will sometimes be little strips of pitch up and down inside the trunk where it has been split apart. That's called "wind shake" in a tree.

When I find that kind of wood, I cut it up into small sticks and use it to get the kindling burning. After birch bark, it's the second best thing to start a fire.

Stinkweed (*Artemisia*)

Stinkweed is the same species as sagebrush. I don't think we need to go into that. A herb book will tell more.

I used it most often as dried leaves. I don't usually make tea. For indigestion or some other problem, I'd just take a wad and start chewing on it.

Inner bark of tamarack

Take a small tree, a couple inches in diameter, and shave the outer bark off. It's very astringent. It's real good for bleeding piles, or any bleeding.

When I had back surgery, the doctor didn't want me to go home until spring. I felt like I should go home because of things that needed care before winter. I started having some problems. I didn't know what it was.

One day I had occasion to crap on some paper in the house, and the stool indicated blood. I figured it was from my stomach, because I'd been having digestive problems. So I made a very strong tea from the inner tamarack.

I could have used fireweed, also known as firewort. It will do the same thing. But it was all down and under the snow, and the tamarack was available above the snow, in a low area not far from the house.

I cut one of these little tamaracks, brought it in, made up a tea from the inner bark, and let it steam away in order to concentrate it somewhat.

Then I took a 4" x 6" x 1-1/2" medical magnet that was negative on one side and positive on the other. I put that over the area where I thought the bleeding was, and at the same time I drank a lot of that super-strong tea. That stopped the peristaltic action, and took care of it right away.

Fireweed leaves

If I have diarrhea and am at home, I will get some fireweed leaves and chew on them. That takes care of it. I use the green leaves. If they're not available, I use the dry leaves hanging on the stalks.

One time when a lady was pregnant and had problems with bleeding piles, I found some fireweed under a log. I gathered some, took it to her, and made a poultice out of it. That stopped her bleeding. Again, herb books will talk about this in detail.

Acupressure

There are books about acupressure. Anybody out by themselves should get a couple of them and study up on it. It's sometimes very effective when you're out and depending on yourself.

Colloidal silver

I understand you make your own colloidal silver. How do you make it, and how does it work?

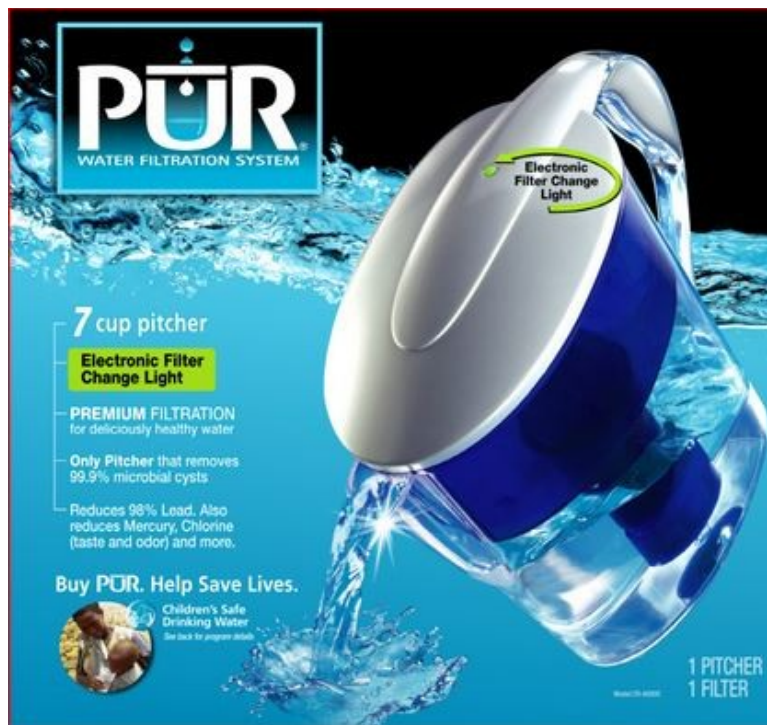
I buy a one-ounce piece of silver, which is about the size of a silver dollar. It's sometimes pretty hard to get pure silver if you don't buy it that way. You can get silver that's mixed with other things, but you want pure silver.

Many jewelers will run a piece of silver through a roller press so it gets long and narrow, maybe 1-1/4 to 1-1/2" wide by 6 to 7". It's about as thick as a post card, or maybe slightly thicker. It gets hardened by being worked, so sometimes they'll heat it in order to anneal it.

I make two holes 5/8” apart in the plastic lid of a pint jar. I stick a 3/16” or 1/4” section of the silver strip up through each hole and anchor them in there with some hot melt glue. I leave enough sticking up so that I can bend the ends over, away from each other, and then bend the ends up again. That gives the glue a little more purchase to hold them steady.

I then put distilled water in the jar. Commercial distilled water, the stuff you buy in plastic containers, doesn’t work. If you try to use it, you’ll get a lot of black oxide right away. That doesn’t hurt anything, but it’s a nuisance. If it builds up too much, it’ll short out the electrodes.

The purer the water, the easier it is to make colloidal silver. I have a pitcher-type water purifier that cleans the water up. I think it’s a “Pur” brand. Maybe others would work.



Pur pitcher-type water filter. <http://www.purwater.com/>

I put the lid on the jar, with the two pieces of silver extending down into the water. I hook three 9-volt batteries to the strips, in series. You can stand two batteries on end on the table, with the other one fastening them together. The process works best at 27 or 28 down to about 24 volts, but it doesn’t have to be exact. It can be as high as 30 volts, though it doesn’t work as well if you get too much voltage there.

You can buy colloidal silver generators that have timers that you can set for whatever strength you want, but I’ve never had one. I just go by the color.

Once the bubbles start coming, you’ll see a little white or yellow tinted cloud pretty soon. That’s the silver coming off. It will gradually settle to the bottom of the jar, and there’ll always be some floating around.

If you buy colloidal silver in the health food store, it will have only 10 parts per million, and you can’t even see it. I let it go until there is quite a bit of color in the water,

sometimes even until it's dark enough that I have trouble seeing the pieces of silver in the jar. That's pretty potent.

But then you have to pay attention. The black residue that builds up, in spite of everything, can reach across and join one electrode to the other. If that happens, it'll make a sound, or you'll see it when it's starting to do that. I take the lid off, stir the water around with a wooden stick, and put it back together.

When the process is finished, I fasten a coffee filter across the mouth of another jar and pour the colloidal silver through it. The solution needs to be kept in a dark place, at room temperature. They advise not putting it into the refrigerator.

You need to build up an accumulation of about 4 parts per million in your tissue. That's not very much, but that's what it takes. If you don't get it built up to that, it doesn't do you much good.

If you take a tablespoonful maybe three times a day, it'll take two or three days for that to build up in your system. They say it doesn't hurt you if you get an excess. It'll pass through, as long as it's in the colloidal form.

When I feel like I'm catching cold or something, I usually take a teaspoon or a couple of teaspoons full every day, just to keep my resistance built up. If I get any kind of an infection, I take more of it.

One time I was trying to clear up a sinus infection with colloidal silver and other things, but wasn't having much luck. Those sinuses are hard to get to, I guess. One day I got disgusted. I tipped up that jar and took a couple of good swallows, and later I did the same thing. That got rid of the sinus problem.

Antibiotics can become useless when the pathogens adapt to them, but they don't adapt to colloidal silver. It works in some kind of an indirect way, and is a broad-spectrum remedy, good against germs and viruses and fungi.

Do you keep it on hand most of the time?

Yes, but colloidal silver is an electrolyte, like battery acid. If you don't charge it up once in a while, it will die. It won't last forever.

What do you do then?

You make some more.

How did you learn about this?

I have a friend who had bought some silver as a speculation. The silver price didn't go up and didn't go up, so he started making jewelry. There were instructions for making colloidal silver along with some of his jewelry instructions. He wrote them out and sent them to me.

Are there any other uses for colloidal silver?

I would daub it on any kind of a sore or skinned place--any place where you want an antibiotic.

[I describe how I once had surgery for a broken tendon in my knee, and a silk suture formed an abscess. The doctor treated it with silver nitrate each week until the thread finally worked its way to the surface and could be plucked out.]

Before they had a way of making colloidal silver, they made other silver solutions or powders. If you really overdo it, it'll turn your skin dark, kind of blue. But I don't think there's much danger of that happening, as long as you're taking colloidal silver.

I sometimes gargle with it. Instead of spitting it out, I just swallow it.

Are you still using it?²

Yes. I made another batch of it just a couple of days ago. I might comment though that when it comes to a sore throat or something like that, I found that spruce gum works just as well.

As you make the solution, do the electrodes shrink away?

There is such a very small amount that I've never had them shrink enough to where I would notice it.

When I take the electrodes out of the water, there will be a black residue on them, more on one than the other. I suspect it's an oxide. I wipe it off with a cloth or piece of tissue to expose the silver for the next time I want to use it.

How many batches do you get out of one set of electrodes?

A lot, because I have never worn out any electrodes. I don't notice them getting that much smaller. Quite often I'll use my best pieces of silver for somebody else, and all I have left is a few remnants for myself.

One time I had a piece of silver that was almost cut in two. About a third of the length of it was just the size of a thread size, with a very small piece of it hanging there.

I taught Delma³ to make the solution. One day she made some up when I wasn't with her. I had an electronic transformer thing that turned 110 volt A.C. into 31 or 32 volts D.C., or something like that. I think she left it on for quite a while, and that little thin strand looked like had just melted off.

Could you still make more at that point?

Yes, as long as some of it is down in the water, but it takes longer.

Do you ever switch the positive and negative poles?

I'm sure I do.

When the electrodes are hooked up, most of the bubbles come off one or the other—the positive, I think. I notice that sometimes it's coming off of the one, and another time it'll be coming off of the other. So they get switched, but not deliberately. I don't pay any attention.

The veterinarians seem to use it more than medical doctors. I don't know why. Maybe because they are working with bigger sections and they have their own generator and it's a lot cheaper than antibiotics.

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- 1) This commentary is from a telephone conversation that Ole Wik had with Oliver on January 1, 2008. Highlighted text indicates remarks made by Ole.
 - 2) By this time Oliver was pretty much bedridden, and was living in Oregon.
 - 3) One of Oliver's caregivers