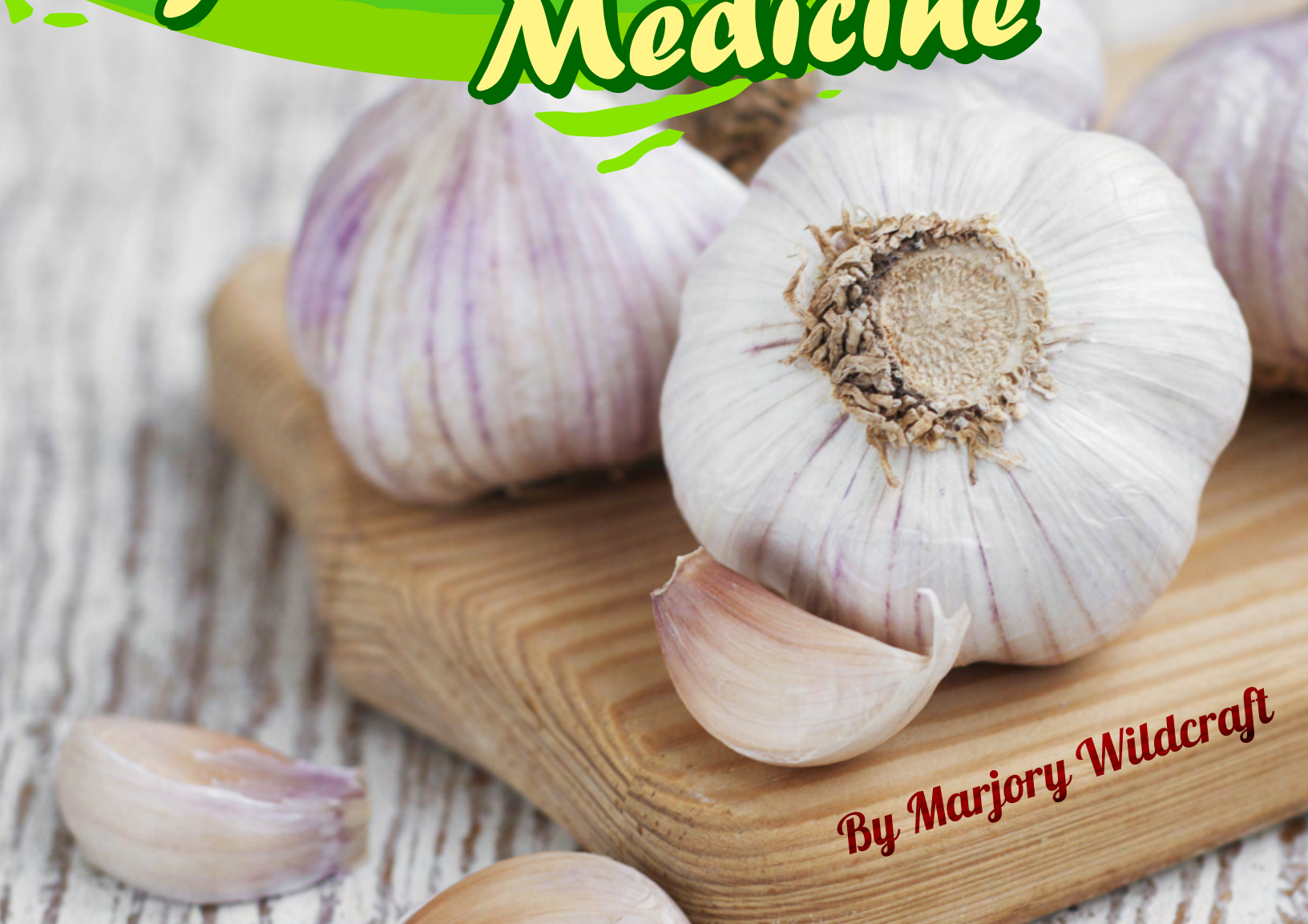


GARLIC

Your First Home Medicine



By Marjory Wildcraft

A KITCHEN REMEDY MORE POWERFUL THAN PHARMACEUTICALS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

5

Introduction

6

From Pantry to Apothecary

- ▶ *Garlic Can Be More Effective Than Pills—Here's Why*
- ▶ *From Stress to Sinus Infections: Opportunities to Use Garlic Medicinally*
- ▶ *Seven Mistakes to Avoid*

15

Drug Interactions and Safety Concerns

- ▶ *How to Increase the Potency of Garlic*

18

Bibliography

INTRODUCTION

What if I told you there's a miracle drug that kills cancer cells and intestinal parasites, helps prevent and cure the common cold, fights heart disease and free radicals—and is probably in your kitchen right now?

Sound too good to be true? It's not. This “miracle drug” is none other than raw garlic.

I have been using garlic medicinally for most of my adult life, but this member of the lily family has been preventing and treating illness since the beginning of recorded history—and maybe long before that.

- Well-preserved garlic cloves were found scattered around the tomb of King Tutankhamen, who died around 1324 B.C.
- About 900 years later, Hippocrates, who is widely regarded as the father of medicine, advocated using garlic as a regular part of his therapeutic treatments.
- In France in the early 1700s, gravediggers drank wine mixed with crushed garlic to protect themselves from the plague.
- And during World War I, garlic was used extensively in paste form as a battlefield wound dressing.

Revered in so many different eras and cultures for its healing properties, yet available for pennies at the grocery store, garlic is an antimicrobial powerhouse that makes a great first home medicine.

Scientific study upon scientific study have shown that garlic reduces inflammation; fights bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites; helps keep the cardiovascular system healthy; and even kills cancer cells.



Marjory Wildcraft is the founder of The Grow Network (TGN), the online home of a global community of people who grow their own food and medicine. The vision of TGN is “home grown food on every table.”

Marjory has been featured as an expert in sustainable living by *National Geographic*, and she is the host of the Mother Earth News Online Homesteading Summit. She is best known for her DVD series “Grow Your Own Groceries,” which has over a half million copies in use by homesteaders, foodies, preppers, universities, and missionary organizations around the world.

Marjory and her husband are raising two teenage kids in Central Texas. When she's not building an online network, being “Mom,” and tending her family's food supply, Marjory loves playing, running, doing gymnastics, skateboarding, acquiring skills from the Paleolithic era (yes, she is part cavewoman), and experimenting with everything.

FROM PANTRY TO APOTHECARY

When you are first learning to use home medicines, I strongly recommend that you pick just a few remedies to start with and get to know them really well.

There are so many herbs and techniques out there that it's easy to get overwhelmed. You'll have a higher probability of success by getting deeply familiar with just one or two plants to start, and then adding more as you gain confidence in the first few.

Even once you've gotten comfortable using a wide array of home medicines, you'll find that you really don't need a lot. I only have a handful of plants that I rely on for 90 percent of my home medicine.

And the number one plant I rely on to treat infections? Garlic.

Garlic is in the lily family, which also includes onions, chives, shallots, and leeks. Sometimes this family is referred to as "the alliums." Garlic's scientific name is *Allium sativum*.

Garlic is easy to grow and thrives in any temperate climate. As of 2013, China supplied about 80 percent of the world's garlic, followed by India, South Korea, Egypt, and Russia.

Garlic Can Be More Effective Than Pills—Here's Why:

Why would a plant medicine such as garlic be a superior antibiotic to the pills created by the pharmaceutical industry? The answer lies in its complexity. While garlic naturally contains 33 sulfur compounds, 17 amino acids, and multiple other components, many of its therapeutic benefits come from a sulfur compound called allicin.

Interestingly, raw garlic does not contain allicin, but rather two ingredients that create it when they come in contact: alliin, a sulfur-rich amino acid, and alliinase, a protein-based enzyme.

These two compounds are physically separated in the whole clove, but when garlic is crushed, minced, or otherwise broken, the physical barrier is removed and the alliinase enzyme begins to convert alliin into allicin.

Allicin is the compound that gives garlic its antimicrobial properties, because it has the ability to inhibit RNA synthesis and DNA polymerases. Basically, it disrupts the bacterium's entire enzyme system responsible for cell replication. Since bacteria can't overcome the complicated barrier produced by allicin, they can't develop resistance to it.

In contrast, pharmaceutical antibiotics generally aim to disrupt one metabolic pathway—a problem bacteria can usually overcome with a single gene mutation.

As I mentioned above, garlic has also been shown to be effective against viruses, fungi, and parasites.

According to Stephen Buhner, an expert in herbal antibiotics, "If only one herb could be used to combat an epidemic spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, [garlic] would be it."



From Stress to Sinus Infections: Opportunities to Use Garlic Medicinally

With most of my home medicine, I focus on prevention. And the winter holidays are the time I'm most likely to tend toward illness.

Maybe it's because some viruses are happier in colder temperatures and lower humidity. Or maybe it's because, during the holidays, all of my regular rhythms are disrupted and I indulge in foods I don't normally eat.

Maybe it's both.

Regardless, winter offers a classic recipe for stressing any immune system and plenty of opportunities to pick up a "bug."

Knowing this, I start taking garlic as a preventative measure just before attending the first holiday party and throughout the two or so weeks of the season.

***How do I take it?
I use two to three cloves of fresh,
crushed garlic per day.***

(I'll get down to the nitty-gritty details of exactly how to take garlic below.)

For the holiday season especially, there is another way I like to take garlic. This method does take some advance preparation—but we all know when the holidays are coming, right?

So, in November of each year, I make a spicy liquid that is sometimes called fire cider or four thieves drink. The primary ingredient in this concoction is raw garlic, and it takes about a month for the spicy liquid to reach full potency. Just when the holidays are in full swing, I'll add a splash of the spicy fire cider to my salads or steamed veggies, or I'll simply take a shot of it daily.

Making fire cider, or four thieves tonic, is super easy. [Here's a link to a short video](#) showing you exactly how to do it.



I also take garlic “just in case” when I have a major injury. In addition to treating the injury externally (debriding, cleaning, poulticing, bandaging, etc.), I also take garlic to help ward off infection internally.

For example, in June of 2016, I was bitten by a venomous copperhead snake. I successfully treated that bite at home. As part of the healing process, I took garlic for several days to help prevent any internal infection from the bite. [You can read the story here.](#)

I am careful not to overdo it. In general, it is not good to use any plant medicine continuously.

I use garlic during the holidays and at various times throughout the year. If I am feeling low and getting that “things aren’t quite right” feeling, then I will take garlic for a few days. And, if I miss my body’s warning signals and do end up with a cold, the flu, bronchitis, or another infection, I’ll start taking garlic.

Another common use for garlic is as a treatment for earaches. I’ve done this successfully for my two kids, as well as for myself.

Study: Pharmaceutical antibiotics have little impact on child ear infections

A 2010 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* stated that giving children (pharmaceutical) antibiotics for ear infections does little to speed their recovery, while raising the risk of side effects.

For earaches, garlic should be taken both internally (as described below) and topically in the form of a simple-to-make ear oil. Simply prepare your raw clove, take a few pieces of the raw garlic, and put it in about a tablespoon of a good oil, such as olive oil or coconut oil.

Gently warm—but don't overheat—the oil and garlic for a few minutes to let the garlic infuse. Then take an eyedropper and put the warm, soothing garlic oil into the ear.

It feels so nice. And, even better, you've got the antiviral, antibiotic, and antifungal properties of garlic helping your ear to heal.

These are just a few of the many, many medicinal uses for garlic. I've only presented the most common scenarios that come up in my family, but I encourage you to do your own research on this "miracle drug." You'll be amazed at its uses and abilities.

Getting the Most Out of Garlic

To use garlic medicinally, start with a clove taken from a good quality bulb.

Peel the clove. Then, you can use either a garlic press or a knife to process the clove. If you are using a knife, crush the clove on a chopping board with the flat side of the knife and then finely mince the crushed clove.

Wait at least a minute for the alliin to be converted to allicin. You might even want to wait a little longer.

Research indicates that allowing chopped or crushed garlic to sit for 10 minutes before using it significantly increases the amount of allicin that is produced. I wouldn't let it sit for much longer than that, though, as allicin is a volatile molecule that quickly starts to break down into other compounds.

The rest is pretty simple. Just eat the crushed clove.

I do it straight up. But you can also juice it with other vegetables or take the crushed or minced garlic with a spoonful of melted butter or coconut oil. I'd just caution you to avoid taking it with simple sugars or starchy carbohydrates, as these feed infection.

Also, be sure to eat the garlic with something else in your stomach.

It is powerful medicine! Eating raw garlic on an empty stomach can lead to nausea, heartburn, or worse.

How much do I take?

- 🍃 If I am using garlic as a preventative (for example, when I am feeling the edges of an illness, or know that I am headed into some stressful times), I will eat two or three cloves a day.
- 🍃 If I am fighting a more serious infection, I increase that dosage to six or nine cloves a day. There are people who have reported taking even higher dosages.

How long should you follow this regimen?

Well, herbal medicine is definitely a slower healing modality, and taking garlic is going to be a multiday process. But keep checking in with yourself.

- 🍃 After a day, how are you progressing? Are you better or worse? Do you need to adjust your dosages up or down?
- 🍃 After two days, are you seeing some improvements?
- 🍃 Usually by the third day, you'll know how well it is working for you.

Garlic is very powerful medicine and can heal many things, but maybe not everything. If you are not seeing any improvement after a week, it is probably time to go see your trusted health care provider.

There *are* times when your home medicine isn't enough. Everyone needs to know when they have reached the limits of their skills.

I wrote about an experience like this for [The Lab](#), The Grow Network's membership area. I got into a situation that my home medicine and then my main herbalist couldn't treat, and finally I needed to go to the hospital.

It can happen to the best of us. ;-)

So, let's not try to cure cancer the first time you use garlic, OK?

Start using it as a preventative measure, maybe before and during the holidays. Or the next time you are feeling off, try using some garlic and see how it works for you.

If you do get a cold or flu, then take some garlic.

If you get an earache, use some garlic oil.

As you become familiar with using garlic to treat minor illnesses, your confidence will build and your ability to use it during more stressful times will increase.

Seven Mistakes to Avoid

It's important to remember that certain practices can diminish the effectiveness of medicinal garlic. Here are a few things you'll want to avoid:

Mistake No. 1: Using Old Garlic

Make sure the bulbs you get are fresh. The cloves should be firm and pungent. If the cloves are dry, soft, or mushy, or if they have darkened brown or black spots, it is a sure indication that the garlic is old. Old garlic does not have the potency you want.

Mistake No. 2: Using Cooked Garlic

I certainly love the taste of garlic in my vegetable stir-fries, but cooking destroys or weakens a lot of garlic's most active ingredients, especially the allicin. So, for medicinal purposes, be sure to properly prepare and eat raw garlic.

Mistake No. 3: Taking Garlic in a Pill or Powder Form

The potency you are looking for is in fresh, vibrant garlic.

Pills and powders are almost universally created from garlic that still has some moisture in it. It's this moisture, combined with the crushing, grinding action used to pulverize the garlic, that allows the alliin and alliinase to mix and form allicin. Soon after the allicin is formed, it begins breaking down into myriad other compounds.

If you could eat the pill or powder immediately after the allicin is created, you'd still be getting a powerful remedy. But, as you know, when these supplements reach you, they just aren't that fresh—and therefore the allicin has had plenty of time to break down into various other forms.

Of course, all this assumes that the pills or powder have actual garlic in them. Numerous studies have surfaced in recent years showing that many commercial herbal supplements do not even contain what they promise on the label.

Mistake No. 4: Taking Too Little Garlic

As I've mentioned above, one clove just isn't going to do it. Herbal medicine is, by nature (pun intended!), just a bit slower. Take several cloves per day for several days. If you are really trying to knock something out, take more.

Mistake No. 5: Stopping Too Soon

Just because you are feeling better doesn't mean your body is done healing. Continue taking garlic for an extra day or two just to help your immune system complete its job.

Mistake No. 6: Not Eating a Healthy Diet

Garlic can't do everything on its own. You have to help the process of healing. Anytime you are ill or feeling the edges of sickness, it is vital that you nourish your body with good food. So, focus on ingesting fresh vegetables, fruits, probiotic foods, healthy oils, high quality meats, and plenty of water. As I mentioned earlier, you should avoid eating infection-feeding foods such as simple sugars and starchy carbs.

Mistake No. 7: Failing to Restore Your Gut Flora

There is some debate about whether garlic, with its antibiotic properties, also kills off your gut flora. Some studies seem to show that it spares certain types of beneficial gut bacteria and even, with its prebiotic qualities, nourishes them. Others indicate that garlic does, indeed, inhibit the growth of friendly bacteria.

As unsettled as this question is, I'd suggest going ahead and planning to restore your gut flora as if you had been taking pharmaceutical antibiotics. Doing so is simple—just remember to **R.E.A.D.** your way to beneficial bacteria:

- 🌿 **Rest:** Sleep and rest are probably more important than using medicinal garlic! Yes, garlic will help you, but if you are stressing your immune system, you have to do your part to help the healing. Get some rest!
- 🌿 **Eat:** Get serious about eating fermented and cultured foods. Fermented veggies, sauerkraut, kefir, and kombucha are just a few whole foods that provide probiotics.
- 🌿 **Avoid:** While you are restoring your gut flora, avoid eating all forms of simple sugar and starchy carbs, as well as all dairy except for butter.
- 🌿 **Double:** Take double doses of high-quality probiotic supplements. Here's what I take in this situation: Prescript-Assist by Enviromedica, Saccharomyces Boulardii by Klaire Labs, and Bifido Complex by Kirkman.

DRUG INTERACTIONS AND SAFETY CONCERNS

While the beneficial effects of garlic are well-documented and the FDA says it is generally recognized as safe, it can have unwanted side effects in some people and in certain situations:

- Garlic is contraindicated with certain medications, such as birth control pills, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and some drugs used to treat HIV infections.
- Since garlic acts as a blood thinner, it can increase the risk of bleeding. If you take an anticoagulant such as warfarin or are about to undergo surgery, proceed cautiously and consult your health care provider.
- Handling too much garlic can result in skin irritations.
- Rarely, taking garlic medicinally also causes headaches, muscle aches, vertigo, fatigue, loss of appetite, and allergic reactions. (Of course, with the prevalence of garlic as a culinary spice, I am sure you know if you are allergic.)

The more common physical side effects of eating garlic are what you'd expect—bad breath, body odor, bloating, and upset stomach.

- In my experience, eating fresh, raw garlic does not create as strong of breath and body odor as eating cooked garlic does. **My solution? If anyone is annoyed, simply feed *them* some garlic, too.**
- As mentioned in the sections above, be sure to eat raw garlic with some food in your stomach. Eating garlic on an empty stomach can make you nauseated and give you heartburn.

Finally, keep in mind that while adults would have to eat about five to ten grams of garlic per pound of body weight for it to have any toxic effect (literally, a trunk load), there is no research-based recommended dose for kids.

Bottom line? In the amounts I've suggested, garlic is probably safe for most people.

However, I am not a medical doctor, so if you have any concerns about using garlic, I strongly recommend you talk with your trusted health care provider.

How to Increase the Potency of Garlic

As I discussed above, you definitely want to use fresh, raw garlic to get a potent medicine. But is there anything else you can do to increase the potency and effectiveness of this amazing medicine?

Yes, there is. You can grow it yourself.

When you grow your own medicine, you have a much deeper relationship with it than you can with anything you buy.

Growing your own garlic is very easy to do, requires only a small space, and it can be done pretty much everywhere on the planet.

Step-by-step instructions for growing this amazing medicine are available in this eBook's companion video, "How to Grow Great Garlic."

[Watch the video here!](#)

When you plant your cloves, remember to put a little prayer or intention of goodwill into each one.

As you water and fertilize the growing shoots, offer good wishes and thanks for them. When you harvest them, do it gently and with reverence for the gifts they offer you.

Growing your own garlic this way will yield you really strong medicine.

For more information on producing your own food and medicine, be sure to hop over to The Grow Network's website at <http://thegrownetwork.com>.

The road less traveled

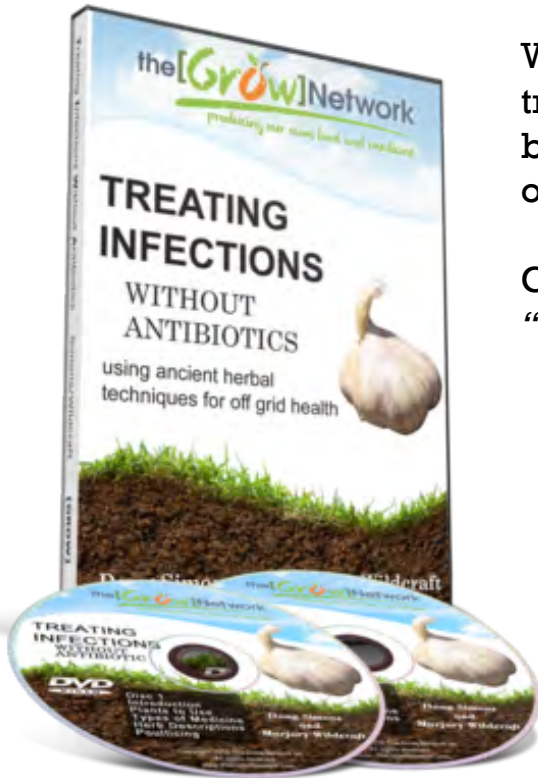
My homegrown garlic often looks downright ugly.

But I don't care. It is infused with the love I have given it while planting, tending, and harvesting.

This medicine has potency!

NEW 10-LESSON VIDEO SERIES EMPOWERS YOU TO...

**“Just Say NO To Antibiotics,
And Be Ready To Fight Your
Next Infection, NATURALLY!”**



Want to learn more about naturally treating infections at home, without being forced to take “too strong,” overprescribed antibiotics?

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you'll know how to battle any infection,
minor or serious...**

**... With 100% NATURAL Treatments that you'll learn
in minutes and master with little practice.**

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