

99 FAVORITE  
AMISH  
*Home  
Remedies*

GEORGIA VAROZZA



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## 99 FAVORITE AMISH HOME REMEDIES

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*To my beloved family—  
As always.*

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COLDS, FLU AND  
ALLERGIES

HEADACHES,  
EARACHES AND  
NOSEBLEEDS

HOUSE AND YARD

PERSONAL CARE

SALVES, OINTMENTS,  
TONICS, AND BALMS

SLEEP ISSUES,  
ANXIETY, STRESS, &  
NERVOUS TENSION

WOMEN'S HEALTH

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# AMISH REMEDIES ARE GOOD FOR YOU!

The Amish are not averse to taking advantage of modern medical technology, especially in the less conservative groups. Because they do not have formal church rules regarding health care, decisions about what type of medical treatment to use is informally decided by individual communities or within families. The Plain groups more open to change tend to avail themselves of modern medicine sooner and more often than do the more conservative groups. However, alternative methodologies are usually welcome in all communities. The Amish have a stoic sense that illness and injury are part of God's will, and as a result they aren't as quick to run to the doctor as are their English counterparts. Therefore, home remedies play a big part in many communities, especially for minor illnesses or injuries.

Because the Amish have a somewhat condensed and unique gene pool, they are disproportionately affected by certain rare genetic disorders. As a result, families often have astronomical medical bills. Added to this is the fact that most Amish do not participate in any type of health insurance plan, so these hard-hit people are responsible for the sometimes staggering amounts. But, as in every other aspect of Plain life, the community offers tangible

support and helps to defray some of the costs by engaging in benefit auctions and sales, as well as collecting regular offerings for the church's mutual aid fund.

So, when common colds, flu, aches and pains, or anxious times occur, it just makes sense for folks to reach for ingredients in their kitchen cupboards to naturally—and inexpensively—find a cure for what ails them. And for those of us who are interested in self-reliant alternatives to a quick trip to the doctor, the remedies in this book might just prove to be useful and effective for us as well.

The remedies I'm sharing with you in this book have been safely and effectively used by Plain and non-Plain people for generations. These old-fashioned solutions to everyday problems use common items, many of which you probably already have in your cupboards, and what ingredients you don't have you can easily purchase. Even better, if you're a gardener, a lot of these ingredients can be harvested from your backyard. For the most part, you can use what you make right away, but it's a good idea to read through the book and make note of any mixtures that may need to set for a time before using. That way, when injury or illness strikes, you'll be prepared.

Obviously, this isn't an exhaustive collection of cures and solutions for what ails you and your loved ones. Rather, these are a sampling of remedies that have proven useful to me and my family for many years. I hope you enjoy reading *99 Favorite Amish Home Remedies* and that you'll be encouraged to try a few of the recipes. I think you'll be pleased!

# **COLDS, FLU, AND ALLERGIES**

*She looks well to the ways of her household,  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

PROVERBS 31:27 NASB

*Dear Lord, I pray You would bathe this home in peace and joy and bind us together in love. Shield us, Father, from sin and despair, and help us to always remember that here, in this house, we can find respite from our daily cares. May our words to one another be sweet and seasoned with kindness. May we be quick to offer grace and slow to anger. Help me, Father, to care well for my loved ones and point them always to You.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*

# 1

Are you coughing or wheezing, or do you have phlegm in your throat? Homemade **horehound cough syrup** will help. Horehound is a member of the mint family and has been used to tame coughs and colds for hundreds of years. You can easily and quickly make this cough syrup. Store it in a clean jar in the refrigerator, and it will keep for about two months.

**1 oz. fresh or dried horehound leaves**

**1 pint boiling water**

**3 cups honey, more or less**

Bring the water to a boil. Add the horehound leaves and then reduce the heat. When you have a gentle simmer, let the mixture steep for 10 minutes. Strain the leaves and measure the amount of liquid. Add twice as much honey as the amount of liquid and mix well. Pour the cough syrup into a sterilized glass jar, cover, and keep it in the refrigerator.

**To use:** Take 1 teaspoon cough syrup up to 4 times daily.

**Note:** If you don't have a food scale to weigh an ounce of horehound, that's equivalent to about  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$  cup ground or  $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup chopped herb.

**Notes:**

## 2

If you have a mild cold, **horehound tea** will help. (This tea is also good in aiding digestion and stimulating the appetite.) Simply steep 1 ounce of fresh or dried horehound leaves in a pint of water.

**To use:** Heat about 4 ounces of the tea at a time and drink up to four times daily. If you find the aftertaste somewhat bitter, you can add some lemon and honey to your cup of tea.

**Note:** If you don't have a food scale to weigh out an ounce of horehound, that's equivalent to about  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$  cup ground or  $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup chopped herb.

*Don't worry about what you could do if you lived  
your life over. Get busy with what's left.*

—AMISH PROVERB

Notes:

# 3

**A** decongestant can be worth its weight in gold when you're stuffed up and feeling lousy. This remedy has helped clear sinuses for generations.

**2 tsp. peppermint leaves, dried or chopped fresh**

**1 tsp. rosemary, heaping**

**1 tsp. thyme, heaping**

**1 quart water**

In a saucepan, add the peppermint, rosemary, and thyme to the water. Bring to a boil and then turn off heat and cover the pot, letting the mixture steep for several minutes.

Remove the cover from the pot and then drape a towel over your head. Lean over the pot, making sure the towel tents in such a way that the steam gets caught inside the towel. Close your eyes and breathe in the aroma. Make sure before you get close to the pot that the steam isn't too hot, and don't get so close that the steam burns you. Breathe in for up to 5 minutes and repeat as necessary. The steam helps to moisturize and soothe your nostrils while the herbs are natural decongestants.

## Notes:

## 4

**P**lacing a **garlic plaster** on your chest will help to clear up colds and flu, and it's quick and easy to prepare. Simply mince several garlic cloves and then add olive oil to make a thick paste. Spread this paste on a square of flannel or muslin that's large enough so that you can completely enfold the paste in the cloth so nothing oozes out. Place the square of fabric onto your chest and then cover with a hot water bottle or warmed blankets or towels. Keep the plaster on your chest for about 15-20 minutes.

Growing up, my siblings and I ate a clove of garlic most days during the winter, and we rarely suffered from seasonal colds and flu. Dad would chop the clove of garlic and have us drink it down with a glass of milk or water. He teased us by saying that an added bonus for him was that he was fairly certain it would keep the young men away from us. And with four daughters, he had a big job!

*Faith is like an umbrella. It protects us  
through the storms of life.*

—AMISH PROVERB

**Notes:**

## 5

If you have stubborn chest congestion, a **mustard plaster** should help loosen things up.

**1 T. mustard powder**

**¼ cup flour**

**warm water**

Mix together the mustard powder and flour and then add just enough warm water to make a thick paste. Put the paste in the middle of a large square of flannel or muslin and then wrap the fabric so that the mustard mixture is covered and can't ooze out. Place the plaster onto the sick person's chest and leave it on for 15 minutes. Make sure the plaster itself doesn't come in contact with skin because it can burn.

(Some folks say that a dab of mustard plaster placed directly on **warts** will do away with them in no time.)

*A great deal of what we see depends on what  
we are looking for.*

—AMISH PROVERB

**Notes:**

## 6

This all-purpose **cold and flu tonic** takes some advance planning, so it's best to make this remedy before the cold and flu season hits so you're not caught unprepared. Here is what you'll need:

- sterilized quart jar with nonreactive, tight-fitting lid**  
(plastic lids work well for this)
- ½ cup fresh horseradish, peeled and chopped**
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and minced**
- 1 fresh white onion, diced**
- ½ cup fresh ginger root, peeled and chopped**
- 2 fresh jalapenos, sliced (use gloves when handling)**
- 2 lemons, sliced thin (no need to peel, but wash well)**
- 2 T. dried rosemary**
- 1 T. turmeric**
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper**
- apple cider vinegar**
- honey to taste**

Put all of the ingredients except the vinegar and honey into the quart jar. Add enough apple cider vinegar to cover. Screw on the lid and store the mixture in a cupboard or other dark, cool area for one month, shaking the jar once or twice a day.

At the end of the month, strain out the liquid, pressing the mixture to extract as much liquid as possible. Add honey to taste (it will take a lot of honey). Store in the refrigerator.

**To use:** Add 2-3 tablespoons of tonic to a cup of hot water, tea, or juice and drink. Repeat 2-3 times daily as needed.

**Notes:**

## 7

This is such a tasty treatment that it can hardly be called “medicine.” To **soothe a sore throat**, **reduce fevers**, and **relieve the effects of common colds**, all you need is some black currant jelly or jam. You can make a tea as follows:

- 1 T. black currant jam or jelly**
- juice of half a lemon (about 1 T.)**
- 1 pint water**
- sugar or honey to taste**

Mix together all of the ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring the mixture to a simmer, and then reduce heat and keep a very low simmer going for about 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drink the tea while it's hot, several times a day, until you're feeling better.

Black currants are very tart berries, rich in antioxidants and vitamin C, and they are just plain good for you. But if you're thinking of making your own jam, you may have difficulty finding a black currant shrub in your local garden center (they can carry a fungus that kills pine trees, so many stores don't offer them for sale). Plan to buy a jar of ready-made black currant jam or jelly at your local grocery store instead. Buy black versus red currant jam or jelly.

**Notes:**

## 8

**W**hite willow bark tea is a surefire **fever reducer** and **anti-inflammatory**. It's also effective for **headache**, **osteoarthritis**, and **menstrual cramps**. In earlier times, folks would chew on willow bark for relief, but later they found that a tea was just as effective, so chewing the bad-tasting bark fell out of favor. White willow bark has salicin, which is very similar to aspirin (salicylic acid), and works the same way. If you are taking medication that requires you to not ingest aspirin or you have surgery scheduled in the near future, you'll want to stay away from this tea. Here's how to make and use it:

**1-2 tsp. white willow bark**

**1 cup water**

**honey to taste**

Place the bark and water in a saucepan (you can double or triple this recipe if you want to make several cups at once) and bring to a boil. Cover the pot and simmer for 10 minutes and then turn off the heat, keeping the pot covered, and allow the bark to continue steeping for 30 minutes.

Strain the tea and add honey to taste. Drink up to 4 cups daily. It will take some time before you find relief, so be patient. On the plus side, the positive effects of drinking the tea will last a good long while.

**Notes:**