

## *Sweat Bath*

Many people in temperature climates worldwide have used sweating to prevent and treat disease. Scandinavians built saunas; Native Americans built sweat lodges. Samuel Thomson would wrap a person sitting in a chair with blankets and place a hot stone in a pail at his feet. The steam would come up under the blankets by pouring water into the pail until the patient started to perspire.

In college, my friend and fellow herbalist Thomas Easley used a hot plate with a pan of water. They could learn about acute illnesses by administering a formula like HCP-X (unavailable) with extra lobelia (and maybe capsicum) and steaming fellow students for about 20 minutes.

With modern hot running water and bathtubs, inducing perspiration to clear toxins isn't that difficult. Start by drinking plenty of fluids.

Sudorific herbs are herbs that enhance perspiration. They move blood to the skin's surface and help open the sweat glands to promote elimination. You can also make a warm tea of any sudorific herb or formula.

After drinking the tea, draw a bath as hot as can be comfortably tolerated. Add a couple of tablespoons of ginger powder, a handful of yarrow, rosemary mint leaves, or other aromatic herbs to the water. Put the herbs in a cloth bag so they don't make a mess in the tub. Another, even easier, sweat bath water treatment is to put about 5-10 drops of essential oils such as lavender, tea tree, eucalyptus, or peppermint in the bath. Dissolve the oils in a little liquid soap before putting them into the bath water so they will mix with the water and not just float on the surface.

After getting out of the bath, don't dry off. Wrap up in a cotton sheet and go to bed. Pile on the blankets and allow the sweat to come freely. It's OK to fall asleep. When done, take a cool shower to cleanse the skin and close your pores. Don't allow chilling during the process.

With small children, don't put them into a really hot bath. Use a warm bath to gently wash the child's body with natural soap (such as Dr Bronner) and a washcloth to ensure the pores are open. Adding just a tiny amount of lavender essential oil or tea tree essential oil to the bath or using a natural soap will help stimulate circulation and draw blood to the extremities.

We have found sweat baths helpful for all acute ailments, especially colds, fevers, flu, sinus congestion, rashes, and earaches. Sweat baths are not recommended for people who are infirm, elderly, or have heart conditions.

Essential Oils: Lavender, Eucalyptus, Peppermint and Tea Tree Oil

Herbs: Chamomile, Ginger, and Yarrow

Herbal Formulas: Catnip & Fennel and HCP-X

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