

# HOLISTIC WELLNESS

## AT HOME



By Dr. Anne Kennard, DO FACOG



# ANNE KENNARD, DO FACOG



Dr. Anne Kennard, DO, FACOG, is an OBGYN physician and Fellowship trained in Integrative Medicine. She holds a bachelor's degree in Nutrition Science, is a registered Yoga and Prenatal Yoga instructor, and is an herbalist. She currently serves as an academic Integrative OBGYN and the Director of Integrative Medicine for Marian Regional Medical Center's OBGYN and Family Medicine residency programs. She is the author of "Nourish: An Integrative Medicine Cookbook," blending her passions for food as medicine, herbal medicine, and mind-body medicine. She lives on the Central Coast of California with her husband, 4-year-old daughter, and several adopted pets, where she enjoys gardening, cooking, herbal medicine making, and kayaking with the otters.

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This eBook is designed to offer some education regarding common environmental toxins and avoidance thereof, along with easy-to-make recipes for home care, body care, and herbal food as medicine. Enjoy!



# TOXINS IN THE HOME

Our home is where we sleep, eat, and raise our families. It's also where a majority of toxic exposures can occur – in our cleaning and personal care products, furniture, carpets, and paints. Here are some suggestions to minimize toxic home exposures and a few of my personal nontoxic clean recipes. A good resource for more information is the Environmental Working Group at [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org). They even maintain a registry of specific personal care and home cleaning products to help make informed choices.

## Furniture

You are spending at least 1/3 of your life on your mattress and couch. Make sure the foam is Certi-Pur certified and avoid polyurethane foam when possible. "Memory foam" tends to emit gas more and should also be avoided unless Certi-Pur certified and from non petroleum sources. Latex is a safe choice, although more expensive. Pocketed coil technology has improved the feel of innerspring mattresses and is also

a safe choice. Choose non-chemical fire retardants, such as wool, silica, and rayon in a mattress. Greenguard and Greenguard Gold certifications are a top choice in mattress ratings. This is especially important for children's mattresses, as children exhibit higher levels of flame retardants than adults after blood testing.

Look for GOTS, GOLS, and Oeko-Tex certifications to make the safest choices for textiles. These have become more available in recent years, with Ikea and Target offering several options with these certifications. Steer clear of any stain pretreatment or "Scotch Guard" on fabrics.

Choose solid wood over wood laminate and particle board/pressed board when possible. The composite woods are typically pressed together with formaldehyde, a known human carcinogen. Pay particular attention to cribs and other children's furniture items, as children's bedrooms often exceed safe formaldehyde levels.



## Flooring

Carpeting should be low VOC, preferably Greenguard certified. Padding should be wool or felt, when possible, and secured with a low VOC adhesive to avoid PFC, PVC, and phthalates exposure. Choose products without any stain or waterproofing treatment, as these contain perfluorinated chemicals, which are classified as a likely carcinogen. Tile and natural wood flooring are preferable. Look for a low VOC sealant on wood flooring. As with furniture, abstain from using composite woods that emit formaldehyde. These recommendations are especially important for families with young children, as babies spend more time in direct contact with the floor and have been shown to exhibit these chemicals in relatively high concentration by the age of two.

## Paint

Look for Green Seal-11 certified paint, water based latex paints, and low or no VOC paints. Avoid any formaldehyde releasing paints. When painting, work in a well-ventilated area. Consider “milk paints” for painting children’s furniture.

## Kitchen Items

Use glass or stainless steel water bottles to eliminate petroleum chemicals that can leach into the water of single-use water bottles and to avoid contributing to plastic pollution on the earth. I prefer these over even BPA-free reusable bottles, as these may still have harmful plastic chemicals.

Never heat in plastic. Use glass. Replace a plastic microwave steamer with a glass Pyrex bowl or a silicone “steamer” lid. Use stainless

steel reusable containers for kids’ lunch items. They are dishwasher safe and virtually indestructible. Reusable produce bags are inexpensive and help keep produce fresher. Steer clear of single-use plastic.

Discontinue use of all nonstick pans, regardless of safety claims. Once scratched, these release fluorinated chemicals into your food. A well-seasoned cast iron pan is naturally nonstick and inexpensive. Cook foods in stainless steel, cast iron or enameled cast iron. Bake in silicone or stainless steel trays covered with parchment paper for ease of cleaning.



## Food

Food can linings often contain BPA or BPS. Avoid canned foods when possible, especially acidic food like tomatoes. Choose jarred or boxed versions, or purchase from a trusted canning company like Eden Foods or Westbrae Naturals that does not use plasticized liners.

Use a carbon water filter. They are inexpensive and can be the kind in a separate pitcher or installed in a refrigerator water and ice system.

# Personal Care Items

## Sunscreen

For the sake of our coral reefs and human health, avoid chemical sunscreens made with oxybenzone, avobenzone, octisalate, octocrylene, homosalate, octinoxate, and the worst (and most pervasive), oxybenzone. Oxybenzone has a direct hormonal effect as a weak estrogen. It is a potent anti-androgen that is absorbed readily through the skin. Once discontinued, blood levels of the chemical drop dramatically. Choose a mineral sunscreen consisting of zinc and titanium and use sunscreen as a last resort. Favor UPF clothes to cover skin, limit sun exposure during the peak times of 10 am to 2 pm, find shade, and wear sunglasses.

## Deodorant

Choose non-aluminum products and avoid “antiperspirants.” Perspiring is a healthy way to regulate temperature and shed toxins. Better to keep an extra shirt on hand than to avoid sweating. I prefer Lume deodorant, Schmidts, Native or homemade deodorant.

## Cosmetics and Body Products

Choose mineral products, when possible. Not only do these have fewer toxins, they provide some mineral-based sunscreen as well. Avoid “long last” lipsticks and chemical sunscreens in cosmetic products. Discontinue use of products with any added “fragrance” as these often contain phthalates. Use non-chemical moisturizers such as coconut oil and shea butter. Check the database at [www.ewg.org/skindeep](http://www.ewg.org/skindeep) for specific product recommendations. Avoid sulfates in shampoos and parabens in facial soaps and

lotions when possible. In hand soap, eschew anything that is advertised as “antibacterial” and abstain from using products that list triclosan as an ingredient, which is associated with hormonal disruption.

## Home Products

Avoid any added fragrances to cleaning supplies or laundry detergents. Dryer sheets, in particular, are loaded with harmful chemicals. For a safe alternative, use natural wool balls in the dryer instead. If you prefer a scent to your clothing, sprinkle a few drops of an essential oil of your choice onto the wool balls prior to drying.

Avoid wall “plug-ins,” spray air fresheners, and heated wax fragrances for home fragrance, along with car air fresheners. A reed or ultrasonic diffuser with natural essential oils eliminates the chemical concerns, although these may still contribute to indoor pollution for a sensitive person, such as those individuals with asthma or allergies.

Mop with a steam mop, sprinkling a few drops of lemon and tea tree essential oils on the mop surface. This will effectively disinfect and clean floors without harmful chemicals.

Stop using fragranced garbage bags and vacuum carpets with a HEPA filter to reduce dust pollution as much as possible.

Most surfaces (countertops, bathroom, and kitchen) can be cleaned with the very simple, nontoxic home recipes included here. When purchasing products, look for recommendations in the EWG Guide to Healthy Cleaning, as there are many good nontoxic options.



## HEALTHY HOME CLEANER

I use this spray on my kitchen countertops, bathroom sinks, toilets, and tile floors. It's a workhorse that cleans well with no toxic ingredients.

- 16 oz spray bottle
- 8 oz white vinegar
- 6 oz water
- 1 oz rubbing alcohol
- 1 T castile soap
- 10 drops lemon essential oil
- 10 drops tea tree oil

Combine all ingredients in the spray bottle.  
Use liberally as desired.

## NATURAL SOFT SCRUB

If I need a soft scrub cleaner for a stubborn stain in the kitchen, I make up a batch of this.

- 1 T castile soap
- ½ C baking soda
- 3-4 T of water
- 10 drops lemon essential oil

Combine and store in an airtight container.  
Rehydrate as needed using 1-2 T of water.





## NATURAL BODY SCRUB

This is so indulgent, hydrating, and polishing for the skin. Sugar will be gentler on the “scrubbing,” while salt is more rough. The basic recipe is one part oil to two parts sugar or salt, with some fun optional add ins, depending on preference. I prefer olive or coconut oil for this recipe, with olive oil being particularly good for sensitive or eczematous skin. This scrub is also great for dry lips.

1 C oil, either coconut, olive, jojoba, sunflower, or kukui nut

2 C sea salt or cane sugar

Optional add ins:

2 T lemon juice for extra antioxidants and exfoliation

Crushed mint leaves for awakening

Pumpkin pie spices and brown sugar instead of cane sugar for an autumn scrub

Green tea leaves for decreasing redness

Combine and apply to skin, rubbing in gently for exfoliation. For best results, repeat 1-2 times per week.

## SKIN LOVE SALVE

This salve is wonderful for soothing, calming inflammation, and providing barrier protection for diaper rash, eczema, and other skin irritations. It is safe for use on sensitive skin, including for infants and the elderly. The sunflower oil absorbs well and acts as natural barrier protection along with the beeswax, and the shea butter is wonderfully nourishing. The lavender is anti-inflammatory and relaxing, and the Vitamin E is an antioxidant and nourishes the skin.

1 C sunflower oil

1 Oz beeswax, grated

1 Oz shea butter

20 drops lavender essential oil

1 tsp Vitamin E oil

In a double boiler, gently heat the sunflower oil. Add the shea butter and beeswax, stirring until melted. Take a spoonful and put it in the freezer for a few minutes to harden, to test the consistency. If too soft, add more beeswax, 1-2 Tablespoons at a time, until desired consistency is reached.

Take off the heat and stir in the Vitamin E and lavender oils. Pour into a small glass jar or metal tin. Wait until cool before placing the lid on. Apply liberally to affected areas.



# WOMEN'S HERBAL MEDICINE

Often many of the issues that women face on a regular basis can be alleviated, at least in part, by herbal medicine. While herbs lack the heavy hand of conventional medicine, they tend to work more gently and with fewer side effects. I particularly enjoy blending herbal medicine and healthy foods, teas, and tinctures, although herbs can also be taken in capsule form. Please enjoy some of my favorite recipes for women's herbal medicine.<sup>1</sup>

## HERBAL POWERBALLS

This is one of my favorite recipes because it is so easy to combine good food and herbal medicine. These powerballs are an easy breakfast or after school snack and provide a full dose of medicine in each serving. They can be customized by using different add-ins, like flaked coconut, dried fruit, and dark chocolate chips, and rolled in oats, cacao, or chia seeds. The protein and healthy fats in this recipe lower the glycemic index and provide long lasting energy and satiety.

### BASIC POWERBALL RECIPE

1 C rolled oats  
½ C ground flax  
1 C natural almond butter  
1/2 C raw honey

Mix all ingredients together, reserving the oats in a bowl. Roll into balls in the bowl to coat the Powerballs with oats. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator.



<sup>1</sup>These recipes are not meant to diagnose or treat any disease. Please check with your health professional to determine what is right for you.



## TUMMY LOVE POWERBALLS

This is such a great recipe for anyone needing a little extra love in the gut. The triphala is an Ayurvedic combination of three astringent fruits that increase intestinal motility and normalize the gut microbiome. The probiotics add an extra dose of love for the gut, along with the Ayurvedic warming spices, fiber from the oats and flax, and prebiotics from coconut.

Prepare the basic recipe and add:

- 2 tsp probiotic powder (or open 10 probiotic capsules and pour the powder inside out; discard the capsules)
- 1 T triphala powder
- ¼ C flaked coconut
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cardamom
- ½ C rolled oats

Mix all ingredients together, reserving the oats in a bowl. Roll into balls in the bowl to coat the Powerballs with oats. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator.

## CACAO IMMUNITY POWERBALLS

This is in my fridge all winter! Reishi mushroom is an immunomodulator, optimizing immune cell function, along with astragalus. Dark chocolate chips and cacao add a polyphenol boost, along with antioxidants from the cranberries.

Prepare the basic recipe and add:

- 2 tsp reishi mushroom powder
- 2 tsp astragalus powder
- ¼ C dried cranberries
- ½ C dark chocolate chips
- ½ C cacao powder

Combine all ingredients, reserving the cacao in a bowl. Roll the balls in the cacao to coat the Powerballs. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator.



## HOT FLASH COOLING TEA

One of the most common complaints of menopause is hot flashes and sweating. This tea is remarkably effective at providing some quick relief. Sage is generally thought of as a Thanksgiving culinary herb, but it is an effective treatment for hot flashes, and pairs well with the cooling of peppermint. This can be drank hot or iced.

1 sprig of fresh sage leaves (4-5 leaves), or 3 T dried herbs  
1 small sprig of peppermint (6-8 leaves), or 1 T dried herbs

Brew in 20 oz of water, steeping for at least ten minutes.

## ADAPTOGEN HONEY

1 C raw honey  
2 T powdered ashwaghandha  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice (cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, ginger)

Warming spices, smooth vanilla and adaptogenic herbal medicine wrapped up in a sweet package; this honey is just divine. Stir all ingredients until combined. Spread on toast, drizzle on oatmeal or over almond butter and sliced apples, or dissolve in Best Rest tea for a good night's sleep. It's a delicious way to add some calming adaptogen to life.

### **Spotlight:** Ashwaghandha

This jewel of Ayurvedic herbs is one of my very favorite for women's medicine. It can be used in a variety of forms: in teas, tinctures, powders in cooking, or taken in capsules. It should be used at night, gently encouraging

the body to relax and let go of stress. Termed an adaptogen because of its ability to help the body manage stress, it modulates the release of cortisol, the body's stress hormone, allowing the body to rest. It also has a mild effect on improving thyroid function, often optimizing function for patients with mild or subclinical hypothyroidism.



## GOLDEN MILK

The adaptogenic almond milk gets an anti-inflammatory upgrade with this golden milk recipe. Golden milk is a traditional Indian beverage, served warm in the evening. It is a nice addition to an evening "wind down" ritual and gives a boost of pain-fighting anti-inflammatory compounds and is warming to the constitution. The pepper contains piperine, a compound shown to increase the systemic absorption of turmeric's active anti-inflammatory ingredient, curcumin. Ancient wisdom for modern healing!

2 C adaptogenic almond milk (previous recipe) or coconut milk  
¼ inch grated ginger root or ½ T dried ginger powder  
½ inch grated turmeric root or 2 T dried turmeric powder  
1 pinch of pepper or 3 whole peppercorns

Add all ingredients to a saucepan and stir. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 10 minutes.





## LEARNSKIN DESCRIPTION

Leaders in integrative dermatology and continuing medical education, LearnSkin shares the latest in scientific research and evidence-based treatment options in dermatology for both Western and Eastern medicine.

LearnSkin offers an integrative, holistic approach to skin, providing patient resources as well as continuing education programs for medical professionals with content written by leading experts in integrative medicine and dermatology.

To learn more about LearnSkin, visit [www.learnskin.com](http://www.learnskin.com).

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