Natural Relief for Middle and Outer Ear Infections

The Pathology of Ear Infections

Earaches occur most commonly in children precisely because their Eustachian tubes are small and underdeveloped, making them more prone to otitis media or middle ear infections. By the age of 7, some 93% of all children have had a diagnosed episode of otitis media. It’s the most common reason for which a child is seen in a doctor’s office. A bacterial middle ear infection tends to be a self-limiting ailment, and in 80 percent of children it clears up without the administration of antibiotics.\(^1\) Indeed, there is very little evidence that the prescription of antibiotics for middle ear infection leads to a shorter duration of symptoms, fewer recurring infections, or even better wellbeing in the long run.\(^2\) Nonetheless, the tendency of medical practitioners has been to over-treat the condition at an early stage and prescribe antibiotics as a way of tackling the immediately painful issue of earache. Not only are antibiotics an unnecessary and ineffective solution, they are not wise either in our day and age, when antibiotic resistance has become an ever darker cloud hovering over the practice of modern medicine. These days, the avoidance of antibiotics early in life, wherever possible, stands to benefit both the individual and the community.\(^3\)

Of all the products we sell, our Ear Oil is easily one of the best known and most effective natural alternatives as compared to a therapeutic approach based on pharmaceuticals. Comprised of four classic Western herbs and macerated in extra-virgin olive oil, ours is a formula specifically intended for topical use in the ear as an analgesic for the symptomatic relief of pain associated not only with acute otitis media (middle ear infections) but also otitis externa (outer ear infections, sometimes known as swimmer’s ear, a common summer ailment).

Antiseptic Properties of the Ingredients

Garlic is rich in antioxidant sulfur compounds, polyphenols, and carotenoids that give it therapeutic effectiveness.\(^4\) Its sulfur compounds, including allicin, offer antimicrobial protection, as well as being anti-inflammatory.\(^5\) A recent study demonstrates that allicin is bactericidal and inhibits the Burkholderia cepacia complex, a highly noxious and potentially fatal gram negative human pathogen that has shown resistance to antibiotics. The study concludes, moreover, that substances containing allicin deserve to be investigated further as an adjunct to antibiotic treatment.\(^6\)

Researchers have noted that mullein is active against several strains of bacteria, including Klebsiella pneumonia, Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus epidermidis, and Escherichia coli.\(^7\)

Who it is for

- People suffering from earaches
- Those with recurring middle ear infections
- Of special benefit for children
- Anyone that has an outer ear infection, sometimes known as swimmer’s ear

How it helps

- Topical remedy proven by clinical trials
- A healing combination comparable to antibiotics in effectiveness
- Herbs with antiseptic, analgesic, and anti-inflammatory properties

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For its part, St. John’s wort (SJW) demonstrates a range of antiseptic action against both gram positive and gram negative bacteria both in the form of a dermal cream or ointment and as a liquid extract.\(^8\)

Similarly, calendula has been shown to be effectively antimicrobial against a range of clinical pathogens.\(^9\)

**Analgesic Properties**

Eclectic physicians—medical doctors of the 19th and early 20th centuries who tended to rely on herbs and derived much of their knowledge from native lore and usage—extolled the anodynal properties of *mullein*.\(^10\) In our own day, researchers have found that verbascoside, a phenylethanoid glycoside found in *mullein*, has anti-inflammatory as well as wound-healing qualities.\(^11\)

An in-vivo trial conducted in 2004 determined that *SJW* has “profound analgesic activity”, twice the analgesic effect, in fact, of ibuprofen. Furthermore, in contrast to ibuprofen, analgesia resulted from both central and peripheral actions. The herb’s action on peripheral afferent nerves resembled the analgesia effected by ASA or ibuprofen, whereas its centrally-acting analgesia was more akin to that of the narcotic analgesics. Note that doses of an extract (0.3% Hypercin and 5% Hyperforin) were administered intraperitoneally at 30, 70 and 100 mg per kg. Compared to controls, percentage reduction in pain was highly significant (p<0.001) at all doses tested. Positive control (ibuprofen) was significant (p<0.01) at 100 mg/kg.\(^12\) Preclinical animal studies show that even low doses of dry extracts of *SJW* can promote antinociception and relief from acute and chronic hyperalgesia, besides improving opioid analgesia.\(^13\)

**Wound-Healing Qualities**

*Calendula’s* anti-inflammatory and wound-healing qualities are well-known and well-attested.\(^14\) Historically, the Eclectics and others used this herb externally to treat burns, bruises, and cuts.\(^15\) It is a remedy, moreover, that practitioners often resort to for eczema and inflamed skin (dermatitis).\(^16\) *Calendula’s* anti-inflammatory action is attributable to its constituent triterpenes and has been shown in some cases to exceed the effects of indomethacin.\(^17\)

An ethnopharmacological study of thirteen *mullein* species native to Turkey revealed a remarkable wound healing activity that seems particular to this genus.\(^18\)

A study involving the use of an olive oil extract of the flowering aerial parts of *SJW* for excision and incision wounds found a notable wound-healing effectiveness.\(^19\) In the wake of a further study that incorporated three *in vivo* experimental models (i.e. incision, excision, and thermal burn), researchers concluded similarly that *SJW* has a significant wound healing effect.\(^20\) Even more remarkably, a recent investigation of the curative role of *SJW* in a rat model of tympanic membrane perforation found this

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**References:**


3. Roxas and Jarenka, p. 29.


herb to be a significant factor in leukocyte infiltration, fibroblast proliferation, and subepithelial thickness. Speculation is that the wound-healing qualities of SJW are attributable to the way in which it stimulates the production of fibroblast collagen, as well as its mobilization of fibroblast cells into polygonal shapes that serve to seal off the damaged area.

Proven in Clinical Trial

A clinical trial using a product composed of ingredients identical to ours was compared with a standard pain-relieving drug preparation for the earache associated with acute otitis media. The authors found a statistically significant benefit for pain with both treatments and noted that there was no difference in effectiveness between groups. The same research team reinforced their findings in another trial conducted two years later. After this trial, they offered the further opinion that antibiotics do not change the natural course of a middle ear infection. They also concluded that the main goal of treatment should be the alleviation of ear pain. It is herbal Ear Oil that does this eminently well, because it is the perfect and appropriate topical therapy, one that serves, among other things, to stimulate the immune response. With its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory qualities, moreover, it soothes the tissue around the tympanic membrane or eardrum.

Active Ingredients (per 1 ml)

- Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*, flower and leaf) 0.263 ml
- Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*, flower) 0.263 ml
- Garlic (*Allium sativum*, clove) 0.263 ml
- St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*, flower) 0.211 ml

Non-Medicinal Ingredients

Certified Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

Contains no: egg, wheat, soy, artificial preservatives, artificial colours, artificial sweeteners.

Dose

Adults and children: Place 5 drops of oil directly in the external ear canal 3 times daily.

Health Canada Approved Use Claims

Mullein has been used in traditional Western herbalism for earaches.

References:


Cautions and Warnings

Consult a health care practitioner before use: if the eardrum is perforated; if you have a discharge from the ear; if you have changes in hearing; if you are pregnant. Consult a health care practitioner if symptoms worsen or persist.

Contraindications

Do not use if you are allergic to plants of the Asteraceae/Compositae/Daisy family.

Known Adverse Reactions

Hypersensitivity (e.g. allergy) is known to occur, in which case, discontinue use.

Quality Summary

Our products are all third party tested to ensure the absence of pesticides, microbes, and heavy metals and to confirm purity and stability.

References:


