

HEALTHY MAGAZINE FEATURES: CLAUDIA LOUCH

CHILBLAINS:

Chilblains, also called pernio, perniosis or blain, are localised areas of erythema (redness), swelling and pruritus (itching) resulting from repeated exposure to cold. Blistering or ulceration may occur, the latter known as kibe. Chilblains most commonly affect the fingers and pretibial area. Chilblains do not usually cause permanent injury, but can result in damage if left untreated. Some patients have a reported sensitivity to cold in the affected area, long after the condition has healed. They are most common in the young and the elderly, and are more likely to occur in women. The difference between Pernio and Chilblains is that Pernio affects mostly young females with a history of Raynaud's phenomenon. Tissue and neuronal damage results in vascular hypersensitivity to cold.

Chilblain Symptoms

- * Itchy skin inflammation
- * Skin redness
- * Toe skin inflammation
- * Finger skin inflammation
- * Earlobe inflammation

Treatment

I would prescribe a cream based on the plant extract *Calendula officinalis* (Marigold), and include concentrated oils of capsicum (Cayenne), Ginger, Wintergreen and Black pepper. The concentrated oils are stimulants of the peripheral circulation and have a topically warming effect on the chilblains. The cream is to be applied between 3 to 4 times a day and improves the condition enormously.

In order to speed up and improve the outcome I would also prescribe concomitantly a customised medicinal plant tincture, to be taken twice a day containing Ginger, Elder-berries, Horsetail, Horse-chestnut and Garlic. Ginger as described previously improves the peripheral circulation. Elder-berries are well known as an anti-inflammatory and Horsetail is well known for contributing to healing wounds thanks to the high silica content. The unique actions of Horse Chestnut are on the vessels of the circulatory system. It appears to increase the strength and tone of blood vessels. The chemical allicin, found in Garlic is known to dilate blood vessels, which in return promotes the peripheral circulation and works very well in chilblain affected patients.

Things you can do yourself:

- Avoid cold exposure
- Wear gloves or warm footwear
- Keep hands and feet warm
- Avoid alcohol (worsens the problem greatly!)
- Exercise