The Charcoal Poultice

By Virginia Hildreth

Through the years, I have been interested in home remedies that work. I’m excited about how bountifully God provides many elements in nature for our healing and good health. Such substances usually have no unwanted side effects and are considerably less expensive than pharmaceutical choices. Powdered activated charcoal is a good example of an effective natural remedy. Sprinkled directly onto a wound to act as an antiseptic or made into a poultice, charcoal has definite healing properties. The charcoal poultice absorbs many toxins, such as those incurred from bug and spider bites.

This past summer, the spider, tick, chigger and bug populations made their presence known. Several, including myself, have been bitten by the dreaded Brown Recluse spider. It’s great to learn that a simple charcoal poultice can be the needed cure. Dr. Agatha Thrash and Dr. Calvin Thrash, Jr., in their book, *Home Remedies*, wrote that, “The treatment of choice for the Brown Recluse spider is charcoal. There is no other recognized treatment except wide surgical excision.”

You will need the following items:

- Flaxseed, ground
- Activated charcoal powder
- Water
- Paper towel
- Plastic wrap
- Bandage or first-aid tape

To make a large charcoal poultice, grind up 3 tablespoons flaxseed and mix with 1-3 tablespoons of activated charcoal powder. Stir this mixture into one cup of water. Let it set 10-20 minutes or heat slightly to thicken. Spread this paste ¼ inch thick over a paper towel and cut to the size of the area to be treated. Cover with another towel and place on the skin. Cover this with a piece of plastic wrap and
secure with bandage or tape. Leave on for 6-8 hours. After removing, rub the skin briskly with a cold washcloth.

When I treated my Brown Recluse bite, I had to apply a second poultice. After leaving the first poultice on overnight, the red streaks from the bite had reduced but were still evident. After the second poultice the wound was healed. Thankfully, I never had to consult a doctor.

Smaller bites may be treated simply by crushing a few charcoal tablets and mixing with cold water. This paste may be applied to a band-aid and placed on the wound. Charcoal works for stings from the fire ants, bees, wasps, and yellow jackets. Some have even used the charcoal poultice on snake bites.

If you have charcoal available, you can make a healing poultice in just a few minutes. Locally, I have purchased activated charcoal in bulk at the Wildwood store. All health food stores sell charcoal capsules or tablets. Charcoal swallowed in capsule or tablet form absorbs poisons and other toxins in the stomach and intestinal tract. I keep some on hand for such emergencies. Charcoal can also ease a stomach ache and sweeten the breath.