

Traditional Herbal Healer

APPRECIATION

Esakkiammal (78) hails from Ottapidaram, Tamil Nadu. She learned the local health practices from her ancestors when she was very young. She doesn't keep count of the number of people she has treated. Most of her treatments have been successful. She quotes herself as an example of the effectiveness of her treatments- so far in her life, she has not had to go to the hospital and she treats all the simple ailments of her family at home itself.

Her husband Mr. Aiyapillai was a freedom fighter and was arrested in connection with the Salt Sathyagraha in Tuticorin and was subsequently released from prison as per the Gandhi Irvin Pact. Both she and her husband had burnt mill cloths as a part of the boycott of foreign cloth. Both of them were imprisoned and she was detained for two hours and her husband was transferred to another prison.

She had five sons and a daughter. A daughter and three sons died due to severe penury in the family. Her husband died in 1974 and ever since she has managed the family from the income generated through small businesses. Her elder son dropped out from school and started working in a workshop. Now he manages his own workshop. The second son is a graduate but earns his wages through sundry works. She has 26 cents of land in "Theni" gifted by her father.

Some of her treatments:

Blood pressure

Boil a handful of drumstick leaves (*Moringa oleifera*) in water and drink the water after cooling.

Giddiness

Boil Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) seeds in two tumblers of water until it is reduced to half of its value. To this add lemon juice and honey and drink.

Liver pain

Remove the skin (outer cover) of the "Onion" (*Allium sativum*) till the white petals show. Consume this onion with rice soaked water with a little salt added. Do it in the early morning on an empty stomach.

Contusion

Grind equal parts of red-gram (*Cajanus cajan*) and mustard to a paste like consistency and apply it as poultice over the affected part for two days consequently.

Cuts

Grind "Kooraipoo" (*Aerva lantana*) and slacked/slaked lime in equal parts and apply over the cuts and tie with a cloth. Pour water periodically over the cloth on the affected part to prevent drying out.

Eye irritation and watery eyes

Boil "Sithahathi" (*Sesbania alata*) in "Gingely oil" (*Sesamum indicum*) and apply the drained oil on hair.

Dysentery

Extract juice from "Kuppaimeni" leaves



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(*Acalipha indica*) and consume with curd.

White discharge

Take the pith of "Sotrukatalai" (*Aloe vera*) leaves and wash thoroughly. Consume on an empty stomach in the morning.

Headache

Extract juice from "Kuppaimeni" leaves (*Acalipha indica*) and add equal volume of "Gingely oil" and boil it. Apply

it on the head at lukewarm temperature. After four hours rinse the hair with shikakai powder and take a bath.

Diarrhoea

Crush pepper(*Piper nigrum*) and boil it with one tumbler of water. The decoction of the same can be consumed twice a day.