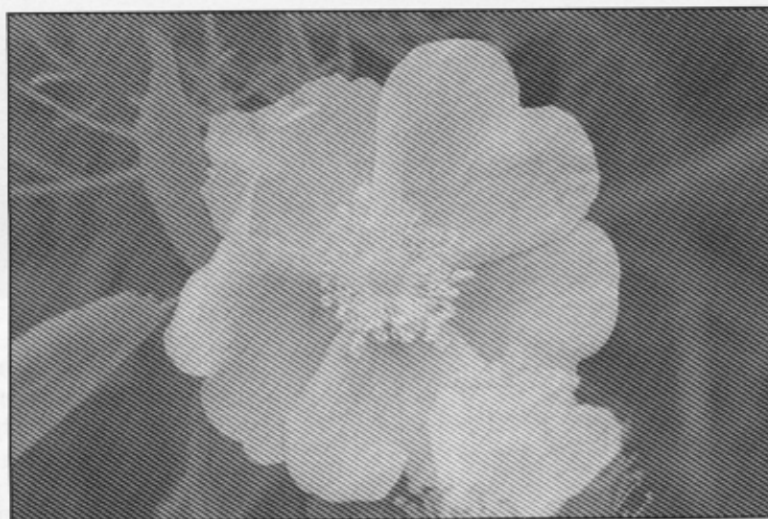


# Chumash Baby and Child Therapies — Teething and Ear Ache

by James D. Adams, Jr. and Cecilia Garcia



California rose  
(*Rosa californica*).

Earaches are a problem that most children encounter. Some children get multiple earaches every year, especially during the winter. Adults can get earaches, too. Modern medicine treats earaches with antibiotics. This normal use of antibiotics has resulted in problems with drug resistance and ear infections that do not heal. A 2003 clinical trial published in *Pediatrics* Volume 111 found that olive oil is just as effective as antibiotics for the treatment of earaches. This study confirms the traditional treatment of earaches with olive oil. Both James Adams and Cecilia Garcia have had all their earaches treated with olive oil. Olive oil is bactericidal due to the presence of phenolic compounds and helps clean out the ear canal and the auditory tube.

The traditional Chumash way to treat earaches is to gather and dry some young mugwort leaves (*Artemisia douglasiana*). Mugwort is found in canyons with permanent streams in California and can be grown at home. The dried leaves can be placed in a clam or abalone shell and smudged. The child should lie down with the aching

ear up. The smoke from the leaves is blown across the ear. Quickly, a half teaspoon or so of olive oil is dropped into the ear canal. In the old days, animal or plant oils were used. Today, olive oil is easily available. The ear is then covered with a smooth, large leaf, such as part of a cattail leaf (*Typha latifolia*). The leaf helps keep the smoke on the ear. If a cattail leaf is not available, a banana peel works well. The child should lie still with the ear up for about 5 or 10 minutes until the oil drops down into the ear. If the earache does not stop within about 2 hours, try another olive oil treatment. If the second treatment does not clear up the earache, go to a doctor.

Teething and colic are common among infants and are traditionally treated by many parents by dipping a finger into brandy and rubbing the infant's gums with the brandy soaked finger. Brandy is irritating to many infants and can cause them to vomit.

The traditional Chumash way to treat teething and colic is with rose petals (*Rosa californica*). California rose is a common plant that grows in deep canyons in the chaparral. The plant can

also be grown at home. When the plant is in bloom, it perfumes the canyon. The petals are collected and used when fresh. Try putting a petal in your mouth to experience the very pleasant smell and taste. To treat the baby, place a few rose petals in a small bowl with a small amount of water. Use your finger to mash the petals into the water. Rub your finger onto the baby's gums. This helps the baby with teething and colic and is not irritating. The petals can also be chopped in a blender with a small amount of water. The liquid is then frozen in an ice cube tray and used as popsicles for teething babies. By the way, most commercial roses do not work well since they are not as fragrant as the California rose. Rose petals contain monoterpenoids that are fragrant and are mild pain relievers.

White sage (*Salvia apiana*) should be a normal part of a child's or adult's life. Put a white sage leaf in a gallon of water and have the child drink that water. One leaf is enough. Make sure to use a fresh leaf every day in a fresh gallon of water. White sage helps us to be reasonable and function in society.

