

**DOMESTIC HEALTH**  
Send us your family's favourite home remedy for a chance to win one of five copies of *1801 Home Remedies* (Reader's Digest, \$59.97). E-mail your entry to [betterhealth@healthsmart.com.au](mailto:betterhealth@healthsmart.com.au) by July 1, 2009



**ALOE, ALOE**

EVERY KITCHEN should have one or two aloe vera plants on the windowsill. It's been used as a healing remedy since ancient times and, as it thrives on neglect, it's easy to grow.

Scientists are not exactly sure how aloe vera works, but they have identified many of its active components. The gel contains gummy substances that form soothing natural emollients. It is rich in anti-inflammatory compounds as well as a chemical called bradykininase, which acts as a topical painkiller. The magnesium lactate in aloe vera soothes itching and the gel promotes healing by dilating blood vessels and increasing blood flow to injured areas.

**TO TREAT MINOR SKIN IRRITATIONS** wash the area, cut and slice a leaf lengthways, then squeeze out the gel and apply a generous coating two or three times a day.

**Superbugs be gone!**

**SUPERBUGS ARE ENDEMIC** in most hospitals, and each year about 200,000 Australians pick up a healthcare-related infection. Here's a good way to help safeguard yourself against nasties. PatientPak contains such items as sanitising wipes, sprays, body washes, soap and a nailbrush to keep even the most sensitive skins comfortable – and help prevent germs hitching a ride from hospital to home. It costs \$35 and can be ordered online at [patientpak.com](http://patientpak.com). Or put together your own kit of mini-sized toiletries and sanitising cleaners for friends or family who need a trip to the wards.



**TOP TIP**

To remove a blood stain, try a thin paste of cornflour and cold water to draw out the stain. Allow to dry, then brush away.

FROM SPOTLESS 2 (ABC BOOKS, \$19.95)

**Back care: form meets function**

IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR with the sore ache or the raw agony of back pain, this will sound attractive: a lounge that mixes space-age technology with an oh-so-cool design to help you feel relaxed all over.

The Zero Gravity outdoor recliner leans on NASA research to help mimic the posture that weightless astronauts use in space. The unconventional reclining position – the same angle astronauts take up during the critical g-force-loaded launch phase – takes pressure off spinal discs,

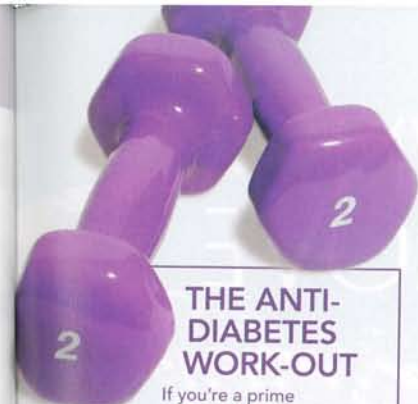
stopping compression that leads to chronic back pain. HealthSmart tried the chair for a weekend and was impressed. French designer chic? Tick. Light and easy to carry? Tick. Easy to adjust? Tick. Comfortable? Double tick. Easy to get out of? Mmm, OK... once you get the hang of it. Appealing to all members of the family? Unfortunately, yes. (But it did offer the opportunity to pull rank on a wannabe laid-back 14-year-old – "It's for work" and "I'm the one with the sore back!" both suddenly became claims to wield gleefully.)

With prices from \$269, it is a tad expensive, but it's well made and smartly finished. All in all, we recommend it, bad back or not. Visit [zerogravitychair.com.au](http://zerogravitychair.com.au).

HealthSmart has two Zero Gravity loungers to give away. Tell us in 100 words or less how a bad back has got you into or out of trouble. Visit [healthsmart.com.au](http://healthsmart.com.au) to enter. Competition closes July 1, 2009.



PHOTOS: BETTY IMAGES



**THE ANTI-DIABETES WORK-OUT**

If you're a prime candidate for diabetes, or already diagnosed, quiz your doctor about the Lift for Life programme. Founded by the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne, the strength-training course is designed for people who want to raise the bar on diabetes and its complications. Studies by the institute have found that regular training by people with type 2 diabetes leads to a 14% improvement in blood glucose control in just six months, putting it on a par with drug treatment. Visit [liftforlife.com.au](http://liftforlife.com.au) for your nearest classes.



**Toss the cheap gloss**

LIP GLOSSES without an SPF can increase your risk of developing skin cancer, warn dermatologists. Says Dr Christine Brown, a dermatologist at Baylor University Medical Centre, Dallas, "Glosses can make more of the light rays

penetrate directly through the skin instead of being reflected off the skin's surface." Look for a lip gloss with an SPF30+ or use a lip balm with good SPF cover as a base beneath your glossy.



**TRAVEL TAKE YOUR ALLERGIES ON THE ROAD**

IF YOU LOVE to travel and try local cuisine but have food allergies, go to [allergytranslation.com](http://allergytranslation.com) to print out a card outlining your allergies in any one of more than 20 languages. That way, your health concerns will be less likely to get lost in translation. You can also download Chef Sheets, which explain the dangers of cross contamination, to pass along to the cook.

"It's probably rhinovirus."  
"OH MY GOD! What's that?"  
"A cold."  
**Dr Gregory House and patient, in House**

**Medicines**  
What's in a name?

**Prescription medicines are supposed to help you feel better, not worse.** Right? Unfortunately, 140,000 Australians wind up in hospital each year because of a bad reaction to their meds. The National Prescribing Service has launched an online tool, the NPS Medicine Name Finder, that identifies a prescription medicine's active ingredient and other brand names it goes by. Visit [nps.org.au/medicine\\_name\\_finder](http://nps.org.au/medicine_name_finder) and click the link to Consumer Medicine Information to learn of any hazards specific to your drug.

