

# Natural Mastitis Treatments



## Acute Toxic Mastitis

Onset is fast, usually 12 to 16 hours. Symptoms include a high temperature 105 – 106+ degrees and the quarter will be very hard and tender. Usually you will get a watery or yellow serum-like excretion, and on occasion a reddish color with or without blood clots. The quarter is very touchy and she may raise her leg in protest when you start to strip. The heart rate is quite often up; it can be 70 – 100 beats per minute with 60 being normal. This is a very sick cow, she will usually be off her grain feeds and some will go off feed entirely. These cows have absorbed toxins into their blood stream. These toxins are bacteria (dead and alive), foreign protein from destroyed milk secreting alveoli, ruptured white and red blood cells and other proteins from body tissues. This sets up an endotoxic shock which gives the animal a headache, raises her temperature and overwhelms her lymphatic system. Antioxidants will help clear out the toxins in the blood stream. The treatment for acute mastitis should be early and aggressive. There are many tools and items one can use in treating this. I will list the ones that have been successful.

## Protocol A –

1. IV glucose or dextrose
2. Vitamin C 30–50cc in the IV and follow up with 30–50cc subcutaneous (SQ) every 12 hours for 2 to 3 days.
3. If no Vitamin C given, use antioxidant tinctures such as rose hips, chapparal, echinacea, or red clover blossom.
4. Aloe vera, drench 300cc orally every 12 hours for 2 to 3 days.
5. Echinacea tinctures, 3–4cc orally or in vulva twice a day for 2 to 3 days or as needed.
6. Garlic tincture, orally or in vulva. If using a good quality tincture this may go IV.
7. St. John's Wort tincture or aspirin boluses for pain. Twice a day or as needed.
8. 30cc of a good quality whey product SQ. Repeat daily for 3 days.
9. A liniment of essential oils for the udder; rub and massage udder twice a day.
10. Homeopathy treatment, one of three are popular for mastitis. Phytolacca, bryonia or SSC. 10 pills of a 30cc, use the large #40 pills, put 10 in the vulva or under the tongue.
11. Repeat homeopathy every couple of hours if needed. Continue for 2 days.

12. Strip, strip, strip. This is very important. Fennel and chamomile tinctures applied in the vulva or applied on top of the udder (3cc) in back have some milk let down effects. Apply and rub in with the liniment and then strip.

13. Over night infusions of essential oil combinations in the udder.

If you're picking off this list always include aloe, garlic, whey, and an antioxidant and build or delete from there.

**\*Note:** Homeopathy pills are put under the tongue or in the vulva with a 3cc syringe with the end cut off. Rinse in a sanitizing solution between animals. The liquid tinctures are put in the vulva with a 3cc or 5cc syringe with a 3" plastic infusion pipette to get the liquid over the pelvic brim – clean and rinse pipette.

## Protocol B –

This regimen comes from the Vermont area and has worked quite successfully on hot toxic mastitis.

1. 17cc echinacea tincture
2. 17cc garlic tincture
3. 17cc St. Johns Wort tincture

Add the above (51cc) to 49cc of water and drench.

Do this three times a day for two days. Put a liniment on the udder and strip out often. Isolate her and give her no feed only water for 48 hours. When fasting, all of an animal's systems return to homeostasis (normal).

Wellness Tonic or any apple cider vinegar drench.

### **Protocol C –**

This comes from New York and has been used quite successfully. A couple of these herbs have effects against Staph mastitis. If Staph hasn't set up scar tissue in the udder this may help. Old Staph animals with scar tissue one can feel by palpating the udder should be moved to the very top of the cull list. Here is the recipe:

- 3 Tbl. – Cayenne powder
- 3 Tbl. – Echinacea Augusta-folia powder
- 2 Tbl. – Goldenseal Root powder
- 1 Tbl. – Oregon Grape Root

Put all of the above in that proportion on the feed twice a day for 4 to 7 days. Be careful of the cayenne powder as this is strong and can irritate ones eyes and lips. It will also trigger one to sneeze. One should strip out the quarter or quarters frequently.

### **Protocol D –**

For a flare up that is not acute, a cow not particularly off feed, but has an obvious swollen quarter with bad milk, this protocol comes from Kentucky.

1. Massage the quarter or quarters with poke oil twice a day for 3 to 4 days. Poke oil contains essential oils and poke weed. Poke weed is phytolacca.
2. Use the homeopathic phytolacca. 10 big pills in vulva or under the tongue twice a day for 3 to 5 days.
3. Give an antioxidant twice a day for 3 to 4 days either 30–50cc of Vitamin C or 3–4ccs of a tincture = antioxidant blend (make sure your antioxidant tincture has rose hips in it).
4. Strip, strip, strip.

### **Gangrenous Mastitis**

This is a mastitis usually seen in the summer during pasture season when it's hot, although with acidotic confined cows in the mainstream dairy world, I would see it all year. This cow comes with a quarter or two that are swollen. The lower part and usually the teat are cold and blue (dead tissue) and she has gas coming out. You will strip out gas. They are usually down and heading towards death. Over 50% will be dead in 24 hours. In my later years of practice, I could keep most of them alive with the following treatment.

1. If an older cow, an IV of glucose, also an IV of calcium.
2. Hydrogen peroxide IV. 10cc of 35% into 500cc saline or 500cc glucose or 100cc of 3.5% into 500cc saline or 500cc glucose. Give this slowly, otherwise they will hyperventilate. I never lost one while giving the IV.
3. Into the bad quarter or quarters I would then take 250cc saline + 5cc of 35% peroxide or 250cc saline + 50cc of 3.5% peroxide and infuse that into the quarter it will foam and bubble.
4. Take a scalpel and then cut the bottom 1/3 of the dead teat off. This will bubble and fizz for hours. Always cut the teat end off so it can drain out well. Farmers are always hesitant to cut off the dead cold teat 1/3 the way up. Surprisingly they don't bleed and there is very little feeling when the teat is cold, it's dead.
5. Drenching with aloe vera liquid and 3cc of echinacea tincture. To stimulate the immune system, this should be continued for 3 to 5 days, if she makes it.

The dead tissue will turn black and eventually slough off. This takes months. Gangrenous mastitis cows are never again milk cows. You are strictly trying to salvage a slaughter cow.

## High Somatic Cell Cows

This is the good cow you want to keep in the herd that has flare ups and will run between 500,000 and a million or more cell count. First thing you do is culture these to see if you have Staph aureus. If they are Staph cows they go to the top of the cull list. Second thing you do with these cows is palpate their udder after they are milked out. If you feel lumps and hard consolidated masses and they are staph cows they go even higher on the cull list. Your treatments may not touch them organically or conventionally. If they are non-Staph cows I will suggest the following protocols.

### Protocol A –

For high somatic cows, feed 2 to 4 oz. of aloe pellets for three weeks along with 2 oz. of kelp or free choice kelp. In mild cases, this may tweak the immune system enough to help her lower the cell count by herself.

### Protocol B –

Days one, two, and three give your high somatic cow the following each day:

1. 300cc aloe liquid or 8 oz. of aloe pellets 2 times a day.
2. 30cc of a quality whey SQ once per day.
3. 3–4cc garlic tincture in vulva twice a day.



4. Vitamin C 30–50cc twice a day SQ or an antioxidant blend tincture in vulva twice a day.
5. Strip, strip, strip.

On occasion you will get a major flushing of the udder that will plug up the filters and socks, this is good. Do not market any milk during this treatment then come back on days 10 and 11 and repeat the above treatment. (Skip a week after day 3). If you see a response the second time repeat in another week. Wait 10 days and do a somatic cell test to see if you lowered the count.

### Protocol C –

Use a mixed mastitis nosode. This nosode covers Strep, Staph species, and Staph aureus, E. coli and Campylobacter. Some herds have seen a reduction in somatic cell count after using the nosode. They can also be used along with any treatment. When using a nosode as a preventative, it is recommended to repeat it every 6 months.

### Summary:

No one treatment is going to work on every farm. Some cows will not respond to any treatments if they have a weak immune system. Your ultimate goal as an organic dairy farmer is to have your herd so balanced with minerals; so full of energy from high quality forages; and with such a healthy immune system that you won't need any treatment. I have seen many farms on Organic Valley's truck that have little or few mastitis problems. You will always have the stepped on teat or spring mud that can precipitate mastitis in any herd. In a very healthy herd, any treatment always works more effectively.

## Handling the Dry Cow

When drying off a cow, a few biological laws should be known from the cows systems. The endocrine system (hormone) is in charge of dry off. When you dry off a cow you want to quit milking her pronto and don't touch her for about 6 to 7 days. Why? Because the switch that turns off the endocrine system to shut down the lactating hormones is a tight udder. If you keep stripping her, you're turning the switch on and off. Now on problem cows: high cell count or mastitis prone ones, you go in and strip on the seventh day and see what's there, if you have a mess then implement a treatment from any of the acute cow protocols. You have a 10 to 14 day window to work aggressively by stripping and treating.

A second dry cow tool or problem mastitic cow tool we employ in organics is pre-milking. I used this in practice on chosen cows successfully. This can be used on huge edematous udders also. Start at least two weeks before calving, milking her two times a day until freshening. It's been shown if you do this for two weeks you will lessen her chance of milk fever. The first few days she won't give much, if at all. Usually about the 3rd or 4th milking she will start to drop her milk. If you run into a mess then start treating her with one of the acute protocols. This was hugely successful on high potassium herds with a lot of udder edema also. You do not lose colostrum quality. Colostrum is triggered by the endocrine system. I have personally seen cows with white

milk at 7 a.m. calve at 4 p.m. and have dark yellow tan thick colostrum at 5 p.m. Impro Company, with their extensive work with colostrums, will attest to this. Their staff veterinarian Dr. Holliday encourages pre-milking adamantly. Also, there are tubes which contain essential oils and probiotics that are available for dry cow treating on the market. They are not widely used at all. I recommend all dry cows receive free choice kelp meal and humates along with trace mineral salt and a proper mineral free choice. Also, kelp helps build a healthy immune system. It's a huge dose of colloidal trace elements, as are humates. For the dry cow, keep these separate, so she can select what she needs.

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One Organic Way • LaFarge, WI 54963  
1-888-809-9297 [www.organicvalley.coop/farmer](http://www.organicvalley.coop/farmer)