

THE
Beginner's Guide
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PRE-MENSTRUAL SYNDROME

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PMS is a constellation of symptoms, both physical and emotional, which affect many women in the days leading up to a period, for anything from two to 14 days. It is only relatively recently that it has been recognised and accepted as a disorder with a physical cause. The term pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) is more comprehensive than pre-menstrual tension, and is preferred by women as it has a less sexist, accusatory ring. The symptoms are relieved almost as soon as the period starts. It is a very common complaint, affecting three out of four women aged 30-40.

The social implications of PMS are considerable. There is an increased incidence of anti-social behaviour, accidents, illness and psychiatric crises in pre-menstrual women. Examples of this include poor standards of school work, with fewer passes and distinctions; schoolgirls receive more than the expected number of punishments, and are more forgetful and unpunctual. A three to five per cent increase in absenteeism from work occurs around the period time. Symptoms may be severe enough to cause a fear of crossing the road or driving, so the sufferer becomes isolated, preferring to stay close to home.

Behaviour of the sufferer that is different from the norm influences the lives of partners, children, neighbours, and friends. Aggressive behaviour towards the partner may lead to counter-violence.

Children are very sensitive to their mother's emotional state, and may respond to inexplicable mood swings by psychosomatic symptoms such as a cough, runny nose, crying and vomiting. Thus, in addition to the unpleasant symptoms and feeling of not being in control that the sufferer experiences, she may also feel guilty about the effect she is having on those closest to her. This may account for the significant number of attempted suicides in the pre-menstrual phase.

Causes and symptoms

The causes of PMS are many and varied. They include hereditary predisposition, emotional causes and dietary errors. Metabolically it is possible to recognise four main sub-types of PMS, depending on the symptoms experienced.

Type 1 PMS A: Symptoms are nervous tension, mood swings, anxiety and irritability. This is the most common type, affecting 65 to 75 per cent of PMS sufferers.

Type 2 PMS B: Symptoms are of fluid retention, weight gain, breast heaviness and swelling and abdominal bloating. This affects 65 to 75 per cent of sufferers with PMS and appears to be due to excess aldosterone production, which produces salt and water retention.

Type 3 PMS C: Symptoms are sweet craving, increased appetite, dizziness and fainting. This affects 24 to 35 per cent of pre-menstrual women, and is due to decreased carbohydrate tolerance.

Type 4 PMS D: Symptoms are depression, crying, confusion, forgetfulness and insomnia. This affects 25 to 35 per cent of women, and is more commonly found combined with PMS A, which occurs first and is followed by PMS D symptoms a few days before the onset of a period. It is characterised by high progesterone and low oestrogen.

Additional Symptoms

- 1 Skin disorders, increased tendency to acne. Skin becomes blotchy and dull with blemishes and whiteheads, and there may be a tendency to bruise. The skin is often more greasy.
- 2 Aches and pains due to (a) increased pressure within the tissues as retained fluid starts to collect, pressing on the nerve endings; (b) increased state of tension of the muscle fibres, possibly due to actual pre-menstrual effect on the muscle fibre, though it may also be due to mental tension; (c) painful periods caused by congestion of blood vessels in the pelvis and the genital regions - giving rise to a dull persistent pain in contrast to spasmodic period pains; (d) clumsiness.

Other more unusual symptoms are as follows: apathy, agoraphobia, panic attacks, fright, phobias, aversion to company, suspicion, feeling of detachment, suicidal tendencies, swelling of upper eyelids, hair loss, sinusitis, sore throat, numbness of the throat, backache, swelling of the hip and lower back, cutting pain in the legs, itching irritation and burning in the vagina, vaginal discharge which may be yellow and offensive, aversion to intercourse, pain on intercourse, burning pain in bladder, increase in wind and alternate constipation and diarrhoea, hot feet and a general feeling of being worse between 3 and 5pm.

Homeopathic treatment

The best course of action is homeopathic constitutional treatment, although the remedies listed below are well worth trying.

Specific remedies to be taken every 12 hours for up to three days, starting 24 hours before pre-menstrual symptoms are due. All remedies to be taken in 30c potency.

Sepia

Irritability - worse for stress; depression; indifference; agoraphobia; weepiness; difficulty in concentrating;

wanting to get away from everyone; emotionally flat; suicidal; fits of screaming; possible violence; anger; hair falling out; headaches in general; pressure on top of the head; chronic sinusitis; greasy facial skin; hot flushes on face; sore throat with numbness; desire for sweets and salty things; tenderness, dragging, bearing down pains in lower abdomen; anal fissure; burning pain in vagina; yellow, burning, offensive vaginal discharge; itching of vagina caused by discharge; discharge after intercourse with tendency to thrush - worse after childbirth; aversion to sexual intercourse or just reduced sex drive; prolapse of the womb; may have endometriosis; pain in vagina on intercourse, symptoms worse at menopause; sore nipples; palpitations.

Generalities: muscular tension - worse between 3 and 5pm; trembling weakness and weariness in morning. Symptoms worse after periods.

Calcarea

Depression; indifference; agoraphobia; weepiness; irritability; panic attacks; suicidal; apprehension; fearful, especially in public places; dizziness; headache before periods; general tendency to headaches; pains in back of head; greasy facial skin; sore throat; desire for sweets, sugar, salt and eggs; yellow, burning vaginal discharge causes itching; tendency to thrush; PMS worse since pregnancy; prolapse of womb; pain in womb during periods; swelling and tenderness of breasts before periods; backache; clumsiness; swollen ankles; swelling of hands; cutting pains in thigh; sleeplessness.

Generalities: painful joints; tiredness and lack of energy; weakness with cold sweats; tendency to put on weight.

Lycopodium

Irritability - worse for stress; depression; lack of self confidence; weepiness; difficulty in concentrating; wanting to be left alone; suspicious; mistrustful; feeling of being detached; violent behaviour; fearful in a crowd of people; weepy after periods; anger; hair falling out; headaches before periods; greasy facial skin; hot flushes on face; sore throat; nausea; desire for sweet things; desire for sugar; bloated abdomen; dull aching pains; bearing down pains in lower abdomen; irritable bowel syndrome; yellow vaginal discharge; aversion to sexual intercourse; may have endometriosis; tender nipples and breasts; backache; swelling of back; swollen fingers, hands, feet and ankles.

Generalities: joint pains; general weakness; trembling; weakness in morning; weakness with sweating; tendency to put on weight.

Pulsatilla

Irritability - worse for stress; depression; indifference; lack of self-confidence; weepiness; burst into tears for

no reason; desire to be alone; suspicious; mistrusting; feeling of detachment; suicidal; indecisiveness; anxious about the future; fearful in public places; fearful in a crowd; dizziness; headaches before periods; swelling of upper eyelids; bloated abdomen; dull aching pain and bearing down pains in lower abdomen; cramping pains - better for heat; irritable bowel syndrome; urgent need to pass water; burning pain; burning pains in vagina; burning yellow vaginal discharge, with tendency to thrush; PMS worse since pregnancy; prolapse of the womb; pain in womb during periods; periods irregular and may be scanty; symptoms worse at menopause; tender breasts; backache; hot feet; swollen fingers, ankles and feet.

Generalities: joint pains; weakness; muscular tension; tendency to weight gain.

Sulphur

Weepiness; irritability; desire to be left alone; mistrustful; anxiety; violent; angry and apprehensive; hair falling out; headache before periods; drawing pains in head; swelling of upper eyelids; chronic sinusitis; greasy facial skin; hot flushes on face; sore throat; marked desire for sweets, sugar and salt; dragging bearing down pain in lower abdomen; constipation; anal fissure; irritable bowel syndrome; urgent need to pass water; burning pains in vagina; yellow, burning offensive vaginal discharge which causes itching; aversion to intercourse or reduced sex drive; pain in vagina on intercourse, worse at menopause; painful nipples; clumsiness, hot feet; swelling of fingers and hands.

Generalities: joint pains; PMS worse during convalescence from illness; tendency to put on weight.

Lachesis

Irritability; difficulty in concentrating; aversion to company; suspicious and mistrustful; detached feeling; suicidal; violent; indecisive; symptoms worse for stress; dizziness; hair falling out; headache before periods; sore throat worse on left side; bloated abdomen; tenderness in abdomen; constipation; anal fissure; irritable bowel syndrome; menopause; burning, vaginal discharge; PMS worse since pregnancy; tender nipples; palpitations; backache; clumsiness; swollen ankles; aching pains in hips; swollen hands; sleeplessness.

Generalities: symptoms better at beginning of period; weakness and heaviness in morning - worse after periods are over.

Natrum mur

Depression; indifference; lack of self-confidence; weepiness; definite aversion to company; detached feeling; anxiety; suicidal; violent; fearful in a crowd; symptoms worse for stress; hair falling out; headaches before periods; pressure on top of head; greasy facial

skin; nausea; desires salty and sweet things; anal fissure; irritable bowel syndrome; burning pain in vagina; itching from vaginal discharge; tendency to thrush; aversion to intercourse or reduced sex drive; pain in vagina on intercourse; swollen tender breasts; palpitations.

Generalities: weakness; muscular tension; trembling; weariness in morning; fluid retention.

Nux vom

Indifference; lack of self-confidence; agoraphobia; irritability; difficulty in concentrating; aversion to company; mistrustful; anxiety; suicidal; violent; fearful in public places; fearful in a crowd; anger, symptoms worse for stress; dizziness; drawing pains in head; chronic catarrh; acne on face; sore throat; nausea; desire for fatty foods, rich foods, alcohol; bearing down pain in lower abdomen; constipation; anal fissure; irritable bowel syndrome; frequent need to pass water; yellow, offensive vaginal discharge with tendency to thrush; PMS worse since pregnancy; pain in womb during periods; worse at menopause; tenderness of breasts; backache; clumsiness.

Generalities: joint pains; muscular tension; weariness in the morning; generally worse after periods as well as before, chilliness.

Phosphorus

Worse for stress; indifference; panic attacks; difficult concentration; feeling of detachment; violent; apprehensive; weepiness after periods; anger; dizziness; hair falling out; greasy facial skin; acne on face; nausea, desire for sweets, sugar, salt and salty things; dragging down pain in abdomen; anal fissure; irritable bowel syndrome; urgent need to pass water; menopause; burning vaginal discharge; aversion to intercourse; clumsiness; swollen fingers, ankles, feet and hands; cramps in calves.

Generalities: joint pains; weakness; PMS worse during convalescence from and acute illness; muscle tension; tendency to put on weight.

Graphites

Weepiness; irritability; difficulty in concentrating; anxiety; indecision; hair falling out; swollen face; hot flushes on face; constipation; anal fissure; burning pain in vagina; yellow vaginal discharge, with tendency to thrush; reduced sex drive; symptoms worse at menopause; tenderness in breasts and nipples; clumsiness; cutting pains in thigh; swelling of fingers, ankles and feet.

Generalities: weakness; generally worse after periods; tendency to put on weight.

Kali carb

Irritability; panic attacks; angry; tense; hair falling out; swollen upper eyelids, like a little bag or pouch; chronic

sinusitis; swollen face; desires sweets, sugar; dull aching pain; gnawing pain in abdomen; constipation; irritable bowel syndrome; urgent need to pass water; reduced sex drive; pain in vagina on intercourse; symptoms worse at menopause; swollen, tender breasts; backaches; sleeplessness.

Generalities: joint pains; trembling; tendency to weight gain; exhaustion; symptoms worse around 3am.

Silicea

Lack of self-confidence; difficulty in concentrating; hair falling out; pressure on top of head; greasy facial skin; acne on face; sore throat; cramping pains - better for warmth; constipation; anal fissure; offensive vaginal discharge; tender nipples; clumsiness; swollen feet.

Generalities: joint pains; symptoms worse during convalescence from acute illness; muscle tension.

Belladonna

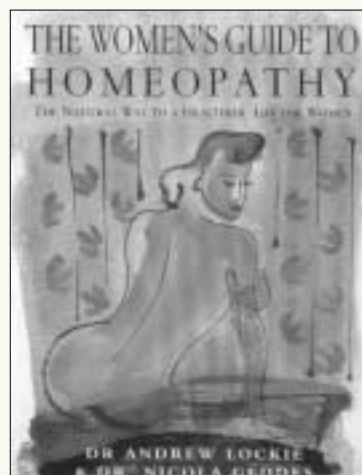
Worse for stress; irritability; aversion to company; mistrustful; suicidal; violent; headache before periods; feeling of pressure on top of head; sore throat; dragging pains; burning in vagina; tendency to thrush; PMS worse since pregnancy; pain in womb during periods, symptoms worse at menopause; clumsiness; cutting pains in thigh; swollen hands; sleeplessness.

Generalities: joint pains; weakness; weariness; tendency to gain weight.

Causticum

Depression; weepiness; irritability; difficulty in concentrating; suspicious and mistrustful; pessimistic; over-sensitive; greasy facial skin; acne on face; sore throat; frequent urge to urinate or signs of cystitis; anal fissure; itching from vaginal discharge; PMS symptoms worse since pregnancy; aversion to sexual intercourse or reduced sex drive; tender nipples; backache; clumsiness; swollen feet.

Generalities: joint pains; weakness.



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COMMON PROBLEMS DURING CHILDHOOD

BY DR DAVID GEMMELL MB BS BSc MFHom

Homeopathy can be particularly helpful for the problems of children. Remember that children fluctuate alarmingly in their symptoms in a few hours so do not panic. However, if you have any doubts about any situation, it is essential that you consult your own doctor immediately.

Asthma

Asthma in childhood can be treated effectively by homeopathy, but this should be done under the care of a qualified practitioner. It is important that the child continues with the conventional medication prescribed by the doctor. Homeopathy is used in a complementary way and the dose should be reduced as the symptoms improve.

Symptoms: Asthma after fit of anger. Irritable hard, dry cough. Better from bending head backwards; cold, fresh air and drinking cold water; and being carried about. Impatient, irritable and whining; spiteful.

Remedy: **Chamomilla 30c.**
One dose every 15-30 minutes.

Symptoms: Asthmatic bronchitis - rattling and bubbling. Chest full of mucus - but not easily coughed up. Better sitting up to breathe; better in open air or by open windows. Spasmodic coughing violently with each breath till blue in the face. Nausea and gagging and much saliva. Hoarseness at end of episode. Returns periodically each year.

Remedy: **Ipecac 6c or 30c.**
One dose every 15-30 minutes.

Symptoms: Worse 4 to 5 am and in cold, wet weather and cold, damp places. Very breathless, with much rattling of mucus in chest. Mucus thick and greenish. Pain in lower chest. Every cold results in asthma.

Remedy: **Nat sulph 6c or 30c.**
One dose every 15-30 minutes.

Symptoms: Great difficulty breathing or lying down. Variable hoarseness. Dry cough early night, loose cough in the morning - yellow green sticky mucus. Better open air and gentle motion, sympathy and consolation. Worse for heat of a warm room.

Remedy: **Pulsatilla 6c or 30c.**
One dose every 15-30 minutes.

Bedwetting

Homeopathic remedies may be useful as an aid. However, for many children bedwetting may be a problem of long duration. If these remedies are not helpful, seek the advice of an experienced homeopath.

Symptoms: May be wet during the day also. Leaks with coughing. Wet early in sleep; not aware of passing urine. Irritable and very sensitive to cold.

Remedy: **Causticum 6c.** One dose 6 times a day for 5-10 days. With improvement, reduce to one dose before bedtime.

Symptoms: Frequency during the day. "Soaks the bed." Dreams and nightmares. Dull discomfort and tenderness in the bladder. (Consult your doctor about possible bladder infection.)

Remedy: **Equisetum 6c.** One dose 4-6 times a day for 5-10 days. With improvement, reduce to one dose before bedtime.

Symptoms: "Soaks the bed" later in sleep. Irritable, peevish and fretful. Worse on waking. Hates contradiction. Likes fresh air.

Remedy: **Lycopodium 30c.**
One dose before bedtime for 5-10 days.

Symptoms: Debility after recent illness or recent growth spurt or overtaxed at school. Listless and apathetic. Profuse milky urine. Anxiety first, burning after.

Remedy: **Phos ac 6c or 30c.**
One dose before bedtime for 5-10 days.

Symptoms: Increased need to pass urine. Worse lying down and coughing. Very changeable; timid and likes sympathy and cuddles.

Remedy: **Pulsatilla 6c or 30c.**
One dose before bedtime for 5-10 days.

Symptoms: Urgency - can't wait - doesn't wake up in time. Untidy warm-blooded children. Thirsty and craves sweets.

Remedy: **Sulphur 6c or 30c.**
One dose before bedtime for 5-10 days.

Constipation

General Management

- Encourage the child to use the toilet at regular times.
- Train the child to go to the toilet as soon as the urge to empty the bowels occurs.
- Drinking adequate quantities of water will help to prevent the motions from becoming hard.
- Increase the amount of fibre in the diet and eliminate highly refined and manufactured foods.

Symptoms: Straining for a soft sticky stool. Unable to pass stool until a large accumulation.

Remedy: **Alumina 6c.** One dose 2-3 times a day.

Symptoms: In chilly, sedentary child with sluggish bowel action. Feels better when constipated.

Remedy: **Calc carb 6c.**
One dose morning and evening.

Symptoms: Frequent and ineffectual desire. Small quantities at each attempt. Alternating with diarrhoea. Impatient and over-sensitive.

Remedy: **Nux vomica 6c.**
One dose morning and evening.

Symptoms: No desire for stool. No complaints. Bowels seem closed.

Remedy: **Opium 6c.** One dose morning and evening.

Stop any of the above when the condition improves.

Coughs

Call the doctor if:

- the overall condition worsens;
- there are other problems, such as diabetes or a heart condition;
- the new infection is in addition to a long-term chest infection such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema.

Do not attempt to treat severe bronchitis or pneumonia yourself. The doctor may have to prescribe an antibiotic, which at some stage could be in the patient's best interest.

If you cannot decide which of two remedies is the more appropriate in the circumstances, take them alternately, as often as is necessary for relief. Remember to change the remedy with a change in the symptom picture and reduce dose with improvement.

Dry Cough:

Symptoms: Croup-like cough in very dry, cold weather. Anxiety and restlessness. Fever, thirst, no sweating.

Remedy: Aconite 30c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Symptoms: Slow, gradual fever; irritation of air passages. Cough worse for movement and entering a warm room; can be worse at night. Much thirst for cold drinks. Stabbing pains in throat or chest.

Remedy: Bryonia 6c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Symptoms: Rough, noisy croup-like cough. Sudden onset in cold weather. Better in a warm, steamy room.

Remedy: Hepar sulph 6c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Symptoms: Raw, tearing, burning pain in a croup-like cough. Improves with hot drinks.

Remedy: Spongia 6c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Spasmodic Cough:

Symptoms: Crowing spasmodic cough. Better for sipping cold water.

Remedy: Cuprum met 6c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Symptoms: Dry cough – a bit like whooping cough. Worse at night and lying down. May be wheezing; occasionally croup-like.

Remedy: Drosera 6c.

One dose at 15 minute intervals.

Symptoms: Spasms of coughing; the more he coughs, the more he has to.

Remedy: Ignatia 6c. One dose morning and evening and after a bout of coughing.

Loose Cough:

Symptoms: Loose phlegm, thick and difficult to cough up. Breathless. Wheezing, noisy chest.

Remedy: Antim tart 6c. One dose 4-6 times a day.

Symptoms: Spasmodic cough, worse in open air. Breathless. Rapid development of phlegm which may be vomited up.

Remedy: Ipecac 6c. One dose 4-6 times a day.

Symptoms: Thick yellow loose phlegm. Runny nose. Cough productive in a day and dry at night. Better in fresh air. Towards end of illness.

Remedy: Pulsatilla 6c. One dose 4-6 times a day.

Sometimes coughs can drag on for weeks. In other cases, the child may have repeated infections over a period of years. In both these situations the child can be said to have a basic weakness, and this can only be treated on constitutional grounds and you should consult a homeopath.

Croup

This is a spasm of the vocal cords which makes breathing in difficult, giving a sensation of suffocation. It usually occurs at night. The child may already have a cough or a cold, but it can come "out of the blue". It causes a crowing or croaking noise, frequently with a barking or metallic cough. An attack may last from one to three hours and then rapidly ease off, but it can recur for two or three nights.

Croup can be dangerous and should not be ignored. Call your doctor if there are no obvious signs of improvement in 30-60 minutes, or if at any time the spasm worsens or the breathing becomes difficult, or if the colour of the lips and fingernails of the child turns blue.

Remedy: The recognised treatment for croup is first to give a dose of Aconite 30c, followed in ten to 15 minutes by Hepar sulph 30c and by Spongia 30c ten to 15 minutes after that. Then return to the Hepar sulph, continuing the treatment as required by alternating Hepar sulph with Spongia at ten to 15 minute intervals. Use whatever potency is available, but the 30c is likely to be more powerful.

Earache

Most ear infections are due to viruses and usually clear within 48 hours. If not, then consult your doctor.

If the earache is repeated several times each winter, or forms part of a picture of frequent colds and chest infections, there is an underlying constitutional weakness which can only be helped by "constitutional" treatment. You must consult an experienced homeopath for this.

Symptoms: Abrupt onset of pain in ear, especially after a chill in cold, dry weather. Unbearable and usually worse at night, some improvement by local heat; skin burning and dry; fever with shivering. Anxious and restless, fearful.

Remedy: Aconite 30c. One dose at intervals of 30 minutes for 3-4 doses. If no improvement, move on to one of the other remedies and reduce dose as condition improves.

Symptoms: Pain, stinging, burning, pricking. External ear may be red and tender. Eased by cold

compresses; made worse by heat. Hot dry skin alternating with perspiration.

Remedy: **Apis 6c.** One dose every 30 minutes.

Symptoms: Throbbing pain, not so rapid onset. Very hot dry skin, red face and dilated pupils. Not restless or fearful.

Remedy: **Belladonna 6c.** One dose every 30 minutes.

Symptoms: Stabbing pain, intolerable. Cross, irritable; doesn't know where to put himself.

Remedy: **Chamomilla 6c.**

One dose every 30 minutes.

Symptoms: Jerking, tearing pain, ears hot. Pain is made worse by heat. Miserable and whining; responds to cuddling and affection.

Remedy: **Pulsatilla 6c.** One dose every 30 minutes.

Ears - Discharging

Earache which ceases suddenly followed by the appearance of pus discharging from the ear canal probably means that the eardrum has burst. This is not an emergency because the pressure in the ear has been relieved - when the infection has subsided with treatment the eardrum will heal and hearing will return to normal.

For ears which have discharged many times - chronic ears - it would be better to consult an experienced homeopath. It may be necessary to use antibiotics. If this course is decided upon, it will be helpful to use homeopathic remedies at the same time.

Symptoms: Yellow pus - flows easily. Very sensitive to draughts.

Remedy: **Hepar sulph 6c.** One dose three times a day until improvement.

Symptoms: Thick, white, stringy pus; very sticky and difficult to clean.

Remedy: **Kali mur 6c.** One dose three times a day until improvement.

Symptoms: Yellow-green pus; thicker, sticky.

Remedy: **Pulsatilla 6c.** One dose three times a day until improvement.

Symptoms: Foul-smelling pus.

Remedy: **Pyrogenium 6c.** One dose three times a day until improvement. When the discharge stops, continue the original treatment for two further days, and then give **Sulphur 6c** morning and evening for two days more.

Fluid in the Ears ("Glue Ear")

This usually occurs after ear infections following a cold. It may only last a few days, but it may take many weeks to clear. Your doctor should be consulted if deafness or poor hearing persists, in order that the level of hearing can be monitored.

Symptoms: Chronic catarrh. Mouth breathing. Recurrent tonsillitis.

Remedy: **Kali mur 6c.** One dose morning and evening for 4-8 weeks.

Symptoms: Deafness - intermittently hard of hearing.

Variable deafness. Squelching, bubbling noises in the ear.

Remedy: **Pulsatilla 6c.**

One dose morning and evening for 4-8 weeks.

If the treatment appears to cure the deafness, and your doctor finds on examination that the ear drums have returned to normal, then stop. If however the ear drums have not completely returned to normal or the hearing is improving but variable, continue to use the remedies for a further month and arrange for your doctor to examine the ears again.

Sleeplessness in Children

Symptoms: Anxiety, restlessness. Fear and excitement.

Remedy: **Aconite 30c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Anxiety about forthcoming events (eg examinations or starting a new school).

Remedy: **Argent nit 6c.**

One dose in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Very restless - gets out of bed and walks about; tries to sleep in a chair or another bed. Increasingly apprehensive.

Remedy: **Arsen alb 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Nightmares. Red face, hot dry skin. Pupils dilated, eyes bright. Head hot.

Remedy: **Belladonna 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Oversensitive, especially to pain; peevish and petulant.

Remedy: **Chamomilla 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Can't stop thinking. Excitement, happy events. Very sensitive to noise.

Remedy: **Coffea cruda 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Restless, miserable, depressed, afraid to be alone. Weepy and hysterical.

Remedy: **Ignatia 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Sensitive, mentally active, irritable and angry.

Remedy: **Nux vomica 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

Symptoms: Nightmares in a very sensitive child. Fear of the dark.

Remedy: **Phosphorus 6c.** One to two doses in the evening and on retiring.

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COMMON PROBLEMS DURING ADOLESCENCE

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Homeopathic adolescent temperamental types

Mature and charming

Sensitive and often precocious, both physically and mentally, these teenagers seem older than their years. Inviting adult problems on youthful shoulders leads to their often worried expressions and general concern and anxiety about the future. Generally they are very attractive, gifted, and charming. Although artistic, they tend to be somewhat over-intellectual, preoccupied with problems of world events, finance in the home or the family generally. However, under this facade of maturity and social aplomb, they are highly nervous and lack confidence, covering this by their considerable ability and skill with words, and a plausible pseudo-adult manner. It is this type of temperament that responds so well to *Lycopodium*.

Moody

Artistic but more passive and obviously shy and moody, without the apparent maturity of the *Lycopodium* make-up, they look and feel like a young child, are easily influenced, changeable and lack the depth and ability of the former. There is a tendency to be solitary or in the company of an adult. Often, they are too ready to please. This over-compliant attitude undermines their confidence and the whole of their personal development. At other times they can be stubborn and difficult, as part of their general changeable tendency. Much reassurance and sympathy is needed. Girls often have difficult, delayed, or painful periods which are a nuisance and a problem from the onset. This form of temperament responds well to *Pulsatilla*.

The Rebel

The typical awkward teenager, defiant and difficult to handle, fiery, over-sensitive and rebellious, any trivial remark may be taken as an insult or intended hurt, they are frequently at variance with their parents or teachers, often associate with a minority group, and may become violent or destructive within this group, although not usually directly within the family. Impatient, tending to get too quickly involved in issues, at the same time they feel easily misunderstood or rejected. They are passionately determined to take a stand, often on political or social issues, and may defiantly oppose authority in whatever area of injustice they are currently preoccupied. These social concerns and attitudes towards authority are an extension of similar attitudes to the boundaries and limits within the family, where they are often equally in a position of protestation and conflict. This type of temperament often shows qualities of strength and leadership, can be very loyal and a tower of strength to friends especially anyone regarded as being in any way "hard done by" or the "underdog". A great weakness is their tendency to have a "short fuse" and to over-react in any situation, rising up with spasms of righteous indignation and rage, even with friends, which makes them difficult,

unpredictable and often unreliable. Colicky digestive troubles and constipation are common physical problems. This behavioural pattern is indicated for *Nux vomica*.

Messy and untidy

Always in a mess and untidy, both in their physical appearance and in their thinking, they are full of plans and projects, many of them ambitious, but often unfortunately unrealistic, changing and unlikely to be ever realised. Ideas may be thought about, planned and discussed for many months without ever coming to fruition. Often they are drop-outs, and unlikely to act with any organised or thoughtful initiative, tending to follow the herd. Others are preoccupied with unreal pursuits and fantasies in a solitary way. Their physical weakness is skin which tends to be chronically infected and unhealthy, with frequent crops of boils and spots, adding to their unhealthy and unattractive appearance. Sulphur is the remedy choice for this type of adolescent.

Surly and irritable

Often tall and thin with a long back and a sallow pale skin, they are never really well, always exhausted and even wake up feeling tired. Frequently they are late for work or school and in trouble because of it and their attitudes of criticism and irritability. There is always an improvement with exercise, and the more energetic they are, the better they feel. Often they blossom in company and once encouraged to mix socially quickly forget their many ills. Girls are frequently incapacitated by heavy and painful menstrual periods with dragging down colicky pains and a general sense of misery. Constipation is a common problem as is backache. *Sepia* is the remedy of choice for this type of adolescent.

The Loner

Solitary, varying in mood from angry and childish behaviour to tears and hysteria, being especially prone to emotional outbursts, they quickly become ill or upset at a change of routine, such as before an interview, an examination or perhaps a change of job or school. Difficult to help or relate to, they shun sympathy or consolation in any form, preferring to be alone. In general, they lack confidence and are never really natural or able to be themselves in any social situation, always seeming to be acting, distant and remote or uninvolved. There is frequently a great craving for salt and they are commonly either better or worse for being at the seaside. The remedy of choice for this temperament is *Natrum mur*.

Handle with care

Because an adolescent's self-image is weak and lags behind external and physical maturity, the development of a secure identity is often not established until early adulthood, and for some even later. This makes the adolescent extremely vulnerable and suggestible, often needing to identify with whatever is being currently put out by the media as the current teenage ideal of health, success and potency. The

adolescent deals with these problems by creating a temporary identity for himself, which ensures his acceptance by others in his peer-group.

At the same time as the physical changes of the adolescent, there is a recurrence of early childhood demands, with attention-seeking behaviour, including demands for sweet foods. Rich, starchy snack foods and drinks are all taken to excess. Meals are also rushed, irregular, often of poor quality, particularly those outside the home. This poor diet, together with the associated problems of hormonal changes, accounts for many of the typical adolescent problems with general health.

All these adolescent difficulties can seem very bewildering to parents, unless they are in touch with the same struggles which they themselves went through at this stage with their own families. When a balanced overall position is taken, the often apparently outrageous, anti-social, non-caring attitudes can be put into proper focus allowing the parents to remain calm and not unduly over-anxious, whatever the pressures. By the early adult years, most of these problems will have been resolved.

Homeopathic Treatment Guide

Acne

- Causes:** Diet over-rich in carbohydrates, constitutional, lack of hygiene.
- Symptoms:** Discomfort, irritation, infection, discharge.
- Treatment:** **Kali brom:** very useful remedy in chronic acne.
- Sulphur:** one of the best remedies for raised hard circular areas which are red and often sore and infected. Usually they are worse for water.
- Calc sulph:** useful with pallor, sweaty forehead and flabbiness.
- Pulsatilla:** helpful in all cases which are aggravated by heat.
- Arsenicum:** useful in chronic cases where there is severe weakness associated.

Blushing

- Causes:** Embarrassment; shyness; constitutional; immaturity; inexperience; over-protected child; familial.
- Symptoms:** Heat; redness; discomfort; embarrassment; shyness; may be sweating.
- Treatment:** **Phosphorus:** the adolescent is delicate, fine-boned and out-going, but nervous, over-sensitive, and in constant need of reassurance. They flush up easily and often have a characteristic bead of sweat just above the upper lip.
- Pulsatilla:** one of the best remedies for blushing of emotional origin in a shy adolescent. They need reassurance, to be approved of, and attention. They easily burst into tears.
- Natrum mur:** useful for nervous tense

adolescents, unsure of themselves, ill at ease, and never quite able to relax and be natural in any social situation.

Ferrum phos: useful for pallor and quick flushing in new or tense situations. They are somewhat less sensitive to external impressions than Phosphorus.

Body Odour

- Causes:** Constitutional, inadequate hygiene.
- Symptoms:** Odorous, often offensive, excessive sweating.
- Treatment:** **Nux vomica:** sweats profusely with exercise and emotion, and the sweat may be offensive.
- Silica:** has profuse sweating, particularly of the soles of the feet which may be offensive.
- Mercurius:** has a profuse offensive fetid sweat.

Boils

- Causes:** Infection, usually circulatory, high blood sugar level, diabetes.
- Symptoms:** Pain, throbbing, redness, fever, glandular enlargement, may become a carbuncle.
- Treatment:** **Hepar sulph:** to mature the boil.
- Hypericum tincture:** indicated when the area is particularly sensitive to touch, and the boil is in an area of the body where it affects the fine and peripheral nerves running over the swelling, and causing intolerable pain.
- Silica:** if slow to mature or chronic.
- Belladonna:** painful, hot, shining, inflamed base, about to suppurate, before pus forms.
- Merc sol:** threatens to become putrid and suppurate.
- Sulphur:** to prevent recurrence.
- Tarantula:** very acute, severe pain, stinging and throbbing.

Dandruff

- Causes:** Constitutional, usually associated with a dry skin generally. It is sometimes allergic.
- Symptoms:** Dryness and itching; there may be redness and a sense of local heat.
- Treatment:** **Sulphur:** helpful particularly when there is associated acne, flaking and itching.
- Calc carb:** often helpful if they tend to sweat across the forehead at night.
- Sepia:** useful and often associated with dark brown patches and discolourations of the skin.
- Lycopodium:** very helpful, particularly when there is a lot of flaking and scaling and a very dry skin.
- Arsenicum:** useful as a hair tonic and when there is a dry flaking skin condition.

Delayed Puberty

Causes: May be small in height; may be familial.

Symptoms: As above.

Treatment: It is always initially helpful in these cases to give the constitutional remedy in high potency as a stimulus to normal development.

Silica: can be helpful in small, slender, fair haired adolescents with poor peripheral circulation, chilly, and profuse sweating of the extremities.

Depression

Causes: Psychological in a sensitive child, may be familial or constitutional.

Symptoms: Anxiety, lack of confidence, insomnia, no appetite, lethargic, no interests, apathetic, withdrawn, solitary, weeping.

Treatment: **Lycopodium:** indicated in a forgetful rather hypochondriacal child, that rarely sweats, is timid and tends to crave sweet foods.

Natrum mur: helpful in the more remote solitary nervous child, that shuns company and is usually a salt lover.

Pulsatilla: indicated for the more changeable, emotionally unstable child with a tearful depression and disposition.

Argent nit: may be required when there is a phobic component and intolerance of heat.

Exam Fears

Causes: Shyness; immaturity; lack of confidence; psychological and may be familial.

Symptoms: Panic, anxiety, tension, pains anywhere in the body, weeping, regressed behaviour with childish demands.

Treatment: **Argent nit:** most useful and basic remedy, particularly when there is an associated intolerance of heat and digestive disorders such as flatulence.

Gelsemium: usually they are weak, and collapsing at the knees from panic.

Greasy Hair

Causes: Dietary, excessive carbohydrate intake; constitutional; lack of personal hygiene.

Symptoms: Often associated with a waxy unhealthy skin and acne.

Treatment: **Thuja:** useful general remedy for the condition.

Pulsatilla: helpful when the condition is worse before the period.

Lycopodium: often used as a remedy in dull, greasy, lifeless hair.

Menstruation (Delayed Onset)

Causes: Constitutional, anaemia, stress and nervousness, imperforate hymen.

Symptoms: Failure to establish a regular cycle, or totally without appearance at all.

Treatment: **Bryonia:** if vicarious nose-bleeding occurs.

Pulsatilla: pain in the abdomen and back, headache and nausea, anaemia, palpitation.

Veratum alb: the onset is suppressed and often associated with shivering, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Sepia: if leucorrhoea is present.

Aconite: suppressed from chill or fright.

Natrum mur: constipation, chilliness, anaemia, thin woman.

Sulphur: pain in abdomen and loins, vertigo, throbbing head, constipation.

Cimicifuga: headache, insomnia, pain in left breast.

Shyness

Causes: Temperamental. Often familial in origin.

Symptoms: Embarrassment, discomfort, awkwardness, blushing, timidity, worse in any new or unexpected or unfamiliar situation.

Treatment: The person's constitutional remedy.

Lycopodium: helpful when the person likes their own company, but needs people to be in the house and not too far away.

Generally they are rather shy and unsure of themselves - but respond well to encouragement and reassurance.

Argent nit: useful when there is a phobic element and always worse in heat.

Natrum mur: much more solitary and independent than Lycopodium. They are always nervous and unsure of themselves in any social situation and never really able to completely relate to or join in what is going on.

Pulsatilla: shy, fair, timid agreeable, placid person, anxious to please, weeps easily and in need of company and reassurance that she is liked and popular. Can change from shyness to stubbornness very quickly.

Worse in a hot room and needs an open window or cool spot.

Books by Dr Trevor Smith, currently available:

Homeopathy for Teenager Problems

Homeopathy for Pregnancy and Nursing Mothers

Homeopathy for Babies and Children

Homeopathy for Everyday Stress Problems

Homeopathy for Psychological Illness

An Encyclopedia of Homeopathy

Understanding Homeopathy

Talking about Homeopathy

Emotional Health

Personal Growth & Creativity

The Side-effects Book

Dr Smith can be contacted through the Trust.

THE **Beginner's Guide** to **homeopathy**

continuing our major partwork



TRAVEL PROBLEMS

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Travellers' Nerves

Many trips are spoiled by nervous disorders associated with travelling, such as anxiety, fear and insomnia. Even before the journey has begun, such psychological problems may become manifest. Those who are absent from home for a prolonged period may suffer from what I have termed immigrant syndrome. Homeopathic remedies can do much to alleviate these disorders of the mind, without the drugging effect associated with orthodox tranquillisers and antidepressants.

Anticipatory nerves: apprehension

Anxiety concerning journey or destination may be either rational or irrational. A satisfactory prescription may be based upon the way in which the nervous state manifests itself:

1. Over talkative, cannot rest, busy with many tasks (a picture of over activity):
Argentum nitricum 30c every four hours
2. Lethargic, motionless, silent (a picture of under activity): Gelsemium 30c every four hours

Whichever remedy is selected as more appropriate, persons of a generally nervous disposition may find the 30th potency may produce a transient aggravation of their symptoms and should consider commencing treatment with a lower potency (eg 6). Conversely, generally non-anxious individuals who suffer extreme apprehension of travel may require higher potencies (eg 200), in order to allay their anxieties. In either case, the initial dosage interval is every four hours.

Anticipatory nerves: fear

The above remedies will be ineffective where the dominant mental state is one of fear. Great fear, dread, fears death may be at hand, terror, panic:

Remedy: Aconite 30c every two hours

Bach Rescue Remedy every hour

Anticipatory nerves: over-excitement

Some people become so over-excited about a trip that they cannot rest. They present a picture which resembles that given for Argentum nitricum (see apprehension). They are not dreading the trip but are, indeed, looking forward to it. In this situation a different remedy is indicated: Coffea cruda 30c every 12 hours

Homesickness

Remedy: Capsicum 30c every 12 hours

Bach Honeysuckle every six hours

Inadaptability

General inadaptability to change:

Bach Walnut every six hours

Immigrant syndrome

A combination of homesickness, inadaptability, and a sense of isolation, arising from emigration or prolonged absence from home. Consider:

Bach Walnut plus Bach Honeysuckle every six hours

Sensitivity to noise and smells

Especially in irritable and precise people:

Nux vomica 30c every six hours

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Sensitivity to noise

1. Intolerance of the slightest noise:

Theridion 30c every six hours

2. Intolerance of loud noise:

Borax 30c every six hours

Sensitivity to tobacco smoke

Especially useful in cafes and bars:

Ignatia 30c every two hours

Aversion to crowded places

Also known as agoraphobia. Consider:

Argentum nitricum 30c every six hours

Persons of a generally nervous disposition may find that potencies lower than 30c may suit them better (eg 6), in that a transient aggravation of symptoms may occur with higher potencies.

Impatience

Excessive impatience and anger when being kept waiting, or subjected to the shortcomings of others:

1. Bach Impatiens every six hours

2. Nux vomica 30c every six hours

Nervous exhaustion

From overdoing things, or too many late nights:

1. Kali phosphoricum 6c every six hours

2. Panax ginseng 6c every 12 hours

Fractious children

Many small children become extremely difficult as the result of travelling. Usually this results from disturbance of their usual routine. Consider:

1. Restless, spiteful, cross, irritable, whining, uncooperative, but with a desire to be carried or petted, which improves the mood:
Chamomilla 30c every two hours

2. Similar to the former, but does not wish to be touched, carried, or even looked at:

Cina 30c every two hours

Travellers' insomnia

You might like to consider the following:

1. Sleeplessness due to mind being full of thoughts (especially pleasant ones):
Coffea cruda 200c, a single dose at bed time
2. Early waking due to alcoholic or gastronomic over indulgence:
Nux vomica 200c, a single dose at bed time
3. Mild sleep-inducing herbal tablets are available from pharmacies and health food stores, which may be taken irrespective of cause. They are best avoided during pregnancy or lactation.
4. Some sleep better upon a pillow filled with dried hops (*Humulus lupulus*). The aroma of the hops induces sleep in mild cases of insomnia.

Problems of flight

Fear of heights

More commonly experienced in small aircraft.

Consider: Argentum nitricum 30c every four hours

Fear of descent

Dread of the descent of landing, or the sudden descents

associated with air pockets: Borax 30c every four hours

Claustrophobia

Fear of restriction to a confined space. The same is occasionally experienced by rail travellers and pot-holers. Consider: Argentum nitricum 30c every four hours

Jet lag

The biological clock is unable to adapt with sufficient rapidity to the new time of the destination. This results in disturbance of sleep pattern, excessive fatigue, difficulty in concentration, and disturbance of appetite and bowel movement patterns. Left untreated, it takes approximately one day for each time zone traversed to recover, although it is true to say that westward travel is often better tolerated than eastward. Fortunately, however, recovery can be accelerated by the homeopathic method. The following remedy should be taken regularly two days before to three days after the flight:

Cocculus indicus 30c every 12 hours

Swollen feet (postural oedema)

This is promoted by immobility, and is more common in women and especially the elderly. It may be reduced by frequent walks along the aisle of the plane, but this is not always an easy matter especially in small aircraft. The same problem may be associated with coach and railway journeys. Even if the occasional walk does little to alleviate swelling of the feet, it does much to prevent the development of serious clots in the deep veins of the legs (deep vein thrombosis) which can be fatal. A useful homeopathic prescription to prevent foot swelling, which should be commenced 24 hours before travelling is: Urtica urens mother tincture, five drops to be taken every six hours

Earache and sinus pain (barotrauma)

Earache upon descent, known as otic barotrauma or aero-otitis, is an extremely common phenomenon. As a plane descends, the pressure within increases, leading to contraction of the air contained in the middle ear. Should the Eustachian tube, which connects the middle ear chamber to the throat, be blocked, the eardrum will become indrawn and severe pain experienced. Such obstruction is common in catarrhal patients, whether the catarrh be a long term problem or in the form of an acute catarrh, such as the common cold. A similar phenomenon, termed sinus barotrauma, may occur with blocked sinuses, leading to intense pain in the cheeks, or above the eyes. The sinus variety is less common than the otic. A useful physical treatment for both types is the so-called Valsalva manoeuvre, the objective of which is to force air into the middle ear cavities or sinuses:

Pinch your nostrils tightly shut with finger and thumb. Take a deep breath and hold it. Seal your lips tightly together. Forcefully breath out, so as to blow out your cheeks. Repeat several times. Popping sounds signify success.

Obviously any treatment instituted to improve the catarrh state before departure will reduce the likelihood of barotrauma, and for this matter you should enlist the services of a homeopath or acupuncturist. However, the

homeopathic method now given may be regarded as useful in a large number of cases as a short term preventative against barotrauma in those predisposed to it.

On the day before departure, in the morning, take a single dose of Medorrhinum 200c (or 30c). 12 hours later take one more dose of Medorrhinum 200c (or 30c). From the morning of the day of departure take Borax 30c every six hours, until landing.

The remedy Medorrhinum should not be given during pregnancy or lactation, without taking proper advice. In such circumstances, or where the remedy has not been obtained, commence Borax 30c every six hours from the morning of the day before departure.

If your trip is less than 14 days, do not repeat the Medorrhinum before the return flight. Merely take the Borax as described in the previous paragraph.

Flatulence (wind)

As an aircraft ascends, so the pressure within it drops from approximately 760mmHg to 600mmHg. This reduction of pressure causes gases within the gut of the passenger to expand, which may lead to a feeling of abdominal distention and discomfort. Such a sensation will be exacerbated by tight clothing, the consumption of fermentable foods, such as greens and beans, and consumption of alcohol and carbonated drinks. To feel comfortable, it is, therefore, important to dress, eat, and drink appropriately. Additionally, homeopathic remedies may be taken to improve the state of comfort:

For upper abdominal distention:

Carbo vegetabilis 30c every two hours

For lower abdominal distention:

Lycopodium 6c every two hours

For generalised abdominal distention:

Cinchona officinalis 30c every two hours

Further hazards of reduced cabin pressure

There are certain surgical conditions which may be adversely affected by reduced cabin pressure. These include: recent abdominal, chest, cranial or ear operations; recent bleeding from the gut, collapsed lung, skull fractures and plaster casts. Any traveller for whom these matters are relevant should consult his doctor before flying. The plaster cast, for example, which is not an uncommon sight on return flights from skiing resorts, contains trapped air. Upon exposure to the lower pressure of ascent, this will expand, and may cause compression of the limb and restriction of blood flow. For long flights, it may be considered necessary to split the cast.

Hypoxia (lack of oxygen)

Associated with the reduced pressure on ascent, even in modern pressurised aircraft, is reduction in oxygen pressure. This leads to a small reduction of oxygen in the blood. For most travellers, this effect goes unnoticed. However, symptoms of hypoxia may develop in heavy smokers, those who have overindulged in alcohol, fatigued passengers, and those with heavy colds. These symptoms,

which are subtle in onset, resemble alcoholic intoxication, with the development of confusion, disorientation, unsteadiness, and personality change, and are accompanied by a blueness of lips, nail beds and ear lobes. Oxygen should be administered in such circumstances. Passengers particularly at risk are those suffering from certain major medical problems. These include: respiratory disease (such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema), heart disease (such as angina), anaemia, and impairment of blood supply to the brain (in stroke patients). Such passengers may not only develop the symptoms of hypoxia described above, but may also experience a worsening of their pre-existing condition. Oxygen, therefore, which is readily available on board, may well be required. Moreover, epileptic travellers may require additional medication for flying, in order to avoid seizures brought on by hypoxia.

All these risk groups should avoid flying in unpressurised aircraft above 200 metres, and in any event should always consult their doctors before any flight.

Dehydration

The air within the aircraft is extremely dry. The worst thing is to fill yourself with alcoholic and carbonated drinks. Stick to fruit juices, still spring water and tea. If you wear contact lenses, beware! Contact lenses dry out whilst flying with great rapidity. An additional hazard is the insecticide aerosol. Shut your eyes whilst the cabin staff are spraying, to avoid the deposition of aerosol droplets on your contact lenses, and consequent eye irritation.

Travel sickness

Also known as motion sickness, this is an acute disorder associated with travelling, and is characterised by pallor, dizziness, sweating, abdominal discomfort, salivation, nausea and vomiting. It is extremely common in children, who fortunately usually grow out of it. Cars and boats constitute the worst offenders in this respect.

Apart from motion, there are various visual and psychological causative factors. Certainly, heavy or greasy meals should be avoided before or during the journey. Discomfort and inconvenience aside, there are seldom any serious effects from this disorder. However, for diabetics on insulin it may be a major problem, and cause the blood sugar level to drop (hypoglycaemia). Neither does persistent vomiting do any good to the foetus in early pregnancy in women prone to miscarriage. Gastric ulcer patients may bleed from the lining of the stomach. Persistent vomiting in any patient will eventually produce dehydration, and attempts to rehydrate orally will usually fail until all vomiting has ceased.

Fortunately, homeopathic remedies come to the rescue of many people afflicted with travel sickness, or a predisposition to it, without causing the drowsiness and dryness of mouth associated with orthodox drugs:

1. The following prescription is best used preventatively, although it may also be used for treatment of established travel sickness. For maximum efficacy, in the case of a prolonged trip, treatment should begin

two days before travelling. In the case of a short journey, such as a day's outing, the first dose should be given not less than an hour prior to departure. This prescription taken every six hours is a mixture of three homeopathic remedies:

Cocculus indicus 30c + Petroleum 6c + Tabacum 6c

If the remedy is supplied, as it usually is, in the form of tablets, pillules or coarse granules, and is being used to treat established travel sickness, then it is best for the sufferer to crunch the remedy between his teeth in order to promote rapid oral absorption. Alternatively, crush the remedy to a fine powder before administration.

2. Where the above mixture is unavailable, this single remedy will be of use in many cases, and should be administered similarly:

Cocculus indicus 30c every six hours

3. As an alternative, the following remedy may be used for both prevention and treatment. It is very safe, highly effective and remarkably rapid in action. Whatever the length or nature of the proposed journey, a dose given even minutes before departure can be highly effective in the prevention of travel sickness. The disadvantages are its unpleasant taste. It feels hot as it is swallowed, and it requires the availability of clean water to dilute it.

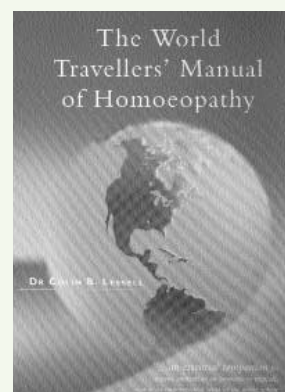
Zingiber mother tincture, 5 – 10 drops every two hours

For maximum effect, it is important not to over-dilute the drops. About one teaspoonful (5ml) of water will suffice for this dose. Remember to reduce the number of drops given to small children, and to reduce the quantity of water use proportionally.

Having satisfactorily controlled a bout of travel sickness, the sufferer must be rehydrated slowly. Sips of water only.

Ski sickness

Skiers may experience something akin to common travel sickness when negotiating uneven or undulating slopes during conditions of diminished visibility, from either snow or mist. This may be prevented by instituting any of the measures described above with regard to ordinary travel sickness. Additionally, perhaps with some advantage, the remedy Borax 30c may be taken in combination, with the same frequency. Where Borax 30c is to be taken in combination with Zingiber mother tincture, the former should be taken ten minutes before.



This article is taken from *The World Travellers' Manual of Homoeopathy* by Dr Colin B. Lessell, published by The C.W. Daniel Company Ltd, priced £12.99, and available from good book shops.

THE
Beginner's Guide
to
homeopathy

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LABOUR AND CHILDBIRTH

BY BARRY ROSE MRCS, LRCP, DRCOG, FFHOM
AND CHRISTINA SCOTT-MONCRIEFF MB, CHB, MFHOM

For most women, homeopathic medicine can help enormously in the run-up to the birth of a baby and in avoiding or reducing some of the problems associated with labour, as well as in dealing with post-natal symptoms. This is the follow-up to the article 'Common problems in pregnancy', that was published in our Spring issue

False labour

Labour-like contractions may occur in the last few weeks of pregnancy and are felt irregularly, usually in the lower part of the abdomen. These are said to occur because the uterus (womb) is 'toning-up' in preparation for the birth. If the contractions become very frequent or regular, or if there is a 'show' of blood, the doctor or midwife should be called.

Symptoms: Contractions that occur early in the pregnancy. Pain shoots across the abdomen, causing doubling up.

Medicine: Cimicifuga

Symptoms: Contractions that occur in the last few weeks of pregnancy

Medicine: Caulophyllum

Symptoms: Pain goes up the back and into the hips

Medicine: Gelsemium

Symptoms: Colicky, cramp-like pains

Medicine: Viburnum opulus

Dosage: Use the 12c potency. Take every hour until the pains cease.

Preparing for delivery

Taking Caulophyllum in the last weeks of the pregnancy and Arnica before delivery will minimise much of the bruising and bleeding. Caulophyllum is also said to 'tone up' the uterus, helping to produce good contractions and lessening the chances of becoming over tired during labour.

Symptoms: Reduces the bruising and bleeding of normal labour

Medicine: Arnica montana

Dosage: Arnica should be taken in the highest potency you can obtain — the 10m potency powder form if possible. If not,

use the 30c potency in powder form. If you cannot obtain a powder, simply crush one tablet for one dose. Take one dose at the start of labour and one during labour just before delivery. It is useful to take a 30c dose three times a day for three days after the birth of the baby.

Symptoms: Used routinely to help uterine contractions and to bring about a smooth delivery

Medicine: Caulophyllum

Dosage: Caulophyllum should be taken in the 30c potency — three doses on the same day each week from the 34th week onwards. There is no clinical evidence that this homeopathic medicine causes women to go into labour too early. This is specifically mentioned because Caulophyllum in normal — that is, non-homeopathic doses — may cause early labour. Used homeopathically, it is given to prevent premature labour and to help normal labour.

Symptoms: May help if there was heavy bleeding in a previous pregnancy

Medicine: Millefolium

Dosage: Millefolium should be taken in the 30c potency. Take three doses on one day in the last week of the pregnancy.

In early labour

A normal pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks. For a few weeks before the birth occasional painless 'contractions' may be felt in the lower abdomen (see False Labour above). When labour proper begins, the contractions become noticeable but may be infrequent and irregular. As labour proceeds, they become more frequent and occur at regular intervals. They may also produce some discomfort. At first they are often felt in the back. The start of labour may be indicated by a small blood loss called a 'show'.

At some stage the membranes in which the baby is contained will rupture, producing a loss of a watery fluid from the vagina. This is perfectly normal. The actual duration of labour varies tremendously, but is lengthier with a first pregnancy, so there is usually plenty of time in which to get to hospital or for the midwife to arrive if delivery is to be at home.

Symptoms: When the labour pains are frequent but irregular. A good remedy if restless, anxious and frightened and convinced of dying during labour

Medicine: Aconitum

Symptoms: Painful labour, with the pain starting in lower back and radiating to inner part of the thighs. The woman may be over-excited and angry, and resent being examined. Intolerance of pain

Medicine: Chamomilla

Symptoms: Spasmodic irregular pains in the small of the back. Feelings of exhaustion and being out of control

Medicine: Cocculus

Symptoms: Contractions are very painful but ineffective. The woman is restless and agitated.

Medicine: Coffea cruda

Symptoms: Intermittent, relatively painless contractions with little progress. Excessive tiredness

Medicine: Gossypium

Symptoms: Early labour pains in back

Medicine: Kali carbonicum

Dosage: Use the 12c potency. Take every 30 minutes until relief is maintained.

Immediately after delivery

The mother's main problems after the birth will be related to bruising in the birth passage and surrounding organs, such as the bladder and urethra.

With a prolonged labour, especially one that has caused much sleep deprivation, fatigue can also be a problem, but this is easily remedied by a good night's sleep. The main problems after a birth by Caesarean section tend to be those that can occur after any surgical procedure.

Most of these complications are unlikely, however, if the woman has been treated with Arnica and Caulophyllum, as described above. See also the section on After-pains below.

Symptoms: Difficulty passing urine. Restless, sleepless and frightened

Medicine: Aconitum

Symptoms: Constipation. Rectum feels sore and anus itches. Even a soft stool is passed with difficulty

Medicine: Alumina

Symptoms: Problems passing urine

Medicine: Arsenicum album

Symptoms: Irritation of the vulva. Cramp-like pains occur in the uterus (womb), mainly at night

Medicine: Caladium seguinum

Symptoms: Retention of urine, especially after a long labour

Medicine: Causticum

Symptoms: Nervousness and restlessness

Medicine: Chamomilla

Symptoms: Excited, oversensitive and suffers from insomnia. Abdominal pains

Medicine: Coffea cruda

Symptoms: Painful piles

Medicine: Collinsonia

Symptoms: Flatulence and abdominal colic

Medicine: Nux moschata

Symptoms: Back pain

Medicine: Phosphoric acid. Itching between the breasts. Apathy

Symptoms: Piles and anal prolapse occur

Medicine: Podophyllum

Symptoms: Total exhaustion and overheating

Medicine: Secale cornutum

Symptoms: To aid healing if there has been catheterization or an episiotomy

Medicine: Staphysagria

Dosage: Use the 12c potency. Take three times a day for five days.

After pains

These pains are similar to labour pains and may occur after childbirth. They are a result of the uterus (womb) contracting as it reduces to its size before the pregnancy.

The pains are more likely to occur to breastfeeding mothers as breastfeeding causes the pituitary gland to release the hormone oxytocin, which helps with milk production, and may also stimulate some uterine contractions.

Symptoms: Used routinely after all labours, especially if labour has been protracted

Medicine: Arnica montana

Symptoms: After pains with a headache, flushed face, nervousness, restlessness

Medicine: Belladonna

Symptoms: Soreness felt all through the pelvis, making walking and standing painful.

Medicine: Bellis perennis

Symptoms: Severe, cramp-like pains

Medicine: Camphora

Symptoms: Spasmodic pains occur which move across the lower abdomen, especially after a prolonged and exhausting labour. Quite specifically for after-pains.

Medicine: Caulophyllum

Symptoms: Severe pain causing great irritability

Medicine: Chamomilla

Symptoms: Intense pains like electric shocks in the groin. Agitated and intolerant of pain

Medicine: Cimicifuga

Symptoms: Pains which feel as if they are in the intestines rather than the uterus

Medicine: Cocculus

Symptoms: Extreme pain causing sleeplessness

Medicine: Coffea cruda

Symptoms: Distressing after-pains after pregnancy that is not the first

Medicine: Cuprum metallicum

Symptoms: Anxious, apprehensive, sleepless

Medicine: Gelsemium

Symptoms: Severe after-pains shoot down the thighs and are worse on the right. Pain appears to be in the rectum or the bladder

Medicine: Lac caninum

Symptoms: Large blood clots may be passed. Much flatulence

Medicine: Nux vomica

Symptoms: Pain shoots forwards from behind

Medicine: Sabina

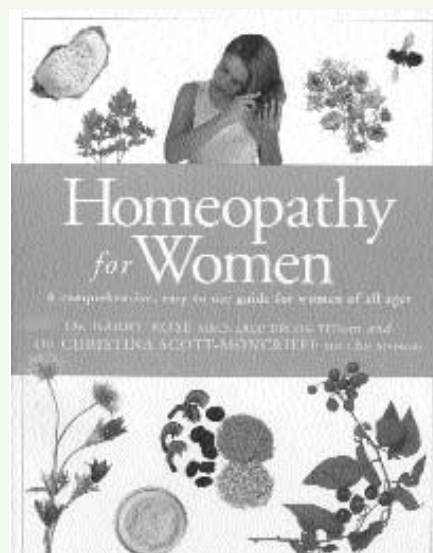
Symptoms: Pain radiates upwards. A sensation of a weight in the lower bowel. Pelvic organs feel as though they are about to drop out

Medicine: Sepia

Symptoms: Use this if there are not other symptoms and no other homeopathic remedy seems to fit

Medicine: Xanthoxylum

Dosage: Use the 30c potency. Take four times a day for two days after delivery.



This article is taken from *Homeopathy for Women* by Dr Barry Rose and Dr Christina Scott-Moncrieff, published by Collins & Brown, price £14.99, and available from all good bookshops. *Health & Homeopathy* readers, however, can purchase the book at the special price of £12.99, with free p&p, by phoning 01403 710851 and quoting offer code V-12.

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TIRED ALL THE TIME

BY BETH MACEOIN, BA, MNCHM, RSHOM

HOMOEOPATHIC PRACTITIONER AND AUTHOR, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

As a homoeopathic practitioner, one of the most common problems that I encounter in patients is a general feeling of not being on top of things or a vague sense that they are just not well.

Many of those who fall into this category have had tests to rule out some of the obvious problems that might lead to persistent tiredness and lack of energy. Possible culprits include an underactive thyroid gland, anaemia or glandular fever.

In many cases the results are negative, leaving the patient initially relieved and delighted that they do not have an identifiable medical problem. However, the next stage is usually bemusement and concern that there is no obvious cause for the symptoms, leaving them wondering what they should do next.

For anyone in this position, a holistic approach to healing is invaluable because of the emphasis that alternative and complementary practitioners place on health promotion rather than disease management. Homoeopathic treatment provides a particularly positive option, due to the way that special attention is paid to gaining a broad understanding of the whole range of symptoms experienced by the individual patient, rather than being overly concerned to pick and choose treatment for symptoms on a piecemeal basis.

During the initial homoeopathic interview, it often becomes clear that feeling generally lacking in 'get up and go' has followed on from a period of severe or protracted physical and emotional stress. It may also become apparent that the patient has never been well since contracting a severe viral illness, such as a nasty dose of 'flu.

Occasionally these feelings of lethargy may seem to be initially unrelated to any obvious cause. On closer examination, however, it may become apparent that subtle factors from the past that the patient may not consider relevant have played a part in undermining their health. These factors may include: nursing a sick relative for an extended period, bereavement, crash dieting or undergoing a marked change of routine due to a new, demanding job.

Apart from the general feeling of tiredness and fatigue, other possible symptoms that may be linked to feeling generally under par may include:

- **Poor concentration**
- **Muscle tension and/or aches and pains**
- **Tension headaches**
- **Poor digestion**
- **Mood swings**

Once we have checked the situation by going to our GP and having the relevant tests to rule out any obvious problem that might require medication, we are in a better position to know what our options are and how we can best move forward. If all tests come up with a negative result, we can consider how we may be able to improve our condition with some of the self-help measures suggested below. If these do not yield results within a reasonable period of time, consider seeking treatment from a qualified homoeopath.

Basic self-help

- If we feel exhausted on a daily basis we need to examine our work patterns, since work-related stress can be one of the first factors to undermine energy levels. Pacing ourselves during our working day is one of the most effective tools for managing stress. However much pressure there may be to do otherwise, we should always make sure that we have a proper break at lunch time. This is not only vitally important for relaxation and refreshment, but it also plays an important role in preventing digestive problems.

The tempting habit of grabbing a snack while on the run often leads to problems with heartburn, indigestion or a generally upset digestive system.

- We can also protect ourselves from becoming emotionally, mentally and physically over-tired by making relaxation or meditation part of our daily routines. There is an increasingly wide choice of audio tapes available that talk the listener through guided relaxation exercises. Once the basic skills of deep relaxation have been mastered, make it a habit to spend a short time each day consciously relaxing and developing an awareness of areas of the body that are tense or rigid.

As we become more familiar with the sensations of mental and physical relaxation, tension is encouraged to dissolve from tense and tight areas of our bodies. Holding tension in a chronic way is a terrific energy drainer and can often contribute to our feeling very low and exhausted. Breaking this vicious circle through relaxation and meditation can be enormously liberating, as it allows us to break free of the constraints of fatigue.

- Energy levels can be stimulated and balanced by regular practise of Yoga or T'ai chi. Both concentrate on encouraging greater harmony between mind and body by putting emphasis on breathing techniques and carefully controlled movements that can encourage physical strength, stamina and flexibility.

Because of the gentle but dynamic approach adopted by both exercise systems, physical injuries resulting from stress or trauma are less likely to occur, while an overall sensation of tranquillity and relaxation should be increased. Many students of Yoga and T'ai chi also report enhanced and better-balanced energy levels and stamina.

- Although it may initially sound strange and contradictory, we should avoid gravitating towards 'quick fix' foods when we feel tired. We may think of these items as the right foods or drinks to give us a rapid boost of energy when we feel low, but they quickly lead to a crashing of energy levels. Foods and drinks in this category are easily identifiable and include: coffee, tea, chocolate, biscuits, cakes, 'instant' noodles and most dehydrated snack foods, and fizzy so-called 'energy' drinks that are often full of sugar with added caffeine.

Far from giving sustained energy levels, these items are likely to lead to a further sense of fatigue once the initial boost of energy has passed. If this happens we may respond by craving more sweet or junk food in order to regain that elusive 'buzz'. If this becomes an established habit, we run the serious risk of experiencing unpleasantly lowered and unstable energy levels, with accompanying mood swings, poor concentration and irritability. People who feel they are constantly running low on energy should review their diet and make sure that they include on a regular basis the foods they need to provide sustained and constant energy levels.

These foods include complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, potatoes (baked in their skins), frequent portions of fresh fruit, vegetables, pulses, small amounts of fish or poultry, and unroasted nuts and seeds. Keep your intake of strong tea, coffee and alcohol down to strict moderation (no more than

one cup of coffee a day; a maximum 14 units of alcohol a week for women, and 21 for men).

- Feelings of lethargy or tiredness in the evening may be counteracted by adding essential oils to a warm bath: rosemary, geranium or grapefruit are good for this. Add no more than four or five drops of oil to the bath water after it has stopped running (to avoid the oil evaporating too quickly).
- If tiredness descends during the day, a quick pick-me-up is to inhale a drop or two of peppermint, grapefruit or rosemary essential oils.
- Although we tend to take it for granted because it is an involuntary action, the way we breathe can have a profound effect on our energy levels. When we breathe smoothly, deeply and evenly, our supplies of energy and stamina should flow in a balanced, optimum way.

On the other hand, when we breathe in a tense, shallow and rapid way, we are likely to feel tired, jittery and muzzy-headed. When we breathe, we take in vital oxygen that we need in order to stay alive, but we also remove toxic waste in the form of carbon dioxide when we breathe out.

If we are not breathing to our maximum potential, we inhale less oxygen than we need in order to function at optimum levels of vitality, but we may also not be breathing out enough carbon dioxide to cleanse our systems efficiently. The unfortunate effect is that sleepiness and sluggishness may insidiously become an accepted part of our lives without us realising it. Controlled breathing techniques, on the other hand, can be used to relax or energise and invigorate, depending upon our individual needs at any time.

The following breathing exercise (called alternate nostril breathing) can be used any time that we feel temporarily exhausted to give a super-quick energy boost. Begin by bending the three middle fingers into the palm of the right hand, extending the little finger and thumb of the same hand. Press your thumb against your right nostril, while breathing in through the left nostril for a slow count of four. Close both nostrils and gently hold your breath for a count of four by placing your little finger against your left nostril, while keeping your thumb in its original position against the right nostril. Remove your thumb and exhale through your right nostril for the same count. Wait for a second or two before repeating the same cycle beginning with inhaling on the same side that you have just exhaled from. This exercise may be done for a total of four times on

each side at any time when the mind needs to be focused and clear, and the body needs to be revitalised and refreshed.

- Short-term use of an appropriately prescribed homoeopathic remedy can provide the 'kick start' that we need if we are suffering from a short phase of feeling tired and under par. If we have selected a well-chosen remedy that fits our symptoms as closely as possible, we should feel back on track within a day or two, when we should stop taking the remedy. However, if symptoms do not improve on taking a well-indicated homoeopathic medicine, or if there is a temporary improvement but the condition keeps relapsing without the on-going support of homoeopathic help, seek a professional opinion, rather than risk of getting out of depth.

Exhaustion with muscular aching and tenderness

Symptoms: Weariness comes on as a result of an unusual physical effort being made in those who are sedentary or inactive. Overwhelming tiredness occurs with muscle strain

Worse from: Movement; jarring, jolting movement; touch

Better for: Resting on a comfortable surface

Remedy: Arnica

Physical, emotional and mental tiredness and prostration in over-achievers

Symptoms: Weary and exhausted, but mental restlessness and addiction to neatness prevents rest. Compulsive tendencies lead to preoccupation with health problems or exercise addiction. Pushes beyond reasonable limits with resulting exhaustion

Worse from: Alcohol; at night; exposure to cold

Better for: Warmth; contact with fresh air while being snugly wrapped up

Remedy: Arsenicum album

Persistent tiredness in those who 'burn the candle at both ends'

Symptoms: Coffee, alcohol and drugs may be used as props in order to keep the pace. Problems follow with fatigue, insomnia, recurrent headaches, and constipation. Sensation of being tired and 'hung over' on waking

Worse from: Coffee; alcohol; lack of sleep; in the morning; loud noise

Better for: As the day goes on; sound sleep; rest

Remedy: Nux vomica

Digestive uneasiness with physical fatigue

Symptoms: Symptoms resembling irritable bowel syndrome surface when under physical or emotional stress. Marked gurgling, distension, acidity and irregular bowel movements develop when anticipating a demanding event

Worse from: In the afternoon; mental strain; becoming chilled or too hot; tight clothing

Better for: Becoming absorbed or distracted; warm drinks; gentle exercise in the open air

Remedy: Lycopodium

Recurrent fatigue with easy sweating and poor regulation of body temperature

Symptoms: Bodily processes slow down and become sluggish with exhaustion. Inefficient circulation with rapid flushing and chill, sluggish digestion with stubborn constipation. Food cravings for indigestible or starchy foods

Worse from: Being chilled; standing; emotional or physical demands; being watched

Better for: Dry, moderately warm surroundings; Rest

Remedy: Calcarea carbonica

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SLEEP PROBLEMS

BY DAVID CURTIN MB, BS, MFHOM, MCH, PCHOM

homeopathic physician, London and Oxford

Insomnia or sleeplessness is a common problem in the modern world: so many people live such busy lives, rushing from one place to the next, and from one task to the next. And we are surrounded by noise – noise from traffic, washing machines, air conditioning, televisions, the children's stereo. In cities, it is quite common for such noise to continue all night.

Fortunately, human beings are designed to be adaptive, and most of us learn to filter out unwanted noise. However, when we are under stress these natural adaptive mechanisms don't function so well.

Some common causes of insomnia in adults include:

- Depression
- Anxiety or fear
- Excitement
- Pain
- Shift work or overwork
- Noise
- New baby
- Old age
- Eating late
- Alcohol, coffee, tea or other stimulants
- Uncomfortable bed or bed too small
- Cold
- Insufficient exercise.

In children causes include:

- Hunger
- Pain – teething, ear ache, colic
- Fear or anxiety, nightmares
- Excitement
- Noise.

There is no one easy answer to insomnia: finding and treating the cause is the most effective solution. In some cases there will be several causes.

Sleeping tablets will often help, but they are not always effective, they can be addictive and they may have side-effects. Also, they do nothing to solve the underlying problem.

If the underlying problem is addressed then sometimes this alone will restore normal healthy sleep patterns. In some cases a multi-faceted approach is necessary. Any serious causes of insomnia should, of course, be treated under the supervision of an appropriate health professional.

Self help

Simple tips:

- Wind down gradually in the evenings. Do not watch stimulating television programmes late in the evening or read stimulating books
- Do not have a television in your bedroom and do not read in bed unless you are quite sure that reading actually helps you to get to sleep
- Avoid eating late in the evening
- Avoid stimulating drinks in the evening – tea and coffee
- Avoid alcohol late in the evening unless you know that it helps you to sleep
- Alcohol often causes disturbed sleep, even though it may help you to get to sleep
- Take 10-15 minutes to wind down when you get in from work if at all possible
- Ideally find a quiet place, lie on your back and then relax each muscle in your body in turn, beginning with your feet, and working up to your head. Then lie quietly and let your mind drift. Do this everyday
- Try to find a bedtime routine that suits you.
- Put young children to bed as soon as practicable. Routines are helpful for most children and most adults
- Avoid sleeping in late in the mornings if you are over-tired. This can disrupt sleep patterns and result in making you more tired. Go to bed earlier instead
- Try self-hypnosis. Lie down in a quiet room and close your eyes. Imagine yourself in a luxuriously comfortable place. Let your imagination flood itself with all the sensations that you would like to experience: touch, sound, colours, smells, even tastes. Choose those that are calming and relaxing. Practise this and you will find that when you are in bed ready to go to sleep you will remember those sensations
- Self-hypnosis sleep tapes can be helpful
- Get a good bed. Good beds are expensive but they really make a difference. Many people believe that pocket-sprung mattresses are the best.

Your bed should be neither too soft or too hard. A double bed should be at least 150 cm wide (5ft) and preferably 165 cm for two people. Most double beds are smaller than this. Remember, you spend a third of your life in bed.

Homoeopathy

As always with homoeopathy, the remedy must be chosen according to the symptoms of the individual. Some of the remedies used may already be familiar to you. Here are some of the more commonly used remedies. I have put them in the order in which I most often prescribe them, starting with the most common.

Nux vomica

The patient goes to sleep late because of a feeling of thoughts crowding in on him. He or she wakes at 3 am and lies awake until daybreak, when he falls into a dull sleep full of dreams, from which it is hard to rouse. He wakes late, feeling tired.

He or she feels drowsy after meals and in the early evening. His dreams are full of bustle and hurry. He feels better after a short sleep, unless aroused.

He has a great flow of ideas in bed in the evening, which often drive away sleep until morning.

Experiences sleeplessness and excitement after overwork or over-stimulation.

Dreams of quarrels.

Coffea

The patient experiences complete sleeplessness and is constantly moving and excited. Sleeps until 3 am, after which he or she is only able to doze. Wakes with a start and feels excited. His sleep is disturbed by dreams.

Experiences sleeplessness because of mental activity; has a flow of ideas, accompanied by nervous excitability.

This remedy is good for hyperactive or hypersensitive children.

Belladonna

The patient has fever, dryness of the mouth, cold extremities and hunger.

There is pulsation of the blood-vessels, and the patient may hear this so loudly when trying to sleep as to be kept awake by it.

He or she experiences comatose sleep at night, with frequent waking and convulsive movements.

The patient's sleep may be accompanied by moaning and tossing about.

There may be nocturnal sleeplessness, sometimes with the desire to sleep and useless efforts to go to sleep, mostly because of feelings of great anguish or agitation.

Dreams may be described as anxious, terrible, frightful and vivid. They may be about fires, robbers and assassins, or may be meditative dreams. On closing the eyes in order to go to sleep, the patient sees frightful visions and experiences jerking in the limbs.

This remedy is often used during childhood fevers.

Colocynthis

The patient experiences sleeplessness following a fit of indigestion or colic. This remedy can be very useful in children.

The patient is very wakeful and sleepless. When asleep the patient lies on his or her back, with one hand under the occiput.

Chamomilla

Patient has nocturnal sleeplessness, with attacks of anguish, visions and illusions involving sight and hearing. On sleeping, the patient starts with fright, cries, tosses about, is tearful, talks, raves, groans, snores and constantly separates the thighs.

The patient has fantastic, lively, quarrelsome and vexatious dreams, with a morose and sullen aspect.

This remedy is commonly indicated in teething children. They have difficulty falling asleep, and demand things only to refuse them. They want to be picked up and carried, but this only helps for a short time.

Aconite

The patient has nightmares and anxious dreams. He or she experiences sleeplessness, and is restless and tosses about (use 30th potency). The patient starts up in sleep, has long dreams, with feelings of anxiety centred on the chest. Insomnia of the aged.

The patient experiences drowsiness, with anxious thoughts and rapid respiration. This is especially associated with fear of dying.

The patient is sleepless because of anxiety, constantly agitated and tosses about

Arsenicum

The patient is disturbed, anxious, restless, agitated and tosses and turns. He must have his head raised by pillows. The patient has suffocating fits during sleep. He or she sleeps with the hands over the head. His dreams are full of care and fear.

He is usually worse at or after midnight.

Children are very demanding and will cry for their parents to come and help.

The patient is thirsty for sips of water.

Phosphorus

Used for sleeplessness in old people. The patient goes to sleep late and awakens feeling weak. Has short naps with frequent waking.

Has vivid dreams of fire or of haemorrhage. Has lascivious dreams. Has anxious, distressing dreams that are frightful and horrible; or vivid and uneasy dreams; for example, of animals that bite, of robbers, of

unfinished business of the day, bloodshed, death, quarrels, creeping things etc.

The patient walks in his or her sleep.

He or she is afraid of the dark and wants company.

Pulsatilla

The patient feels wide awake in the evening and his or her first sleep is restless. He wakes feeling languid and unrefreshed. He or she feels irresistible sleepiness in afternoon. He sleeps with the hands over the head. He dislikes being covered. May be chilly but likes to have the window open.

This remedy is used in the Pulsatilla child who is timid and lacks confidence and is clingy and weepy if upset.

These children are very impressionable and may have difficult falling asleep if anything disturbing has happened during the day. They may have nightmares about being left by parents and they like to be rocked to sleep.

Stramonium

These patients experience night terrors. They suffer from agitated sleep with vivid dreams. They can be very frightened. A child clings to the parents. They have frightful visions during sleep. They lie on the back with open, staring eyes.

They have a tremendous fear of the dark or fear of violence.

If you are new to homoeopathy, it is best to stick to the sixth potency, and to take one dose every evening before bed. If you are more familiar with using homoeopathy remedies, then you might use the 30th potency, though this is best used for more acute situations. If you need to take the remedy nightly for some time, then the sixth potency is better.

Valeriana

Sleeplessness. Disturbed sleep (patient only able to fall asleep towards morning) with tossing, and anxious and confused dreams.

Can be taken in herbal form in capsules.

Homoeopathic remedies for disturbed sleep are widely sold in health food shops and pharmacies. They are usually combinations of two or three remedies, commonly Nux vomica, Coffea and Valeriana. Combination herbal remedies to assist sleep are also widely available.

Herbal teas are beneficial for many people and a wide variety of these are also easily obtained. The name of the tea will usually indicate its properties, for example Night-time, Sleepytime, and so on.

Do not continue taking any remedy ad infinitum. If you find that you need to keep taking the remedies you should seek professional help.

Repertory

Sleeplessness:

Anger, after:

Acon., Coloc., Nux-v., Bry., Cham., Coff.

Anxiety, from:

Acon., Ars., Cocc., Bry., Caust., Cham, Kali-c. Lach

Excitement, from:

Coff., Hyos., Nux-v., Arg-n., Aur-m.

Fear, fright, from:

Acon., Bry., Cham., Cimic., Cocc., Ign.

Grief, from:

Nat-m., Ign., Kali-br., Sulph.,

Mental exertion, after:

Ars., Nux-v., Calc.

Old people:

Acon, Bar-c., Phos., Ars.

Restlessness, from:

Acon., Apis, Ars., Merc-c., Alum., Bry.

Thoughts, from:

Ars., Calc., Coff., Hep., Nux-v., Op.

Wine, after abuse of:

Nux-v., Coff. Coffee; abuse of, after: Coff., Cham., Nux-v.



ACONITE
Aconitum napellus

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EYE HEALTH

BY BETH MACEOIN BA, MNCHM, RSHOM
homoeopathic practitioner, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Protecting the health of our eyes must be a priority when we consider how essential our sight is to everyday living. For this reason, we should make a point of having regular examinations by an optician and also investigate any symptoms of inflammation or irritation affecting the eyes.

Homoeopathic treatment can be helpful in treating a range of eye problems. This guide deals only with conditions of an acute, short-lived nature not because more chronic conditions cannot benefit from homoeopathic help, but because it is important that well-established or potentially serious chronic conditions be treated by an experienced homoeopathic practitioner.

An isolated or mild episode of any of the conditions dealt with below may benefit from self-help measures. But whichever homoeopathic remedy is selected as the most appropriate it should promote a speedy improvement. Once an improvement has been achieved, the remedy should be discontinued and taken again briefly only if there is a relapse. If there is no perceptible improvement after taking a well-indicated remedy, or if there is any suggestion that deterioration in a condition is happening, consult a professional practitioner.

Eye injuries

Any of the following may result in injury or trauma:

- a blow from a hard, blunt object can cause damage to the eyeball, or result in bruising and tenderness of the soft tissues surrounding the eye socket
- the eyeball may become scratched
- abrasive or corrosive chemicals may be accidentally squirted into the eye.

The simple self-help measures listed below may do a great deal to help with the discomfort and trauma of minor eye injuries. However, if there is any doubt about the severity of an eye problem, *always* err on the side of caution and seek professional medical advice. This may be obtained from a general practitioner, an optician or the accident and emergency department of the local hospital.

Basic self-help

When a foreign body enters the eye, do not rub the affected eye in an attempt to remove the object as this can do further damage. Also, never attempt to remove any foreign body that looks as if it might have penetrated the eyeball.

If a tiny object is seen floating on the white of the eye, gently tilt the head backwards. When the foreign body is spotted, carefully lift it off with a clean, dampened piece of tissue or cloth.

Sometimes a foreign body is initially obvious in the eye, but moves rapidly and disappears under the top eyelid. If this happens pull the lid carefully downwards with the minimum amount of pressure, and slowly let it slide back to its original position. This may be all that is required to dislodge the problematic object.

Black eyes may be soothed by holding a clean, cool, damp compress to the bruised eye socket. However, avoid using an ice pack if the skin has been broken.

If a chemical has been squirted into the eye:

- try to wash the affected eye by holding the face under running water. However, always take the precaution of making sure that the traumatised eye is facing downwards to reduce the risk of any residue of the chemical running into to other eye
- gently hold the lids apart while bathing the eye
- after attempting to remove as much of the chemical as possible, cover the injured eye with a clean cloth and obtain emergency medical help immediately.

If any of the following occur, get *immediate* medical help:

- impaled foreign bodies affecting the pupil or the white of the eye
- contact with corrosive chemicals, such as bleach or other household cleaners
- blurred vision, light sensitivity or severe pain following an eye injury
- foreign bodies that cannot be readily found or removed.

Herbal self-help for minor eye injuries

Diluted Arnica tincture may be used to bathe the bruised tissues surrounding a black eye. However, never use Arnica cream or ointment where skin is broken, and restrict its use to unbroken skin surrounding the eye socket. Do not let it come into contact with the eyeball. A soothing cool compress may be made by soaking a clean, soft piece of cloth in diluted Arnica tincture and holding it gently against the bruised tissue of the eye socket. This will reduce swelling and ease acute pain.

Homoeopathic remedies

Aconite

has been referred to as the Arnica of the eye due to its reputation for easing irritated and traumatised eyes following minor injury. It can be effectively used to soothe localised residual discomfort following the successful removal of foreign bodies, and can be especially helpful in easing the emotional shock and distress that follow injury.

Arnica

is the first remedy to think of giving in any situation where shock, bruising and trauma follow an accident. Given promptly after an injury has occurred, it can do a great deal to ease pain and encourage re-absorption of blood from bruised tissues. It also has a reputation for easing the general physical and emotional trauma that accompany injury.

Symphytum

This remedy is often called for when an injury has occurred to the eye socket as a result of a blow from a blunt object such as a tennis ball. It may be given internally after a cool compress of diluted Arnica tincture has been used externally to reduce initial pain and swelling.

Hypericum

would be strongly indicated for a black eye where pain appears to be out of proportion to the severity of the injury sustained, or where discomfort lingers for a long time following injury or after the removal of a foreign body.

Ledum

Black eyes that feel numb and cold, but are also relieved by cool bathing or contact with cool compresses are likely to call for this remedy. Tissues around the injured area are swollen and sensitive, with pains being characteristically stabbing or tearing in nature.

Conjunctivitis

This irritating and painful condition occurs when the transparent membrane covering the surface of the eye

and the eyelids (called the conjunctiva) becomes inflamed. Triggers that may cause this inflammation include infection, or an allergic reaction.

Symptoms of infection may include any of the following:

- a pussy discharge that may be yellow in colour
- pain, inflammation and redness of the eye
- eyelids that become stuck together after a night's sleep.

Allergic conjunctivitis may lead to either of the following symptoms:

- puffiness of the conjunctiva during the hay fever season
- recurrent or persistent inflammation and itching of the white of the eye.

Basic self-help

If infective conjunctivitis is a potential problem, observe scrupulous personal hygiene, including washing your hands after touching your eyes.

Also make a point of keeping your towels, facecloth and makeup brushes away from those of other people.

Allergic conjunctivitis may be eased by wearing good-quality sunglasses to protect the eyes when out of doors.

Inflammation may also be reduced by bathing the eyes with cool water once indoors.

If either of the following occur, get prompt medical help:

- any signs of marked inflammation, redness or pain in the eye
- symptoms of conjunctivitis in a young baby.

Herbal self-help for conjunctivitis

Cooled infusions from elderflower, fennel or chamomile herbal teas make a soothing solution which may be added to cotton wool pads and placed over the affected eye.

Homoeopathic remedies

Aconite: This remedy may be very helpful in easing the inflammation, irritation and discomfort of conjunctivitis, especially if symptoms are of a violent and rapidly developing nature. Conjunctivitis that comes on abruptly following exposure to cold windy weather, or after a foreign body has been removed from the eye, often calls for Aconite. Specific eye symptoms include severe light sensitivity and shooting pains causing general anxiety and distress.

Apis: may be indicated in allergic conjunctivitis where there is a general state of puffiness around the eyes including rosy-pink, bag-like swellings of the lower lid. Symptoms feel generally much worse for any contact with warmth, and are

considerably relieved by cool compresses or bathing the eyes with cool water. Pains are characteristically stinging with a sense of a hot discharge coming from the eyes.

Belladonna: Extreme bright red inflammation of the eyes that develops very abruptly may call for Belladonna. Choice of this remedy would be confirmed by a sensation which feels as though the eyes are half closed, along with extreme general physical and mental sensitivity to pain. There is also likely to be a marked intolerance to jarring movement or bright light.

Allium cepa: would be indicated where eyes look red and inflamed and water profusely. Although irritation in the eyes is quite severe, tears are bland rather than burning. Conjunctivitis may arise as a complication of a severe cold.

Euphrasia: Symptoms that may be eased by Euphrasia include redness, heat and burning pains of the conjunctiva and eyelids with swollen, sore and gummed-up eyelids. Constant desire to blink due to discomfort in the eyes.

Pulsatilla: This remedy should be considered where symptoms of conjunctivitis arise along with a persistent or severe cold. Choice of Pulsatilla would be confirmed if there is profuse, thick, yellowish-green coloured discharge, with a sensation which feels as if there is something covering the surface of the eye. This leads to an impulse constantly to wipe or rub the eyes.

Styes

These unpleasant eruptions are likely to occur if the small glands at the root of the eyelashes become inflamed and infected. Once the latter has occurred, signs of swelling are likely to be seen along with pus formation at the site of inflammation. People may become prone to this problem if they have experienced a period or being over-stressed or rundown. Although styes often occur singly, it is possible for more than one to appear at the same time, or for a sty to recur a short time after clearing up.

Basic self-help

The infection can be stopped from spreading by making sure that towels and face cloths are not shared by other members of the family.

Small children should also be discouraged from scratching or rubbing their eyes, as this can contribute to the development of further problems. Also keep

small children's fingernails cut fairly short so that there is less likelihood of the delicate area around the eyes being scratched.

If styes are a recurrent problem, consider how much sugar is being eaten. A regular or high intake of refined sugar may be implicated in problems with bacterial infections. Remember that apart from obvious sources such as chocolate, puddings, sweets, fizzy drinks and ice cream, products such as baked beans or convenience foods contain hidden sugars.

Adults who develop styes should look at whether their lifestyle is particularly stressful leaving them rundown. If this seems to be the case, it is worth exploring ways of reducing stress and of improving the general quality of diet.

A medical opinion should be sought if styes are a persistent problem.

Homoeopathic remedies

Belladonna may be called for if rapidly developing symptoms arise in connection with a stye. These may include sensitivity of the delicate tissue surrounding the affected eye with marked redness and inflammation of the area. There is also likely to be a noticeable intolerance of bright light and jarring movement, and also irritability and short temper because of the discomfort.

Apis Styes that require this remedy are extremely puffy, rosy-pink in colour, and look water-logged. Pain is burning or stinging and is eased by cool compresses and cool bathing. Any contact with warmth makes pain and discomfort markedly worse. A person is generally fidgety and irritable with physical discomfort.

Hepar Sulph may be indicated where styes are large and swollen and produce a thick, yellow discharge. Pain is sharp and splinter-like in nature and is generally soothed by bathing in warm water or holding a warm compress to the eye. Contact with cold in any form makes discomfort worse, while cold draughts in particular cause an unpleasant sensation of sensitivity.

Pulsatilla Styes that have a tendency to develop on the lower lids with production of thick, greenish-yellow pus may respond well to Pulsatilla. Choice of this remedy would be confirmed if the eyelids become stuck together during sleep, and if the styes generally feel itchy and more uncomfortable by contact with warmth.

Graphites

This remedy may be helpful where eyelids are red, swollen and scaly with stye formation. There may be a history of ingrowing eyelashes, and digestive problems may alternate with a tendency to skin disorders or generally unhealthy skin.

Staphysagria may be indicated where styes occur with light sensitivity, itching, soreness, stinging and burning of the affected eyelid. The margins of the lids have a tendency to stick together after sleep. Symptoms may develop after a period or protracted stress and suppressed anger.

Eye Strain

Symptoms of eye strain may include irritation, itching or burning of the eyes, and the possibility of a temporary decrease in vision. The latter may be especially noticeable as the evening approaches.

Factors that may aggravate problems of eye strain include:

- working for extended periods at VDU screens
- poor lighting arrangements, and insufficient sleep.

In order to combat these problems ensure:

- regular breaks are taken while working at computers
- lighting is comfortably bright
- enough sleep is had on a regular basis.

If in doubt, consult an optician who will be able to judge whether spectacles need to be prescribed or adjusted. The latter is likely to become especially relevant as people approach middle age and reading glasses become necessary.

Seek professional medical help if sudden or marked loss of vision occurs.

Homoeopathic remedies

Ruta may be helpful if headaches are associated with eye strain that arises from watching television, reading, working on a computer, or from concentrating on fine work such as sewing. The transition from near to far vision is uncomfortable, and vision may be temporarily reduced as this accommodation is taking place.

Euphrasia This remedy may be helpful in cases of mild eye strain which result from a cold or from extreme exhaustion. The eyes water profusely when tired, causing blurred vision and a desire to blink frequently.

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***CHRONIC ENT
PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN***

BY SARA EAMES

*Homoeopathic specialist at St Ann's hospital, north London and physician at the Royal
London Homoeopathic Hospital.*

Children's ear, nose and throat problems are extremely common. The majority of babies and young children catch infections which spread easily to the tonsils and the ears. The age of maximum infection depends largely on the social situation of the child. Thus babies who come into contact early with large numbers of children either through childminders or friends of older siblings tend to suffer from more infections at a younger age. Only children who stay at home until starting school or nursery often miss part of their first year at school because of repeated infections.

This is all part of the natural process of building up the body's immunity to common infections. In general, if treated properly these infections are short-lived. In some children, however, there is a tendency to develop recurrent infections and complications. The most common complications are a persistent discharging and blocked nose, recurrent tonsillitis with chronic enlargement of the tonsils and adenoids and recurrent middle ear infection (otitis media) which can lead to glue ear and hearing problems.

Persistent nasal discharge

It is common with most colds to develop a runny nose which, fortunately, doesn't usually last long. Sometimes, however, this discharge continues long after the acute cold has settled. Conventional medical treatment involves the use of steroid and anti-histamine nasal sprays and the use of antibiotics if the condition does not settle. This treatment is not always successful and some children are left with constant blocked and runny noses leading to breathing problems, sniffing, sore noses—and teasing from their peers. Homoeopathic treatment can be very useful and some of the more commonly used remedies are listed below.

Calc. carb.: Blocked nose and thick, offensive yellow discharge with swollen nose and upper lip in a typical *Calc.* child—pale, plump, cold and clammy with a large, sweaty head, tendency to catch cold with every change in the weather and generally slow, sluggish and stubborn.

Pulsatilla: Yellowy green, bland (non-irritating) discharge; more watery in the fresh air with the typical *Pulsatilla* symptoms of changeability, weepiness, need for affection and lack of thirst. They are generally better for fresh air and gentle motion and worse for hot, stuff rooms.

Sulphur: Dirty yellow catarrh with a dry, scabby nose in a *Sulphur* child who is warm blooded, untidy, averse to washing and generally lazy and disorganised. They have dry, red skin with a tendency to eczema and have a sweet tooth and great thirst.

Ars. Alb.: Profuse, watery, burning discharge

Case study

A pale, plump three-year-old child had recurrent ear infections. He received the same remedy for each recur. His mother started to feel unwell on extremely suddenly, with a sharp, throbbing pain, high fever and chills. The infections as effectively as the remedy sought from a homoeopath. Between attacks. The child had no further attacks in almost a

that makes the upper lip red and sore in a child who is thin, chilly, anxious and restless and possibly unusually tidy, with obsessional features. They are generally better for warmth, fresh air and company.

The ear

The ear is a delicate sense organ concerned with hearing and balance and it is important that infections of the ear are treated correctly in order to preserve these functions. Sound waves are picked up by the ear and travel through the outer ear canal, causing the ear drum to vibrate. This in turn causes three small bones in the middle ear to vibrate. These vibrations then pass through to the inner ear, which is rich in nerve endings, and information about the sounds received are sent to the brain. The middle ear is drained by the Eustachian tube that opens into the back of the naso-pharynx.

Acute middle ear infection (otitis media) is a common infection in children. It is usually associated with a cold and presents as a sudden illness with a high fever, general malaise and severe pain in the ear. The symptoms are caused by a build-up of catarrh leading to pressure and pain in the middle ear, which occasionally causes the eardrum to burst. It is treated medically with antibiotics or homoeopathically with remedies such as *Belladonna*, *Chamomilla*, *Aconite* and *Pulsatilla*. It is common to have reduction of hearing during an acute episode and it is important to check that hearing has returned to normal afterwards. There are two common complications of an acute ear infection, chronic otitis media and otitis media with effusion, commonly known as glue ear.

If the perforation of an acute attack fails to heal then discharge can continue and the middle ear bones can become damaged and lead to deafness. Conventional

treatment of chronic otitis media consists of taking swabs to find the appropriate antibiotics and medically supervised cleansing of the ear.

Glue ear is caused by a chronic accumulation of fluid in the middle ear causing deafness and, in the long term, permanent damage to the hearing. It is a modern epidemic and it is estimated that a third of all children are affected at some stage. Although many cases will resolve spontaneously it is important to monitor hearing in children where glue ear is suspected. A main predisposing factor is thought to be antibiotic treatment for an acute ear infection, which prevents the natural perforation of the eardrum and drainage of the ear, but does not completely clear the middle ear infection. Other predisposing factors include large adenoids that block the Eustachian tube and prevent drainage of the middle ear, allergic rhinitis and parents who smoke.

Glue ear is most common in young and primary school age children, and often the only symptom is deafness. This often goes undetected as a failure to respond is often ascribed to the child's tendency to ignore what their parents are saying. A useful test of hearing in young children is to observe whether they need to turn the television up.

Conventional treatment initially consists simply of observation as many cases resolve spontaneously. Antibiotics and antihistamines are sometimes prescribed but are of no proven value. Surgery is considered if hearing loss continues for longer than three months. This consists of making a small incision in the eardrum and inserting a small tube or "grommet" that can drain the fluid from the middle ear. A grommet stays in place for an average of six months which is usually adequate to clear the problem.

While acute ear problems can be treated successfully at home using homoeopathic remedies, so long as the child responds to them, it is advisable to seek professional homoeopathic advice for chronic problems, as constitutional prescribing is usually required. Common remedies are as follows.

Lycopodium: Thick, yellow, offensive discharge, especially from the right side associated with eczema of the ear, reduced hearing and roaring in the ears. In general they are anxious children who lack self confidence, have a sweet tooth, are generally worse in the late afternoon and may also suffer from abdominal problems.

Psorinum: Offensive brownish discharge from

old boy presented with a history of repeated middle ear infections. He had three courses of antibiotics but the infections continued to recur. To treat the acute infections with *Belladonna* as they came on. The infections were mainly right sided and were associated with severe pain, fever, and a bright red hot face. *Belladonna* dealt with these acute infections, but they continued to recur. Advice was given with *Calc carb.* was prescribed constitutionally. The child is developing extremely well and there have been no further infections in a year.

the ear in a thin and chilly child, who always looks dirty, has a ravenous appetite and is worse for the cold.

Merc. Dulc.: A useful remedy for glue ear in a child who is pale and flabby with a tendency to diarrhoea and a taste for cold drinks.

Kali Mur.: Another useful remedy for middle ear catarrh, especially with snapping noises in the ear, thick milky white discharges, and swollen glands.

Other constitutional remedies may be required, including *Pulsatilla* and *Calc. carb.* as described earlier.

Tonsils and adenoids

These are masses of lymph tissue forming a small part of the body's lymphatic system, which fights infection. The adenoids lie on the back wall of the naso-pharynx close to the opening of the Eustachian tube and the tonsils are on either side of the throat at the base of the tongue. Their role is to protect the body from germs that are breathed in. They are always larger in young children whose immune system is still developing—they shrink naturally as the child grows older.

Unusual growth of the adenoids owing to recurrent infections can cause nasal obstruction, leading to further infections, breathing through the mouth and snoring. It can also cause Eustachian tube blockage that causes recurrent acute otitis media and glue ear. Treatment of chronically enlarged adenoids is surgical removal.

Acute tonsillitis is not uncommon in children and presents with a high temperature, pain and enlarged tender lymph nodes in the neck. The tonsils are usually larger and redder than usual, and may have spots of pus and membranous deposits on them. Conventional medical treatment includes rest, soluble paracetamol, adequate fluid intake, and antibiotics in severe cases, although it is not always possible to distinguish clinically between viral and bacterial infections.

Some children suffer repeated attacks of tonsillitis, and then surgical removal is usually recommended, although there is a tendency to grow out of the condition. Parents can become concerned about the size of their children's tonsils, but this is only a clinical problem if the size affects breathing or swallowing.

Acute sore throats can be treated homoeopathically at home, so long as the child's general condition does not deteriorate, and they respond to

the selected remedy. Remedies that can be useful include *Belladonna*, *Merc Sol.*, *Apis Mel.*, *Hep. Sulph.*, *Lachesis*, and *Lycopodium*.

If tonsillitis is recurrent or tonsils, adenoids or neck glands remain enlarged, constitutional treatment should be considered. Common constitutional types prone to enlarged lymphoid tissue include:

Baryta Carb: Useful in heavy, clumsy children, who have slow development, large soft glands, are generally shy and are worse for the cold.

Silica: Useful in thin, pale shy children who are sensitive to the cold and catch colds easily. They can have cold, sweaty, offensive feet and are generally better for warmth, especially wanting to cover their head.

Merc. Sol.: Weak, cold restless children with bad breath, copious saliva and night sweats. The tonsils and mouth can become ulcerated, and they are generally worse at night.

Calc Phos.: Thin restless irritable children who also often complain of headaches and stomach aches. They catch colds easily, are worse for the cold, damp and draughts—it is a wonderful remedy for this type of child who has not recovered from a period of acute infections. They often crave smoked foods.

Other remedies already described, such as *Calc Carb.* and *Pulsatilla*, can also be useful.

While it is reasonably straightforward to treat acute ENT illnesses with homoeopathy at home, the treatment of chronic and recurrent conditions is more complicated and usually requires the help of a homoeopath. While looking after small children one should never delay obtaining medical advice if their general condition deteriorates, even when homoeopathic remedies have been given. Caution also has to be used when treating chronic conditions of the ear in order to ensure that temporary hearing loss does not become permanent due to structural damage. It is usually sensible to seek both homoeopathic and medical advice, hoping that the remedies will have cured the condition before the appointment for surgery is reached.

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***HAY FEVER AND
RHINITIS***

BY ANGELA JONES

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who uses homoeopathy extensively in her practice*

Hay fever and rhinitis are complaints that may seem trivial to the observer. However, to the sufferer they are the source of considerable annoyance and even distress, often detracting significantly from a person's quality of life.

A large range of over-the-counter and prescription medications are available for the treatment of rhinitis and hay fever. They fall into two main groups: the antihistamines and the topical steroids. Both of these types of drug work by suppressing the body's immune response to allergens (substances that cause an allergic response, such as pollen or house dust mite). They are generally only effective if taken on a once- or twice-daily basis. Although more refined than they used to be, these conventional medications can still cause a number of side effects, the most worrying of which is sedation that can interfere with the individual's ability to concentrate, drive and to operate machinery.

Until a few years ago, a popular approach to the treatment of hay fever was the so-called "desensitising injections". A course of injections was given at the beginning of each season containing the common pollens, spores and so on. However, these injections have now been banned due to a number of disastrous instances of anaphylactic shock following the injections.

Using homoeopathy to treat rhinitis and hay fever is attractive for several reasons. First, it offers a mode of therapy that is individualised to the patient. Every allergy sufferer experiences his or her allergy in a different way. Nasal discharges may be bland, burning or itching. There may be unbearable itching in the palate, the ears, the throat, the eyes or a combination of any of these. Rather than offering blanket suppression of symptoms, the homoeopath selects a medicine that is matched to the symptom or allergy picture of the patient.

Second, the treatment may not need to be taken continuously. Often, a short course at the beginning of the hay fever season or a few doses of a so-called "constitutional medicine" may give relief for weeks or even months at a time. Third, homoeopathic medicines are free from the sedative side effects of conventional anti-histamine therapy. Finally, the homoeopathic treatment of hay fever and rhinitis has been subjected to scientific investigation by the team at the Glasgow Homoeopathic Hospital. The results, published in several articles in *The Lancet*, have found homoeopathic treatment to be significantly superior to placebo—in other words, it works!

Before discussing the medicines that can be used to treat hay fever and rhinitis, it will be useful to say a little bit about the medical definitions of these conditions. Hay fever covers any allergic reaction due to the exposure of a susceptible person to pollens or fungal spores. The "season" for any individual varies, depending on which substance they are allergic to, with the tree pollens, such as birch, arriving first in the spring, followed by the grass pollens in the summer and ending with fungal spores, such as *Alternaria*, in the autumn. The areas affected by hay fever may be nose, ears, mucous membranes of mouth and throat and the eyes. In severe cases, the lungs may become affected, causing bronchospasm and wheezing—so-called "hay asthma". Very severe cases may even develop a temperature, although I have never witnessed this myself. This must be where the term "hay fever" originated.

"Rhinitis" means, simply, inflammation of the nasal passages leading to discharge, sneezing and/or nasal blockage. The inflammation can be caused by infections, such as that caused by the common cold virus, or by allergy. The allergic version takes two forms: "seasonal allergic rhinitis" which is part of the hay fever picture, and "perennial" rhinitis which goes on throughout the year and is most commonly related to allergy to the house dust mite.

Isopathic medicines

It is important to ascertain which allergen is responsible for the hay fever/rhinitis symptoms if the isopathic approach is to be used. This approach is similar to

conventional immunisation, in that the substance to which the patient is allergic is administered in order to reduce the allergic response. The difference is that the substance is administered in homoeopathic potency, preferably at non-material potencies (usually 30c), orally rather than injected, and for a short course of a few days only. This often results in relief of symptoms and the course can be repeated when relief is waning. All the common allergens are available in potentised form from the specialist homoeopathic pharmacies: mixed tree pollens, mixed grass pollens, specific tree pollens, fungal, such as *Alternaria*, cat, dog /rabbit/horse hair, house dust mite, and so on.

It is also possible to have customised medicines made up if an unusual allergen is thought to be the culprit (see case history 1).

Case history 1 A 60-year-old carpenter began to develop allergic rhinitis for the first time in his life after using an unusual tropical wood. Conventional antihistamines did not control his symptoms very well so dust was swept from his workshop and made up to a homoeopathic potency of 30c. Administration of the tailor-made medicine cured his symptoms.

A frequently-employed regime for the treatment of perennial rhinitis due to house dust mite allergy is as follows: Give one dose of house dust mite 30c twice daily for five days in the first instance. Wait at least three weeks to assess response. There may be a temporary worsening of symptoms. Repeat the course if required.

Occasional patients need a daily dose, especially at times of intense exposure, such as moving house or decorating.

A similar regime could be used for any of the pollens or other allergens. Despite the risk of temporary exacerbation of symptoms, the phenomenon known as “aggravation”, there is no risk of anaphylactic shock.

Homoeopathic medicines

As in most homoeopathic treatment, there are a number of therapeutic strategies that can be used in the treatment of hay fever and rhinitis. One option is to choose the medicine purely on the actual symptoms of the problem, the so-called “local medicine”. A medicine is chosen whose symptom picture, or materia medica, most closely resembles that of the sufferer. If you are having difficulty in choosing one, it may be wise to try one medicine for a week, following it with an alternative only if the first has not been effective. Some practitioners suggest that two

medicines can be given in alternating doses. I would not recommend this approach as it can cause confusion in interpreting the results of treatment.

Local medicines

The following are the symptom pictures of some of the local medicines which are commonly used in managing hay fever and rhinitis. They may be given in the 6c potency, initially two to four times daily and reducing the frequency with improvement.

<i>Allium cepa</i> (red onion)	Bouts of sneezing Burning nasal discharge causing sore nostrils and upper lip Eyes itch and water profusely but do not burn Better in cold room or open air Worse in evening Tickly cough
<i>Ambrosia</i> (rag weed)	Intolerable itching of eyelids Profuse tears due to smarting and burning of eyes Runny nose, may have stuffed-up feeling Asthmatic attacks
<i>Ammonium muriaticum</i> (sal ammoniac)	Hot acrid nasal discharge corrodes lip Obstructed stuffy feeling and loss of sense of smell Unable to clear nose by blowing
<i>Aralia racemosa</i> (american spikenard)	Frequent sneezing Marked wheezing, especially when lying down Feeling as if something in throat Worse for least current of air
<i>Arsenicum iodatum</i> (arsenic iodide)	Irritation and tingling in nose with constant desire to sneeze Nasal discharge burning Burning watering of eyes May have dry wheezy cough
<i>Arundo</i> (reed)	Everything itches Burning and itching in ears and eyes Annoying itch in roof of mouth, throat and nose

Euphrasia (eye-bright)	Eyes severely affected with profuse burning watering Burning and swelling of eyelids Nasal discharge and sneezing but not burning Headache and aversion to bright light Worse for warmth
Sabadilla (cevadilla seed)	Spasms of sneezing and running nose Severe frontal sinus pain Eyes and eyelids red and burning Sensation of needing to swallow constantly as if lump in throat Worse for cold
Sanguinaria (blood root)	Chronic rhinitis or hay fever complicated by nasal polyps Dryness and burning of ears, throat and nasal passages
Wyethia (poison weed)	Particularly for symptoms confined to back of nose and throat Dry and intensely itchy Dry wheezy cough

Constitutional medicines

The “constitutional” approach to prescribing for hay fever/rhinitis arises from the fact that many so-called “constitutional types” are particularly prone to hay fever or rhinitis as part of their make-up. Thus, if a constitutional medicine is given, as well as raising the general level of health, the tendency to troublesome symptoms is reduced.

Case history 2 Mr X is a 34-year-old accountant who visited me for treatment of irritable bowel syndrome. He was troubled by bouts of burning diarrhoea which occurred especially in the morning, causing him to be driven out of bed and sometimes persisting so that he was late for work. He was a generally fit and energetic type but had a slight tendency to eczema, hay fever and asthma for which he took conventional medication.

In general, he was a warm-blooded individual, often throwing the bedcovers off at night and sticking his feet out of bed. He admitted to being quite thirsty and to

liking fatty rich foods and sweet things. He was fairly untidy in the house but careful with his work. He enjoyed current affairs and documentary programmes and tended to read factual books rather than fiction.

I felt that his overall constitution fitted that of the medicine *Sulphur* and therefore gave him three doses of *Sulphur* 30c at 12-hourly intervals. He made a good recovery from his IBS and needed a further course of *Sulphur* after about 12 weeks. When reviewed the following autumn he remarked that he had had virtually no hay fever symptoms that year. Indeed, he had not needed to buy any antihistamines at all.

Case history 3 Miss Y was a 28-year-old bar manager who consulted me specifically for allergic rhinitis. She was extremely sensitive to any smell and had severe bouts of sneezing several times every day which she found disruptive and debilitating.

She was in good general health and loved to travel. Indeed, she really lived from one holiday to the next and had already visited all the continents. Slightly plump, she admitted to adoring cheese and bacon as her favourite foods. She was moderately thirsty.

In view of her food preferences and her marked desire for travel, I thought that the medicine *Calcarea phosphorica* would be helpful as it seemed to match her constitutional type. It had an effect from day two and she has only needed one repeat dose in the past 12 months!

These cases illustrate the use of two constitutional medicines. Two others that are commonly seen are:

Pulsatilla (windflower)	Changeable Profuse discharges, often yellowish Markedly better for open air and gently moving about
Silica (pure flint)	Chilly persons Often constipated Thin despite good appetite Sweaty feet Nasal obstruction and marked tendency to sinusitis

Beginners reading this guide should feel reasonably confident in using the local medicines and possibly also the isopathic method of desensitisation with potentised allergens. However, if a constitutional approach is needed, it is always advisable to consult a qualified homeopathic practitioner.

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SKIN DISORDERS

BY MARYSIA KRATIMENOS

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The skin is the largest organ in the body, protecting the underlying structures. It is made up of two layers: the outer epidermis and the deeper dermis, beneath which is the fat. The dermis is made up of living cells, unlike the epidermis. The cell turnover in skin is very rapid so minor damage can be repaired within a matter of days. The dermis contains the sweat glands and oil-producing glands. The oil (sebum) is essential for maintaining the skin's elasticity and moisture. It is inflammation of these glands that leads to the boils of acne. An excess of oil production leads to a greasy skin, a deficiency to a dry skin.

The skin has several functions other than protection. It is a huge sense organ, sensitive to touch and pressure. It produces melanin, the pigment responsible for the skin's colour. In addition it is also a site of vitamin D production. This vitamin is essential for healthy, strong bones.

The skin is under constant attack from the environment and our lifestyles. Strong winds, extremes of temperature, pollution, excess alcohol, smoking, unhealthy diets, and lack of sleep can all adversely affect the skin. The emotions are hugely important too—ever wondered why that spot appeared before that all-important appointment? Acne is most common during the teenage years, a time when the hormones and the moods fluctuate wildly. Many skin problems are very closely linked to emotional states.

Homoeopathy provides an extremely useful form of treatment for many skin conditions. It is free of the side effects of many allopathic drugs. Antibiotics, used frequently in acne, can cause bowel upsets and recurrent thrush.

Steroids, the mainstay of many skin treatments especially eczema, act by suppressing the inflammation. They do not cure the condition. Even when applied directly to the skin in the form of a cream, they can cause side-effects. They thin the skin, causing blood vessels to be more noticeable. They can lead to acne, changes in the skin colour, contact dermatitis and an increased chance of skin infections. If used

in large doses over a length of time, they can cause a decrease in the body's own steroid production from the adrenal glands. Strong steroid creams (Dermovate, Betnovate, Eumovate, Fucibet and Synalar) should be used very sparingly on the body only, never on the face, and preferably not on a child's delicate skin.

As steroids act by suppression, steadily increasing doses are often needed to calm the skin. When they are stopped suddenly, the rash frequently comes back with a vengeance.

Homoeopathy acts in a completely different way. The basic principle is that like treats like, "similia similibus curentur". For example, it is well known that people who work with bromide and related chemicals frequently develop severe acne. Therefore, bromine and its salts are often used in potency to treat acne. The remedy stimulates the body's natural healing processes. This may take slightly longer than allopathic drugs, but with homoeopathy the body cures itself rather than be pushed into not reacting.

Occasionally, the body over-reacts to the given remedy. This is known as a homoeopathic aggravation. There is a temporary flare-up before healing occurs. Although unpleasant, this is a good sign because it means that the body is sensitive to the remedy, albeit too sensitive.

If this occurs, the remedy should be stopped and one should wait until the skin settles down completely before restarting the remedy. If flare-ups persist, a different potency may be required, so the opinion of an experienced homoeopath should be sought.

There are two main methods of treating skin conditions: constitutional and pathological prescribing of homoeopathic remedies. "Constitutional" means that the homoeopath will use all the information from the detailed medical and homoeopathic history to choose an individualised remedy from the 3,000 or so currently available. This remedy will reflect the whole of the person, their health, food preferences, weather preferences, and character.

Pathological prescriptions, on the other hand, are more specific for the disease process, and may not reflect every aspect of the individual. Many homoeopaths will commence treatment with a tailor-made constitutional remedy, to stimulate the body's vitality. Once this has completed its action, a pathological remedy can be used to complete the healing process.

As well as increasing one's general health, the constitutional remedy also addresses the emotional side of the picture. The physical problems and emotional responses

can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Stressful situations may well perpetuate skin diseases, and successful treatment can only come about once this issue is addressed.

Obviously, such constitutional prescribing requires experience and should not be attempted by a novice. There are, however, many pathological remedies which can help. In general, a potency of 6C should be used. It should be discontinued if there is a flare-up as previously mentioned, and also when the condition clears up.

There are certain conditions which are not suitable for self-treatment. Obviously one should never try treating skin ulcers, moles or any pigmented lesion. These need medical supervision, and possibly biopsy.

Eczema associated with asthma should also be left to the experts. Many children have both problems. The homoeopath will concentrate initially on treating the asthma, and the skin at a later stage. The direction of cure should be from within to the outside, that is, from lungs to skin. By treating the skin only, the asthma may flare up and this is potentially dangerous. The same principles apply to psoriasis with joint disease.

When starting homoeopathic treatment, whether self prescribed or on the advice of a homoeopath, never stop steroid creams suddenly. These should be tailed off slowly as the skin improves to avoid the flare-ups previously described. Likewise, any other treatments should not be discontinued abruptly, but under the supervision of close medical supervision. If you have any doubts about the suitability of homoeopathic treatment for any condition, consult a qualified homoeopath.

Acne and Boils

Acne is commoner in the teenage years, but often persists into later years. If severe it can cause scarring. It is usually treated by various creams which dry the skin and can give rise to red, scaly patches. Anti-bacterial lotions, soaps and creams aim to discourage infection. In severe cases daily antibiotics are used or, in young girls, certain brands of the oral contraceptive pill. More and more people are turning away from these treatments as they find the local treatments don't work and they are not keen to use strong drugs.

Many remedies can alleviate acne, although severe acne will require professional advice.

Practical Self Help for Acne

1. Cleanse the skin thoroughly twice a day, after removing all traces of make-up. Soap tends to be very drying, but there is an excellent range of alternatives, including facial washes in gel form, available.

2. Moisturise the skin. The choice of creams is individual. Gel is particularly gentle for the sensitive skin around the eyes.

3. Eat a good balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Vitamin C and trace elements aid skin healing. Certain foods may aggravate the acne—chocolate and fried foods are the most notorious.

4. Drink plenty of fresh water, two or three pints a day is ideal, as this will cleanse the body.

5. Never pick the spots, however tempting this may be! This will only spread the infection and can lead to scarring. Apply hot salt compresses to draw out the pus instead.

6. Flower remedies (Bach and Australian) can be very helpful. They can calm the skin, and will also deal with the emotional issues, such as the feeling of ugliness so commonly experienced with a poor skin.

Homoeopathic Remedies for Acne and Boils

Calcarea sulphurica

This is very useful for acne with large infected spots. The pus often continues to ooze even after the spot has opened. Thick, yellow bloody pus is common. The skin tends to be easily infected. It burns after washing. It often feels better in fresh air. People needing this remedy are often warm blooded.

Hepar sulphuricum

The skin is generally very unhealthy and becomes infected easily. There are multiple small infections that are very sensitive to touch, temperature change and draughts. The spots are intensely painful. People needing this remedy are chilly and often irritable. They also crave acid and pungent foods.

Kali bromatum

This is an excellent remedy for teenage acne and acne that gets worse at the time of the menstrual period. There are nasty scars. The acne affects the face, chest and shoulders. The spots tend to have a bluish purple colour.

Natrum muriaticum

The skin tends to be greasy and there can be lots of whiteheads. The acne is worst along the hairline and around the mouth. There are often recurrent cold sores and the skin is very sensitive to the sunlight.

Silica

This is particularly useful for scarring acne with recurrent boils and cysts that do not come to a head. The skin tends to be pale and delicate and every minor cut gets infected. The nails are often weak and brittle.

Sulphur

The skin is very red and angry and readily infected. It is intensely itchy,

particularly when overheated. *Sulphur* is a good cleansing remedy.

Belladonna

This is for boils which are bright red, throbbing, hot and swollen. It will only act well before pus has accumulated. The boils are better for warmth and worse for cold applications.

Hepar sulph

Generally infected skin with very tender boils.

- throb
- discharge pus.

Staphisagria

Throbbing boils which are exquisitely tender to the touch.

- remain for weeks without resolving
- may be stytes
- associated with anger that may or may not be expressed.

Eczema and Dermatitis

Eczema is the term generally applied to the skin rash in allergic, "atopic" individuals. In these cases there is often a family history for eczema, hay fever and/or asthma. The eczema may be recognised as a result of allergy, such as to milk, but more often there is no clear trigger factor. As previously mentioned, eczema associated with asthma should only ever be treated by experienced homoeopaths. Vaccinations frequently lead to an aggravation of eczema or may precede the onset. This particular problem again should be referred to a professional.

Dermatitis means inflammation of the skin and is a loose term that is used to describe any red rash (usually with a fancy Latin name preceding it!). Contact dermatitis is due to an allergy, for example the nickel of cheap jewellery or chemicals such as soap powders. Both eczema and dermatitis can be treated very successfully with homoeopathy.

Practical Self Help

1. A good healthy diet is essential. A lack of essential fatty acids can make skin dryness worse. Eating oily fish (mackerel, herring, and so on) can help greatly as can supplements of Evening Primrose Oil and Marine Oil. Minerals and vitamins and fresh fruit and vegetables aid skin healing and plenty of fresh water helps cleanse the body.

Some people, especially children, find certain foods upset their skin. Milk and dairy products are often a problem. Switching to goats' milk or soya milk products may help the skin significantly in susceptible individuals. It is essential to ensure a good calcium intake for bone development, so calcium supplements may have to be used. If you are considering stopping dairy products, please consult your doctor, homoeopath or dietitian on this point.

Excess alcohol, smoking, lack of sleep and strong sunshine can all harm the skin and should be avoided. Sun blocks should be used, especially in young children whose skin is more delicate and can burn surprisingly quickly.

2. Bathing can make the skin dry and sore. A cheap and easy method of softening the bath water is to put porridge oats in a

muslin bag (or an old pair of stockings), hang it over the taps and run the bath water through it. The water will turn milky and become very soft. Alternatively, there are various bath oils available for sensitive skin. Bubble baths should be avoided. For washing, aqueous cream makes a good soap substitute and is much less drying.

3. Whilst the skin is still warm, apply lots of moisturiser. Aqueous cream is very cheap and useful. For extremely dry skin, ointments may be better.

4. Clothes should be washed in a non-biological soap powder or liquid, such as Fairy, and double rinsed to remove the last traces of detergent.

5. Natural fibres are best close to the skin. Cotton or silk, if you can afford it, cause the least irritation. Wool, especially the fluffy ones like angora or mohair, can be extremely itchy. Acrylic "wools" can be better. Cotton gloves should be used under rubber gloves. It is important to avoid harsh chemicals like washing-up liquids, detergents and household cleaners.

Homoeopathic Remedies for Eczema and Dermatitis

Arsenicum album

The skin is very dry and scaly with lots of flaking. There are round patches of inflamed skin. The skin is very itchy but warmth improves the condition. Patients needing this remedy tend to be chilly and suffer with the atopic type of eczema.

Arsenicum iodatum

This is similar to *Arsenicum album* but is used in warmer individuals. The eczema is often associated with hay fever (the top lip and nose often burn and there is a watery nasal discharge).

Antimonium crudum

The skin is very thickened and often the nails are also affected, being very horny or split. There are many corns and callouses. The eczema is often associated with digestive problems.

Graphites

The skin is very unhealthy and gets infected very easily, oozing a thick yellow discharge. The eczema tends to be worse in the skin creases and is very itchy. The skin cracks a lot and tends to scar. It often flares up before a period and at the menopause.

Petroleum

The skin is intensely dry and tends to crack open and bleed. The deep bloody cracks won't heal well and may ooze a watery discharge. The skin deteriorates dramatically in the winter months, but in the summer it clears and may become entirely normal.

Rhus Tox

The skin is covered in fine blisters usually as a result of an acute flare-up of the eczema. It is intensely itchy and may burn. It is soothed by hot water. The skin may look a dark dusky colour.

Sulphur

The skin lesions are very red, large and florid. They burn and are intensely itchy. They are frequently worse after bathing or heat. *Sulphur* is an excellent remedy for cleansing and is often used in atopic eczema.