

THE COMMON COLD

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It is surprising how lightly our profession regards the common cold and yet it is often the cause of the start of much ill-health and loss of time at work. Colds should not be suppressed except by homœopathic remedies.

One old practitioner once said to me: "I tell my patients that it will take three days to incubate it, three days to endure it, and three days for it to go away." Certainly, it is better to have this philosophy than to give aspirin or penicillin to reduce the temperature, for the temperature is nature's way of burning infection out of the boy.

However homœopaths can do better than this, and we have at least a dozen remedies which have a great reputation for cutting short the common cold. Colds can be caused by infection, emotion, chills, overtiredness or worry, or by the patient having a tendency to catch cold due to chronic catarrh.

They can also be caused by dampness in unfavourable environment, or by wearing the wrong clothes. Most people wear too many clothes. I am appalled at the layers of clothing patients wear at the dispensary. All that is required is a string vest and a nylon shirt.

"CLUTTERED UP" DRESSING

Even in the winter those two garments plus a woollen waistcoat (to keep the back warm) should suffice under a jacket of average weight. The modern waistcoat with its cotton back is a useless garment except for pocket capacity. Scarves or heavy topcoats merely clutter up the person and I am convinced that the art of not getting a cold in our changeable climate is merely a question of letting the body breathe.

The string vest forms a layer of air about the skin and the nylon shirt keeps the air cushioned.

String vests are also cool in summer and one should not

wear a nylon shirt alone in summer for the perspiration does not then get away and the body becomes clammy.

ACONITUM is our best remedy at the start of a cold in the aconite type of person who is usually plethoric, over-anxious who has come down with a chill, usually waiting for transport in cold east winds.

ALLIUM CEPA is good for the sudden streamer, with acrid discharge from the nose.

ARSENICUM ALBUM is good for those thin watery discharges which excoriate the upper lip, and where the nose is stuffed and not relieved by sneezing.

BACILLINUM is an excellent nosode for clearing up the remains of a lingering catarrh while CISTUS CANADENSIS is a good (but neglected) remedy suitable for post nasal catarrh, especially if the patient has a craving for cheese.

DULCAMARA is good for those colds occurring in the cold wet weather of early winter where there is rheumatism and sore red eyes.

GELSEMIUM is prescribed by me almost automatically when the patient phones up and says he feels he is in for a dose of 'flu, aching in every bone.

HEPAR SULPHURIS is another good cold remedy, useful in the type of patient who starts sneezing in cold winds. The discharge starts watery but soon thickens up.

KALI BICHROMICUM is another type of cold remedy suitable when the discharge becomes ropy, tough and which can come out in long strings.

NATRUM MURIATICUM is good for the emotional type of cold with much watery sneezing. I have a patient who gets a regular cold of this type every time she has a row with her husband.

NUX VOMICA is a dry weather type of cold where the patient is irritable, chilly, and full of flatulence and resentment.

PHOSPHORUS is used for the stopping and starting type of cold in the tall sensitive, red haired person who usually has poor resistance to streptococci, with a history of tonsillitis, scarlet fever and many nose bleeds, and who is narrow chested.

PULSATILLA and SEPIA are both good catarrhal remedies but only for the typical persons suitable for these remedies.

EASY TO STUDY

Most of these remedies are easy to study and if the prescriber gets a good idea of the type of patient on whom the remedies act he should do good work with potency 30 in any of them.

If the patient is desperately cold and cannot get warm a dose of Camphor 30 may abort a chill and if such a chill is due to an unexpected ducking in cold water *BELLIS PERENNIS* should be considered.

The kind of patients who do not react to those cold remedies are the chronic catarrhal types who have their septa straightened, their tonsils and adenoids removed, and every available bit of mucosal nose lining removed by surgery. If these unfortunates pick up a virulent infection the early defences of the body are no longer there and the trouble goes deeper.

The hayfever type of cold looks simple but it is difficult to treat for it is an allergy which can be activated by pollen, by animals, by sunlight or by temperature. I give my hayfever patients a prophylactic dose of Timothy Grass early in the season and in early June, and I employ the intervening time looking for their constitutional remedy. In women it is surprising how often that remedy is *NATRUM MURIATICUM*. In men they are often of the psoric type requiring *SULPHUR*, *CALCAREA CARBONICA* and *LYCOPodium* in that order.

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