

HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES APPLICABLE TO DISORDERS OF THE STOMACH*

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Among the causes of dyspepsia are mental overwork, sedentary occupation, high living, and dissipation. These are all keynote symptoms of *Nux vomica* which we shall consider first. Hardly a day but that the *nux* patient walks into our office. The individual is rather thin and spare. He is quick and active in his motions. He has a nervous temperament (the fact that strychnia in alkaloidal form is present in *Nux*, you will find running all through its symptomatology in this over-impressionability—this hypersensitivity to sounds, odours, noises, and emotions). The face tends to be sallow or yellowish. There is a sort of false plethora that gives the patient at times red cheeks on the yellow background. The *nux* patient deprives himself of sleep and exercise in pursuance of his studies. On retiring his mind is so wrought up he cannot sleep. He finally thrashes himself to sleep about midnight and awakes at 4 or 5 a.m. only to fall asleep again to awake at his customary arising hour feeling as if he had swallowed the floor of a bird cage—coated tongue, bitter taste in mouth, dull headache either in occiput or over left eye which increases all day, tending to pass off at night. This may be associated with nausea and vomiting, but the feature of the vomiting is the violent retching, showing the irritated condition of the stomach. The bowels are constipated and there is an ineffectual urging to stool, not due to atony of the rectum but to irregular fitful action. The *nux* patient also suffers from gastralgia made worse by eating. The pains start in the epigastrium and radiate into the back. The paroxysms occur periodically every morning. The pains are of a gripping, clawing character, as though a hand were scraping the inside of the stomach, often relieved by hot drinks.

With *nux* the food and drink taste normal and the gastric distress does not commence immediately after meals as with *lycopodium* and *nux moschata*, but the pain comes on about one-half hour after eating, especially after dinner. The patient often is quoted as saying "If I could only vomit, I would feel better."

There is an aversion to accustomed tobacco and coffee. He loves fats and tolerates them well (opposite *Puls*).

The *nux* temperament might be epitomized then as cranky and irascible in the morning, drowsy and stupid in the evening, and generally dull during the day.

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Nux is preeminently the remedy for many of the conditions incident to our modern life.

I frequently use the 3rd and 30th in alternation.

Hydrastis: The second great remedy for disorders of the stomach is *Hydrastis canadensis*.

Hydrastis is our great mucous membrane tonic as well as a tonic for exhaustion of the intellectual functions. The patient is tired in the morning with much yawning and stretching. He feels he just must lie down. He has that worn, jaded look, sallow complexion, hide-bound skin, and melancholy, lassitude, and malaise. His tongue is large, flabby and slimy, clean at the sides and tip, but with a yellow coating down the centre and shows the imprint of the teeth. He has dull epigastric pain, sour eructations and nausea. He has a complete loss of appetite and that empty gone feeling which may come on any time. He has a gastro-intestinal catarrh and the secretions are thick, yellowish andropy. He has a dull lumbar pain such that he is inclined to use his arms in raising from his seat. He has weak muscular power and obstinate constipation. The action on the liver is marked—torpidity and tenderness. *Hydrastis* is particularly active in old, easily tired people and cachectic individuals. Hence its indication in cancer and the cancerous state before ulceration when pain is the principal symptom.

Nux and *Hydrastis* are our sheet anchors in stomach diseases and I will admit that I have alternated these medicines together with remarkably good effect.

Lycopodium: It is a pleasure to extol the virtues of this remarkable remedy which Hahnemann rescued from its ignominious use as an infant powder and elevated it to the highest rank among antipsorics.

Lycopodium is indicated in emaciated persons who are muscularly weak but active mentally. There is a predisposition to liver and lung trouble. The face is pale and sallow, the eyes sunken and surrounded with dark bluish circles. Often the face is furrowed with creases and wrinkles, indicating deep-seated disease. The face readily flushes and the cheeks become red in the evening after eating. When sick, such patients are apt to become domineering in manner so they order others about with an angry, vehement manner. As to the intellectual part of the mind we find the memory always weak. There are frequent mistakes in speech. The patient forgets words or syllables.

The tongue is coated, sour taste on arising in the morning, a violent hunger—a few mouthfuls of food, however, seem to fill him up so that he cannot swallow another mouthful, quickly followed by hunger again. The distress in the stomach is *immediately* after eating. There seems to be an incarceration of flatus pressing upwards such that the patient cannot bear the pressure of clothing about the waist. There is a sour taste and sour belching which, however, dose not relieve the gas. The incomplete burning eructations rise only to the pharynx and there burn for hours. The patient

feels unconquerably sleepy after eating. He craves all food and drink *warm*. He has a desire for sweets. Most of his distress is on the right side of the body. His symptoms are aggravated 4—8 p.m. The bowels are constipated with urging and constriction of the anus.

Arsenicum: This is a profoundly acting remedy. Its clean-cut characteristic symptoms make its homoeopathic employment constant and certain. Its general symptoms alone often lead to its successful application.

Among these are (1) asthenic weakness and prostration; (2) restlessness and apprehension; (3) midnight aggravation; (4) burning pains; (5) amelioration from heat; (6) intense thirst for sips of water; (7) periodicity and malignancy of symptoms.

In the field of the stomach therefore we would think of arsenic for irritative dyspepsias and acute inflammation with pain immediately after food. The tongue is clean and red. Cannot bear the sight or smell of food. Nausea, retching, vomiting of acid and bitter matter which seem to excoriate the throat. There may be blood, bile, or mucus. There is faintness, icy coldness, exhaustion.

Arsenic antidotes the ill effects of vegetable raw food diets and of melons and watery foods generally.

Graphites: Adults of the calc. carb. type, stout, pale, constipated, unkempt, pimply, soft, flabby. Very sensitive to cold. Full of complaints, despondency, apprehension. Much gaseous distension, with *putrid* eructations. There is an aversion to meat, and sweets nauseate (oppos. *Lyc.* and *Arg. nit.*). The patient gets relief from eating (*Anacard.*, *Petrol.*, *Chel.*), better lying down (*Hydr.*, *Chel.*).

After eating, the stomach becomes distended with wind. There is a burning pain, with cramps and colic. The patient awakes at night gasping for breath. This dyspnoea is relieved by eating. With the distension there is a rush of blood to the head. Jousset recommends *Nux* and *Graphites* as the best indigestion prophylactic.

Pulsatilla: Changeableness of symptoms is characteristic of the remedy. The mental symptoms are no exception to the rule. The patient is irritable, then tearful, again mild and pleasant. The despondency is not the irascible dominating *nux* type, but rather apprehensive and lachrymose. The make-up is slow and phlegmatic. The *pulsatilla* anxiety comes from the epigastrium and is very likely associated with indigestion. It is often accompanied by chattering of the teeth, palpitation of the heart and flashes of heat.

There is a dryness of the mouth. The tongue is coated with a thick, white fur. In spite of the dryness there is thirstlessness. There is a putrid taste in the morning. There is a craving for lemonade and an aversion to fats. The patient is chilly but is worse from heat. There is a feeling of fulness one to two hours after meals. There is nausea and sometimes vomiting. The vomiting is of undigested food, showing the weak digestion of the remedy. The feeling of distress or weight in the epigastrium is often relieved by

cating again. There is also a sensation as if the food had lodged under the sternum (*China*, *Abies*). There is much flatulency which moves about, causing pinching pains and rumbling. There tends to be violent palpitation after meals.

Pulsatilla is a great remedy for gastric catarrh following rich food or from a mixed diet; also after chilling the stomach with ice cream or iced drinks.

Carbo veg.: The torpid *Arsenicum*. Venous sluggishness to stagnation. Imperfect oxidation. The *carbo* patient is fat and lazy and there is a tendency to chronicity in his complaints. Suitable to lowered vital power following debilitating disease, drugging or in elderly people.

Carbo is a putrid remedy. The cructations are rancid, sour, and putrid. The digestion is imperfect. There is a faint all-gone sensation *not* relieved by eating. The flatulent distension gives rise to asthmatic breathing and dyspnoea, due probably to an upward pressure of the accumulated gases (*oppos. Nux*). The patient wants to be fanned and craves fresh air. All the windows must be open.

With *Carbo* there is a tendency to diarrhoea (*Lyc.* constipation).

There is an aversion to the best foods and most digestible foods. Craving for indigestible things such as mince pies.

China: Debility superimposed on nervous crethism calls for *China*. Periodicity is marked. Satiety (*Lyc.*). Tympanites generalized. Sensation as if food lodged in oesophagus behind sternum (*Puls*). Drinks tea to excess. Belching or regurgitations of food gives no relief. *China* (like *Puls.*) is indicated when the food does not digest and lies a long time in the stomach and finally is vomited undigested.

China bloats the whole abdomen (*Carbo* the upper, and *Lyc.* the lower).

Sulphur: Sulphur has a great desire for sweets which make him sick, producing sour stomach and heartburn (*Arg. nit.* causes diarrhoea) (*Lyc.*, *Graphites* opposite).

Feeling of satiety after eating smallest quantity of food (*Carbo veg.*, *Lyc.*, *Sepia*).

Worse from starchy food (*Nat. carb.*, *Nat. sulph.*).

Canine hunger—forced to rise at night to eat.

All-gone feeling at 11 a.m., plus hot flashes, hot head, and cold feet, early morning diarrhoea, cat-nap sleep, aversion to washing, uncomfortable on feet, red orifices.

Anacardium: This patient is found among the neurasthenics. He is hungry all the time. He has a sinking feeling two hours after meals and a dull pain in the stomach which is always better from eating, but returns again in another two hours or so. He often has a violent gastralgia at night.

He is apt to choke on eating or drinking.

There is a sensation of a plug in various parts—stomach, rectum, eyes,

etc. He has an urging to stool but on yielding, the desire passes off.

Mentally, his memory is impaired. He lacks confidence in himself. Inclined to violent language.

Generalized itching.

Phosphorus: Craving for cold food and drink which is vomited as soon as it becomes warm. Weak, all-gone feeling at 11 a.m. Sour eructations and burning between scapulae. Tongue has projective papillae. Hungry at night and lies awake until he gets something to eat.

Sepia: Feeling of goneness in stomach, not relieved by eating. Nausea at sight or smell of food. Longing for acids and pickles. *Sepia* has the vehemency and irascibility of *Nux*, plus the tearful despondency of *Pulsatilla*. The hot flashes of Sulphur.

All distress from below upward. Feels cold even in warm room. Nausea in morning before breakfast. Loathes fat. Sour eructations. Flatulency.

Carbo anim.: The rapid and magical relief of abdominal distension post-operative must be seen to be believed—Margaret Tyler. (*Raphanus*).

Modalities

Better eating—*Anacardium*, *Chel.*, *Graph.*, *Iod.*, *Ign.*

Worse eating—*Carbo veg.*, *Lyc.*, *Nux moschata*.

Satiety—*China*, *Lyc.*, *Sulphur*.

Worse while eating—*Lyc.*, *Nux moschata*, *Sulphur*.

Worse soon after—*Sepia*, *Cocculus*.

One-half hour after—*Carbo veg.*, *Phos. acid.*

One hour after—*Kali hi.*, *Puls.*

Two hours after—*Anacardium*.

Several hours—*Graphites*.

Four hours vomiting—*Kreosot.*

Goneness at 11 a. m., better eating—*Nat. carb.*, *Sulph.*

Goneness at 11 a.m., not relieved eating—*Sepia*.

Goneness at 11 a.m., worse wine—*Zinc.*

Craves sweets—*Arg. nit.*, *Lycop.*, *Sabad.*

Abhors sweets—*Graphites*.

Craves pickles and sour—*Sepia*.

Craves lemonade—*Puls.*, *Bell.*