

Homeopathy: Healthy Medicine

A guide to getting the most out of your homeopathic treatment

What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy is one of the most widely used forms of medicine in the world today, because people are discovering the benefits of a system of medicine which is safe, effective and treats them as unique individuals.



Homeopathy is a complete system of medicine which treats mental, emotional and physical illness.

Homeopathic medicines are chosen to treat the whole person, because, according to the principles of homeopathy, the mind and body operate as one, so you cannot treat one part of the body without affecting the whole. Medicines are chosen to fit all



the characteristics of the patient, so physical disorders are considered in relation to an individual's mental and emotional state.

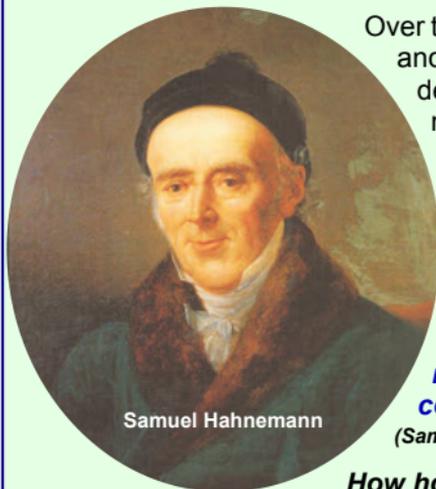
How does homeopathy work?

Homeopathy works on a principle known as 'the law of similars' or 'like cures like'. This law states that a substance which can cause a particular set of symptoms to appear, can also be used to bring relief to someone experiencing a similar set of symptoms. For example, coffee – or *Coffea* as it is known in Latin – is a stimulant which can bring about temporary insomnia. *Coffea*, when prepared as a homeopathic remedy, can be helpful to some people experiencing the symptoms of insomnia.

Another example is that chopping onions can make your eyes water and your nose run. The red onion – *Allium cepa* – can be used homeopathically to help treat colds and hayfever where the main symptoms include watery eyes and a runny nose.



The founding father of homeopathy



Samuel Hahnemann

Over two hundred years ago, a German doctor and chemist, named Samuel Hahnemann, developed a system of medicine which we now call homeopathy. He had a very logical, clear and humane approach to the practice of medicine:

'The highest ideal of cure is rapid, gentle and permanent restoration of health, or removal and annihilation of the disease in its whole extent, in the shortest, most reliable and most harmless way, based on easily comprehensible principles.'

(Samuel Hahnemann, *The Organon of Medicine*)

How homeopathic medicines are made

Homeopathic medicines are sourced from a range of substances which occur naturally in the plant, mineral and animal kingdoms. Hahnemann first experimented with the healing properties of Peruvian bark (*Chinchona officinalis*), from which quinine was extracted as a treatment for malaria. He observed that if he took small doses of the bark himself, he began to develop symptoms very similar to those of malaria. If he stopped taking the bark, the symptoms disappeared. Hahnemann had discovered that the bark was producing **malaria like** symptoms in an otherwise healthy individual (himself). This important observation marked the beginning of the development of homeopathy as we know it today.

To maximise the healing potential of the medicines he used, Hahnemann prepared them in a very specific manner. This involved diluting the substance concerned, then shaking it vigorously with impact. This sequence of actions is known as **succussion**. A substance can be diluted and succussed many times, and Hahnemann termed this process **potentisation**. Hahnemann observed that potentisation made the medicines more effective and reduced the likelihood of unwanted effects. Each new homeopathic medicine undergoes a particular process called a '**proving**'. Volunteers or 'provers' take the new substance until they experience symptoms. All symptoms that result from taking the substance are recorded in detail. In this way a huge variety of natural substances are tested for their healing and curative properties and can be added to the homeopathic pharmacopoeia. Unlike orthodox drugs, homeopathic medicines are not tested on animals.



Chinchona

Homeopathic treatment

Your first consultation may take between one and two hours, with follow-up consultations lasting between twenty to forty five minutes. Your practitioner will need to build up a complete picture of your condition, including your past medical history, so you will be asked detailed questions about yourself. Prescriptions for acute illnesses, such as fever, vomiting or flu, can usually be assessed much more quickly.

To be sure to prescribe the best medicine for your particular problem, your homeopath needs to understand your individual needs. You will be asked about many aspects of your life, such as your emotional state, your sleep patterns and how you cope with stress. Your homeopath will choose a medicine for you that most closely matches your unique pattern of symptoms. Homeopathic medicines are usually supplied in tablet, powder or liquid form. As with all medicines, they need to be stored safely and appropriately. Patients often feel a sense of well-being, optimism and relaxation after taking their homeopathic medicine.

The speed with which you feel relief will depend on the condition being treated. In acute ailments, this can be very fast indeed. In more chronic conditions, your recovery rate will depend on the nature and duration of the illness, and on your individual vitality.



- **Homeopathic medicines promote the body's natural ability to heal**
- **Homeopathic medicines are safe**
- **Homeopathic medicines are non-addictive**
- **Homeopathic medicines are non-toxic**



What are homeopathic medicines made from?

Homeopathic medicines are known by their Latin names and are made from a wide range of naturally occurring substances, including plants, minerals and animal products. For example, *Sulphur* is a frequently used homeopathic remedy, which originates as a product of volcanic eruption. The healing properties of *Sulphur* have been recognised for centuries, and it has been used since ancient times to treat a variety of skin disorders.



Homeopathy for all

Homeopathy can be used effectively by everyone, from babies and children to adults, including women during pregnancy. Homeopathic medicines promote the body's natural ability to heal. When prescribed appropriately, they are safe, non-toxic and non-addictive. They can be taken alongside drugs prescribed by your doctor and will not interfere with their beneficial action. As your condition improves, you may be able to safely reduce your conventional medication, thereby avoiding the unwanted effects that sometimes accompany the long-term use of drugs.

Please note that you should always consult with your GP before making changes to your conventional medication.

For more information about the effectiveness of homeopathy, we suggest you read the report entitled:

'Effectiveness, Safety and Cost Effectiveness of Homeopathy in General Practice – Summarized Health Technology Assessment'.

This substantial survey, comprising over three hundred pages, was first published in Switzerland in 2006. It is available in an English translation.

Its conclusions highlight some of the many benefits homeopathy can bring to patients .

To find your nearest registered homeopath, go to;

www.a-r-h.org

For a complete list of registered homeopaths go to;

www.findahomeopath.org.uk

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