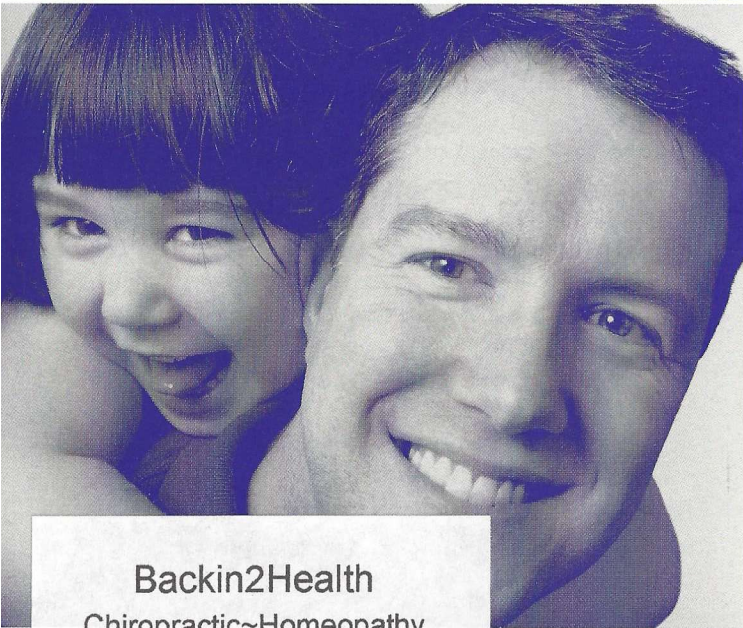


Homeopathy simply explained



Backin2Health
Chiropractic~Homeopathy
~Wellness~

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What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine which involves treating the individual with highly diluted substances, given mainly in tablet form, with the aim of triggering the body's natural system of healing. Based on their individual symptoms, a homeopath will match the most appropriate medicine to each patient. This medical system was developed by a German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann, in 1796 and has been used world-wide ever since.

The idea of treating 'like with like'

Homeopathy is based on the principle that you can treat 'like with like' i.e. a substance which causes symptoms when taken in large doses, can be used in small amounts to treat those same symptoms. For example, drinking too much coffee can cause sleeplessness, agitation and even palpitations, but when made into the homeopathic remedy *Coffea* it can be used to treat all these problems. You may already have come across this concept in conventional medicine e.g. the stimulant Ritalin being used to treat ADHD, or small doses of allergens such as pollen being used to de-sensitise allergic patients. However one major difference in homeopathy is that substances are used in such tiny doses that they are completely non-toxic.

Finding your individual medicine

The example of *Coffea* given above is a simplified one to illustrate the concept of 'like treating like'; when you see a homeopath it's their job to get a thorough understanding of your health and the exact symptoms you are experiencing so that they can find a homeopathic remedy which matches you and your symptoms as precisely as possible. During this confidential, in-depth 'case-taking' process your homeopath will consider all aspects of your health including your past medical history, diet, lifestyle and personality type, as well as current health problems.

The holistic approach

Homeopathic medicine treats the person as a whole, rather than treating specific diseases. This 'holistic' approach is one of the main differences between homeopathy and conventional medicine. For example, if you are suffering from anxiety, arthritis and a skin condition the conventional route might involve three entirely separate courses of treatment from three different specialists; by contrast a homeopath would consider all of these mental-emotional and physical symptoms to be linked and therefore treat them as a whole, possibly with a single prescription.

Is homeopathy safe?

Homeopathic treatment has an excellent safety record' and because homeopathic medicines are non-toxic they can be used for babies, children and during pregnancy.

What will treatment involve?

The initial homeopathic consultation usually lasts for at least an hour, whilst follow up appointments are generally shorter. Individual homeopaths work in different ways, so they will tell you what to expect when you book your first appointment. Your homeopathic prescription will come in tablet, liquid or powdered form. As homeopathic remedies are taken differently from conventional medicines, do make sure that you understand the instructions given to you by your homeopath before you take your remedy.

How long does treatment take?

This depends very much on what sort of illness you have, as well as the other individual characteristics of your case. If you have a long-standing chronic condition, a course of treatment will be needed. As a guideline you can typically expect to see a homeopath once a month for three months to begin with. If further treatment is needed beyond this stage you may find that follow-ups are scheduled at progressively longer intervals as your health improves.

What else does my homeopath need to know?

Please tell your homeopath about any medicine that has been prescribed by your doctor and any recent dental treatment. Please also mention any other complementary or alternative treatments you are having, and anything else that you are taking regularly (such as herbs or supplements) as these may affect your homeopathic treatment.

What are homeopathic medicines made from?

Homeopathic medicines – often referred to as 'remedies' – are made from plant, chemical, mineral or animal sources. The original material is diluted, then shaken vigorously (succussed). The number of times this is repeated determines the strength or 'potency' of the remedy e.g. a '6c' remedy will have been diluted 1 part in 100 then succussed, six times.

How can such dilute medicines work?

The fact that homeopathic medicines are so highly diluted has led some sceptics to say that homeopathic medicines are 'nothing but water'. However research suggests that vigorous

shaking during the manufacturing process may imprint information from the original substance into the water it is dissolved in,² which would explain how preparations can still be active at very high dilutions.

Such theories are still being explored, so we don't yet understand exactly *how* homeopathic medicines work, but experiments have already shown that 'ultrahigh dilutions' like homeopathic medicines have effects. For example, the hormone thyroxine, when prepared as a homeopathic '30c' remedy, was shown to slow down the process of metamorphosis of tadpoles into frogs.³ This experiment was replicated by five separate laboratories in Austria.

Is homeopathy effective?

A service evaluation at the Bristol Homeopathic Hospital recorded the outcome of homeopathic treatment in over 6,500 consecutive patients during a 6 year period, and found that **70% of patients reported an improvement in their health.**⁴

In Germany a health insurance company commissioned a study to help them determine whether they should continue to cover homeopathic treatment.⁵ This study found that homeopathic treatment was more effective than conventional treatment for some chronic conditions commonly seen in general practice, including headache, low back pain, depression, insomnia and sinusitis in adults, and atopic dermatitis, allergic rhinitis and asthma in children.

What scientific evidence is there that homeopathy works?

It is often said that there is 'no scientific evidence' that homeopathy works. This is not the case. More research is needed, but there are already high-quality randomised clinical trials demonstrating that homeopathy is clinically effective beyond placebo e.g. in the treatment of hay fever⁶ and childhood diarrhoea.⁷

For more information about homeopathy research please visit The Society of Homeopaths website at www.homeopathy-soh.org

What about seeing my doctor?

It is recommended that you maintain your relationship with your GP or specialist. When necessary homeopathic and conventional approaches can be used alongside one another to give the most effective and appropriate medical care. Your

local NHS services will also be able to arrange any diagnostic procedures you may need and provide emergency cover.

Some people choose homeopathy because they are unhappy with side effects from their current conventional medication, and in many cases homeopathic treatment can gradually reduce or remove the need for conventional drugs.⁸ However you should continue with any conventional medical treatment that may have already been prescribed as it may be dangerous to stop this suddenly. Any change in use of conventional medication should be discussed with both the prescribing doctor and your homeopath as treatment progresses.

If at any stage of your treatment you are concerned about changes in your symptoms, you should contact your homeopath and/or medical practitioner immediately.

Can I treat myself with homeopathic remedies?

You can use some remedies at home to help in acute and first aid situations such as colds, cuts, stings, minor burns and bruises. Ask your homeopath for further information or find your nearest class or seminar on this subject.

There are a number of good books available to help you use homeopathy at home or just to find out more about homeopathy, such as:

- *Homeopathy - The Practical Guide for the 21st century*, by Beth MacEoin, Kyle Cathie
- *The Complete Homeopathy Handbook*, by Miranda Castro, Macmillan
- *Principles and Practice of Homeopathy – The Therapeutic and Healing Process*, by David Owen, Churchill Livingstone
- *Illustrated Elements of Homeopathy* by Ilana Dannheisser & Penny Edwards, Thorsons

How do I find a qualified and registered homeopath?

Registered members of The Society of Homeopaths (identified by the designation RSHom after their name) have met required standards of education, are fully insured* and have agreed to abide by The Society's Code of Ethics and Practice. To find an RSHom homeopath in your area, you can access our register online at www.homeopathy-soh.org or contact The Society office on 0845 450 6611.

* This does not apply to Registered members practising overseas.

For further information, please visit our website.

Other leaflets available include:

- Homeopathy in Pregnancy and Childbirth
- Homeopathy for Men
- Homeopathy for Babies and Children
- Homeopathy and the Menopause
- Homeopathy for Stress, Anxiety and Depression

For a copy of these leaflets please contact the office at:

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Nothing contained in this leaflet should be taken as individual medical advice or as a substitute for consulting your homeopath or medical practitioner.

References

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