

Homeopathy for Stress, Anxiety and Depression



The holistic approach

Emotional stress caused by grief, shock, abandonment, disappointment, mental exhaustion or major life-changes such as moving home, can leave us drained and prone to illness.¹ If left untreated, these acute emotional responses can develop into long-term health problems. There is increasing evidence to support the holistic idea that how you are feeling mentally can have a direct impact on your physical health. For example, stress has been linked to decreased functioning of the immune system¹ and may raise cholesterol levels.²

How can homeopathy help?

Homeopathy can be used as an early intervention to help you through difficult life events and if a more serious condition such as an anxiety disorder does develop, treatment by a registered homeopath may be a viable treatment option³ either alongside, or as an alternative to, other treatments such as counselling or conventional medication.

One of the commonest reasons people seek homeopathic treatment is for mental health concerns such as anxiety⁴ and depression.⁵ In 2006 an evaluation of complementary medical services provided by IMPACT in Nottingham found that patients with mental health problems were significantly better after homeopathic treatment and in many cases patients were able to come off conventional medication.⁶

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 specific symptoms, a homeopath will match the most appropriate medicine to each patient. 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.

The idea of treating 'like with like'

You may already have come across this concept in conventional medicine e.g. the stimulant Ritalin being used to treat patients with ADHD, or small doses of allergens such as pollen being used to de-sensitise allergic patients. However one major difference with homeopathic medicines is that substances are used in such tiny doses that side-effects are minimised.

Finding your individual prescription

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.

Homeopathic medicines

Homeopathy uses specially prepared highly diluted medicines – often referred to as 'remedies' – which can be made from plant, chemical, mineral or animal sources. Unlike antidepressants or tranquillisers, homeopathic medicines do not pose toxicity problems,⁷ are non-addictive and can be used alongside other forms of medical treatment when necessary.

Is homeopathy safe?

Homeopathic treatment has an excellent safety record⁸ and because homeopathic medicines are so highly diluted, they can be used for infants, children and during pregnancy.

Who would benefit?

Homeopaths treat people of all ages – from children with behavioural problems, to teenagers with loss of confidence, and adults struggling to cope with life's stresses.

Homeopathy for young people

In 2005, NHS guidance outlined that children under 18 should not be prescribed antidepressants, yet 40,000 children are thought to be taking psychiatric drugs for depression, anxiety and other problems.⁹ Homeopaths commonly see youngsters

suffering with behavioural problems, and research studies investigating the homeopathic treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have shown promising results.¹⁰

The need for alternatives to conventional drug treatments

The Government's Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE) say that GPs are prescribing too many pills for those who do not have a serious medical condition and they advise people to seek other treatments.⁹ This advice has never been more relevant when you consider the findings of recent research studies. These have shown that commonly prescribed 'SSRI' anti-depressants such as Prozac are no better than 'dummy' placebo pills (except in the most severely depressed patients, when the placebo effect drops),¹¹ and that the anti-depressant Reboxetine is both ineffective and potentially harmful.¹²

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 welcomed, but there are already high-quality randomised clinical trials demonstrating that homeopathy is clinically effective beyond placebo¹³ and outcome studies which show that homeopathy works in practice.⁵ For more research information 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 some cases homeopathic treatment can gradually reduce or remove the need for conventional drugs.¹⁴ 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 both your medical practitioner and homeopath immediately.

When to visit a homeopath

It is better to seek treatment before symptoms get serious. This means recognising minor symptoms as early warning signs - increased irritability, sleeplessness, feelings of dread or guilt may indicate a need for attention. Many patients arrange regular check-ups with their homeopath in order to maintain their health.

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 or 01604 817 890

* This does not apply to registered members practising overseas.

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

Other leaflets available in this series:

- * Homeopathy for Babies and Children
- * Homeopathy and the Menopause
- * Homeopathy in Pregnancy and Childbirth
- * Homeopathy Simply Explained
- * Homeopathy for Men

For a copy of any of these leaflets please contact the address overleaf.

References:

1. Herbert TB, Cohen S. Stress and immunity in humans: a meta-analytic review. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 1993; 55(4): 364-379
2. Steptoe A, Brydon L. Associations between acute lipid stress responses and fasting lipid levels 3 years later. *Health Psychology*, 2005; 24(6): 601-7
3. Vainchtock A, et al. Medicoeconomic evaluation of the management of anxiety disorders in outpatient care. *Health and System Science*, 2000; 4: 103-115
4. Trichard M, Lamure E, Chauferin G. Study of the practice of homeopathic General Practitioners in France. *Homeopathy*, 2003; 92(3):135-9
5. Spence DS, Thompson EA, Barron SJ. Homeopathic treatment for chronic disease: a 6-year, university-hospital outpatient observational study. *J Altern Complement Med*, 2005; 11(5):793-8
6. IMPACT Integrated Medicine Partnership. Innovation, Choice and Effectiveness: Acupuncture, Chiropractic and Homeopathy in Primary Care 2006
7. Dantas F, Rampes H. Do homeopathic medicines provoke adverse effects? A systematic review. *Br Homeopath J*, 2000; 89(Supl): 535-8
8. Endrizzi C et al. Harm in homeopathy: aggravations, adverse drug events or medication errors? *Homeopathy*, 2005; 94(4):233-40
9. National Institute for Clinical Evidence guidance, 2005
10. Frei H, et al. Homeopathic treatment of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: a randomised, double blind, placebo controlled crossover trial. *Eur J Pediatr*, 2005; 164(12): 758-67
11. Kirsch I, Deacon BJ, Huedo-Medina TB, Scoboria A, Moore TJ, et al. Initial Severity and Antidepressant Benefits: A Meta-Analysis of Data Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration. *PLoS Med*, 2008; 5 (2): e45
12. Eyding D, et al. Reboxetine for acute treatment of major depression: systematic review and meta-analysis of published and unpublished placebo and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor controlled trials. *BMJ*, 2010; 341: 4737
13. Linde K, et al. Impact of study quality on outcome in placebo controlled trials of homeopathy. *J Clin Epidemiol*, 1999; 52: 631-6
14. Fisher P, van Haselen R, et al. Effectiveness Gaps: A new concept for evaluating health service and research needs applied to complementary and alternative medicine. *J Altern Complement Med* 2004; 10: 627-632.

The Society of Homeopaths
11 Brookfield, Duncan Close, Moulton Park,
Northampton NN3 6WL

Tel. 0845 450 6611 / 01604 817 890
Fax. 0845 450 6622 / 01604 648 848

email: info@homeopathy-soh.org

www.homeopathy-soh.org

Private limited company registration number 2036485