

# Homeopathy in pregnancy and childbirth



## 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. 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 and agitation, so according to this principle, the homeopathic remedy *Coffea* is one remedy a homeopath might consider prescribing for people with these symptoms. 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 they are non-toxic.

“Homeopathic treatment has an excellent safety record<sup>1</sup> and because homeopathic medicines are so highly diluted, they are suitable for use during pregnancy”

## 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.

## Is homeopathic treatment safe for pregnant women?

During pregnancy some women choose to live with the discomfort of minor complaints such as morning sickness or heartburn, rather than seek treatment, because they are concerned about the possible effects of conventional medicines on their unborn child. However, as only minute amounts of active ingredients are used in the preparation of homeopathic medicines (often called 'remedies'), they can be used in situations such as pregnancy, when the use of conventional drugs would be inadvisable. Homeopathic treatment has an excellent safety record<sup>1</sup> and can be used whilst breast feeding, as well as for babies and children.

“Your homeopath will be able to advise you and your partner on the use of remedies during labour.”

## The role of homeopathy in pregnancy

Homeopaths provide consultations for women with minor pregnancy-related conditions such as nausea, backache and constipation, as well as more severe pregnancy-induced symptoms. You may also wish to use homeopathy for emotional changes you are experiencing during this exciting but challenging time in your life. Homeopathy can also be used for health problems which are unrelated to your pregnancy such as allergies,<sup>2</sup> hay fever<sup>3</sup> or insomnia.<sup>4</sup> Women with pre-existing health problems such as these may have to stop their usual conventional medication when they became pregnant, so homeopathic treatment can be a useful alternative.

“As well as physical symptoms related to your pregnancy, you may also wish to use homeopathy for emotional changes you are experiencing during this exciting but challenging time in your life.”

## Treating yourself with homeopathic medicines?

You can use some homeopathic remedies at home for minor conditions which develop during pregnancy. Ask a registered homeopath for further information or find your nearest class or seminar on this subject. There are a number of good books available on this subject which may interest you, such as:

\* *Homeopathy for Mother and Baby: Pregnancy, Birth and the Post Natal Year*, by Miranda Castro RSHom, Homeopathic Supply Company (April 2005)

\* *Homeopathic Medicines for Pregnancy and Childbirth* by Richard Moskowitz MD, North Atlantic Books, US (April 1993)

These home-prescribing books give guidance on using homeopathic medicines to treat common minor complaints such as morning sickness, piles and heartburn. However if your symptoms are severe or chronic (persistent), consult a general practitioner, registered homeopath or your midwife. If you are already undergoing a course of homeopathic treatment, it is advisable to check with your homeopath before prescribing for yourself, even for minor conditions.

## Homeopathy during labour

There are homeopathic medicines which appear to be effective in helping during childbirth.<sup>5</sup> Your homeopath can advise you and your partner on the use of remedies in labour and recommend a homeopathic labour kit for this purpose. Alternatively you may wish to ask your homeopath if they are able to attend the birth.

## Homeopathy after childbirth

Women seek homeopathic treatment for a variety of problems during the post-natal period – both physical symptoms such as painful wounds or sore nipples, and emotional symptoms such as anger or weepiness associated with the ‘baby blues’. There are also homeopathic medicines available for minor symptoms your baby may be experiencing, such as teething pains or nappy rash, as well as more serious problems. If you are considering homeopathic treatment for your baby, we advise you to consult a registered homeopath and to see our leaflet ‘Homeopathy for Babies and Children’ for further guidance.

## How do I find a 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](http://www.homeopathy-soh.org) or contact the Society office on 0845 450 6611.

## What about seeing my doctor or midwife?

It is strongly recommended that you maintain your relationship with your GP, midwife and other healthcare professionals you are currently working with. 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.

\* This does not apply to Registered members practising overseas. For further information, please visit our website.

Other leaflets available include:

- Homeopathy Simply Explained
- Homeopathy for Babies and Children
- Homeopathy for Men
- Homeopathy for Stress, Anxiety and Depression
- Homeopathy and the Menopause

For a copy of these leaflets please contact the office at

The Society of Homeopaths  
11 Brookfield, Duncan Close, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6WL  
Tel: 0845 450 6611/01604 817890 Fax: 0845 450 6622  
email: [info@homeopathy-soh.org](mailto:info@homeopathy-soh.org) [www.homeopathy-soh.org](http://www.homeopathy-soh.org)

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

## References

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The Society of Homeopaths  
11 Brookfield, Duncan Close, Moulton Park  
Northampton NN3 6WL  
  
Tel. 0845 450 6611 / 01604 817 890 Fax. 0845 450 6622  
email: [info@homeopathy-soh.org](mailto:info@homeopathy-soh.org)  
[www.homeopathy-soh.org](http://www.homeopathy-soh.org)  
Private Limited Company  
Company Registration Number 2036485