

## What is homœopathy

Homœopathy is a complete system of medicine. It is becoming popular again but it has been in world-wide use for nearly two hundred years.

The Royal Family has used it for generations. People suffering from all kinds of illnesses, from depression to arthritis, migraine to ulcers, and now the more 'modern' illnesses including AIDS and ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis), can be helped by homœopathy to regain their health.

Good homœopathy will not just drive away the symptoms but help the patient deal with the cause of the illness and regain good health.

Homœopaths aim to help their patients achieve freedom from limitations in their lives, and, ideally, to reach a level of health where they are no longer dependent on any medicine or therapy.

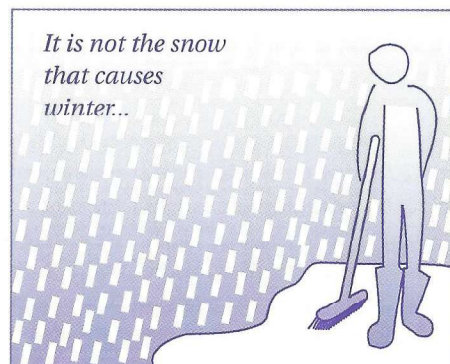
## Homœopathy is holistic medicine

The holistic approach to medicine takes a wider view of illness, a wider view of the causes of disease and the ways in which people express their illness individually.

Paracelsus, a 16th century philosopher and physician, said, 'Those who merely study and treat the effects of disease are like those who imagine that they can drive away the winter by brushing the snow from the door. It is not the snow that causes winter, but the winter that causes the snow.'

Homœopaths do not treat physical, emotional and mental or even spiritual illnesses separately, but regard them as intimately connected, since all are aspects of the whole of the patient's suffering.

When starting homœopathic treatment, the patient may not realize the relevance of some of the questions being asked. It may appear that the homœopath is interested in matters which have little to do with the particular complaint about which the patient is most concerned.



Homœopaths understand that symptoms of illness are evidence of the body's natural and automatic efforts to heal itself and these clues are used to guide them when prescribing a homœopathic remedy.

In homœopathy more of these clues are used than in orthodox medicine, so the patient may be asked questions about all sorts of apparently minor deviations from health and about character and personality traits, in order to arrive at a clear understanding of the whole picture of the patient's state of health. Before prescribing, the homœopath wants to have a complete overview of the patient. The first consultation can take as long as two hours.

A remedy is then prescribed for that individual patient, not merely for his or her disease but for the person's whole state. Thus homœopathy is truly holistic. This fundamental principle of homœopathy, that of the individual prescription, explains why two patients with apparently similar illnesses may be treated with a different remedy. In other words, two patients might have headaches but the way they have their headaches can be different, their overall state of health can be different, the way they cope with life can be different and so on. To go back to the example from Paracelsus, you cannot drive away the whole illness by brushing the headache from the door!

## Treating like with like, or the Law of Similars

Homœopathic remedies are prescribed according to the Law of Similars. This law states, 'That which makes sick shall heal'. This means that the symptoms caused by an overdose (too much) of a substance are the symptoms that can also be cured with a small dose of that substance.

For instance, we know that when cutting a strong onion we often experience an acrid runny nose, a particular soreness in the throat and stinging, runny eyes; so a homœopath will prescribe *Allium cepa* (the homœopathic remedy made from onion) for the patient who has a cold and bad throat with these particular symptoms.

Homœopaths sometimes simplify the Law of Similars by saying that they treat 'like with like'. The name homœopathy comes from the same idea. It is derived from two Greek words, meaning 'similar + suffering'. The Law of Similars has been a part of medical practice at least since the time of classical Greece, but homœopathy as we know it today was first formulated two hundred years ago by Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, chemist and linguist.

## What are homœopathic remedies ?

The remedies which homœopaths use come from many different sources. Most are derived from plants, but minerals, metals and some poisons which have been used medicinally for generations are also used.

After initial preparation of the raw material the remedies are made by serial dilution and succussion (vigorous shaking) in a solution of alcohol and water. This is done a few (three to four) times or up to many thousands of times. The liquid dilution is then used itself as a remedy or soaked into tablets or granules for convenience.

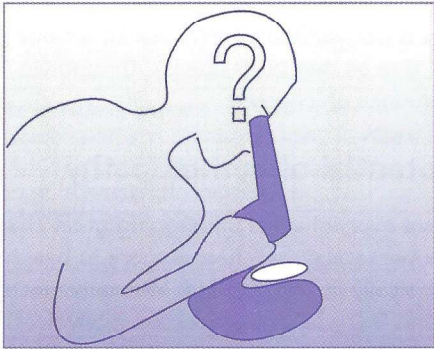
The diluted remedies are described as being 'potentized', in recognition of the dynamic healing power they can stimulate.



## How do homœopathic remedies work ?

Frequently the dilution is so great that no chemical trace of the original substance remains but, if no chemical trace remains, how do the remedies work?

There is abundant proof that the remedies do work but homœopaths and scientists have yet to discover exactly why they work.



*Homœopaths and scientists have yet to discover why the remedies work*

A precise answer is likely to be found outside the chemistry laboratory in the field of physics, especially electro-magnetism. The process of dilution and succussion apparently imprints the characteristic energy pattern, or blueprint, of the original substance onto the water in which it is diluted. This may be likened to the transmission of television signals, where the original scene is converted into an electro-magnetic energy pattern (a signal) which can then be broadcast to your receiver.

A homœopathic remedy acts as a signal which energizes or stimulates the body's self-healing powers, mobilizing the defence systems and working on the mental, emotional and physical aspects of the body.

## Homœopathy is gentle and subtle, or the principle of the minimum dose

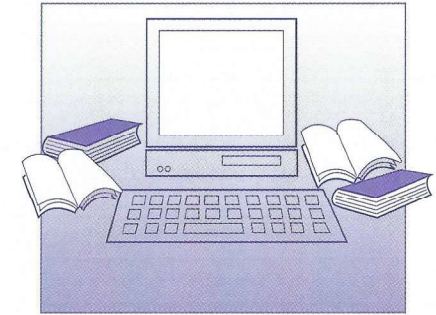
In homœopathy, only one remedy (or signal) is used at a time. Just as a television reproduces only the programme to which it is tuned, so a sick person is very sensitive to, or 'tuned-in' to, the correct remedy and only a minute stimulus from the right signal (or remedy) is required. This is sometimes called the principle of the minimum dose. The idea is to cure with the minimum amount of medicine and the minimum of intervention.

It is the body's energy which is influenced rather than its chemical balance, and the remedies do not cause side effects, as there is no chemical trace to accumulate in the body's tissues. For the same reasons it is not possible to take an overdose of homœopathic medicine in the same way as in orthodox medicine (orthodox medicine works on a chemical level).

Homœopathic medicines are not therefore intrinsically dangerous. Nonetheless, they are clearly capable of stimulating the body's reactive forces powerfully and should be treated with respect.

## Research but no experiments on animals

Homœopathic remedies are tested on people, not on animals. Groups of volunteers under supervision take a safe dose, of a substance prepared as a homœopathic remedy, repeatedly over a period of time until they produce a range of symptoms. These symptoms of 'the proving' are carefully recorded. Additional information on the action of many homœopathic remedies has been gathered for over two hundred years, from clinical experience, and all the information is recorded precisely in two types of homœopathic reference book, the materia medica, and the repertory, as well as on computer.



*Homœopaths record information in books and on computers*

This information is then used to prescribe a remedy for a patient with the same symptoms, according to the Law of Similars (that which makes sick shall heal).

There is much precision involved both in testing remedies and prescribing them. Collective experience reinforces the understanding of their curative action and, because of the way in which they are prescribed, they are not made redundant (as are many chemical drugs) by 'new' or drug-resistant bacteria and viruses.

## Is homœopathy the same as vaccination?

The Law of Similars (that which makes sick shall heal) principle of homœopathy is often compared to vaccination. Vaccines introduce a small amount of the weakened virus or bacterium related to a disease into the body in order to raise the body's immune response against that disease. However, homœopathy is quite different because homœopathic remedies are extremely diluted and therefore no diseased material (biological or chemical trace) is introduced into the body.

Another fundamental difference is that a homœopathic prescription is specific to that particular patient and stimulates the body's immune system to be strengthened against all illness, not just a single disease.

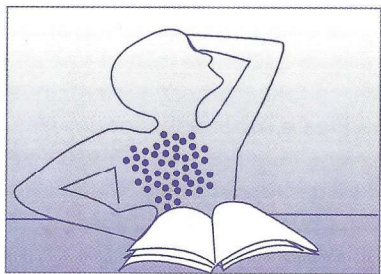


## How the remedies are given

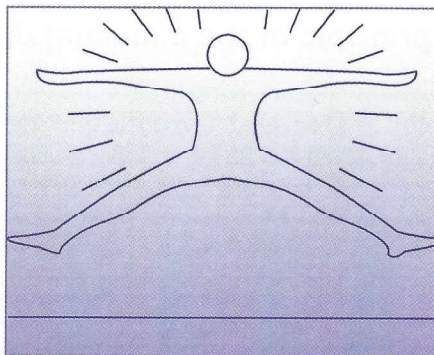
Remedies may be prescribed in a number of different strengths, or potencies as they are called. The lower potencies have been subjected to less dilution and succussion than the higher ones and are not, broadly speaking, as powerful and long-lasting in their effects. It is the low potencies such as the sixth (e.g. Arnica 6) which are to be found on sale in many chemists and health food shops. High potency remedies are usually prescribed by experienced qualified homœopaths.

Remedies can be prescribed in different ways. Sometimes they are given as a single dose (probably in a high potency) when it is likely that homœopath and patient will wait for a period of weeks to see the patient's response. A remedy can also be given in a lower potency, singly or repeated daily or more frequently.

The homœopath will choose the method to suit the patient and the nature of the illness. For instance, a person who has been ill for a long time and whose body has been physically damaged may need repeated doses of a remedy to stimulate the re-cuperative powers, whereas a young and basically healthy person may respond very quickly to a single high potency remedy. Individual patients also respond better to some methods than others; understanding this is part of the skill of the homœopath and explains why attempts to prescribe for oneself may prove ineffective.



*Homœopaths and scientists have yet to discover why the remedies work*



*..an immediate surge of well-being*

## The individual prescription and the individual response

After taking a homœopathic remedy, different patients respond in different ways. While some feel an immediate surge of well-being such as they have rarely felt before, others may suddenly feel very tired at first and need to rest for a day or so before improvement – this often happens with patients who have been under stress and who really do need to stop and re-cuperate. Sometimes the original symptoms temporarily become worse, or patients may experience a brief awareness of symptoms of illnesses they have had in the past and from which they have not truly recovered. All these reactions are indications that the remedy is working and that a process of self-healing has begun. Sometimes these responses are quite subtle and may pass unnoticed, while at other times they can be quite marked.

## What are self-healing powers?

Since medicine began it has been recognized that there is a capacity for self-healing within the human organism. In acute illnesses such as colds, chicken pox etc., the body naturally resists infection and, in time, gets better through mobilizing its own defences, helped by rest,

fresh air and the right food. In more long-lasting chronic illnesses, such as repeated migraine or depression, the body's vitality is often too depleted to do this without assistance. In these cases the right remedy will stimulate the body's self-healing powers to start the process of cure.

Over many years this self-healing power has been given various names in different cultures. It has been called prana in India, chi in China and the vital force in Europe. Researchers have attempted to localize it in what is called, in modern medical terminology, the immune system. It is not yet completely clear to anyone what exactly it is in us that heals disease, though we often see demonstrations of its power.

## The potential of homœopathy

Health care everywhere is undergoing great change as many people realize that there is more to health than being physically fit and well fed. Innovative techniques in surgery and 'miracle' drugs improve many lives but continuing chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, arthritis, cancer, allergies, emotional and mental disturbance, are the fate of many more.

Homœopathy has a great deal to offer. With this different approach to illness, a homœopath can often help patients with diseases generally considered incurable by conventional medicine.

## Homœopathy – medicine of the 21st century

Homœopathy also offers a method of maintaining health and preventing illness. It is a subtle but effective therapy that can correct small imbalances long before the appearance of the more serious symptoms which denote a particular disease. It is not necessary for a homœopath to wait for a conventional diagnosis before treatment can commence. Much illness can be 'nipped in the bud' and the patient swiftly restored to health before a more serious disease appears.

People who have had homœopathic treatment generally find that their state of health and well-being has improved. They are better able to resist infection and have a greater sense of stability and individual purpose in life. These improvements surely are steps towards real health.

### For further information about homœopathy :

There are a number of good books available such as:

*Homœopathy, Medicine for the New Man,*  
by George Vithoulkas, Thorsons.

*Homœopathy, Natural Medicine for the Whole Person,*  
by Peter Adams, Element.

*Practical Homœopathy, A Complete Guide to Home Treatment,*  
by Beth MacEoin, Bloomsbury.

*The Complete Homœopathy Handbook,*  
by Miranda Castro, Macmillan.

A detailed book list is available on request.

### How do I find a good homœopath?

To find a good homœopath consult the Register of the Society of Homœopaths. All homœopaths registered with the Society practise in accordance with a Code of Ethics and Practice, have professional insurance, and have passed stringent academic and clinical assessments before being admitted to the Register.


It is important that you feel happy with the manner and approach of your homœopath. In that way you will be more able to give your homœopath the information needed to prescribe well for you.

Other leaflets available include:

- *Homœopathy and Foreign Travel.*
- *Homœopathy in Pregnancy and Childbirth.*
- *Homœopathy Simply Explained.*
- *Vaccination, an information leaflet for parents.*

## BACKin2HEALTH

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