

## What is homoeopathy?

Homoeopathy is a unique system of medicine that aims to promote good health by stimulating the body's own natural healing ability. It is a non-drug therapy based on the principle of "like cures like".

## How does homoeopathy work?

The remedies are highly diluted substances that work on the body's own healing system, treating the person, not the disease. They do not try to mask symptoms, but instead stimulate the body's own natural healing energy, encouraging it naturally and safely to a good health outcome.

## Benefits of homoeopathy .....

Homoeopathy is rapidly growing in popularity as more and more people seek out safer more natural health options. It offers a holistic approach that takes into account a person's total health needs. All the family, from the youngest to the oldest, can use homoeopathic remedies. They are easy to administer and have a neutral taste, which makes them easy to take especially by children. They will not interfere with any other form of medication, nor will they cause side effects. Homoeopathic remedies are so gentle they can be safely used during pregnancy and by those already taking orthodox medication or suffering from conditions that restrict the use of some medications. As they contain absolutely no drugs, they are the ideal solution for sports people.

## Where does homoeopathy come from?

While the principles of homoeopathy were in use by the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, it is the German physician, Dr Samuel Hahnemann, who is credited with the discovery of homoeopathy over 200 years ago. Disillusioned with the harmful medical practices of his time, Hahnemann undertook study and experimentation, which led to the development of modern homoeopathy. This natural form of healing is acknowledged by the World Health Organisation as a valid form of health care and is widely practised in the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States of America and many other countries throughout the world.

## Like cures like

Homoeopathy is based on the principle that 'like cures like'. When Dr Hahnemann found himself querying the action of Cinchona (Quinine) in its treatment of malaria, he tested the drug on himself and found it produced symptoms very similar to the condition it was being used to treat. From this and other similar evidence, Hahnemann was convinced that medicines which brought on symptoms of disease in healthy subjects could then be used in minute doses as treatment for the disease itself.

Dr Hahnemann set about a systematic testing or 'proving' of substances on healthy volunteers so that he could document the symptoms found when using the medicine. He then matched remedy symptoms with patient's symptoms to arrive at the appropriate medicine. For example, homoeopathically prepared Apis from the bee may be used to treat bee stings or Coffea (coffee) may be used to treat insomnia.

## The minimum dose

In Dr Hahnemann's time it was accepted practice to administer large doses of medicine to patients, often with unfortunate results. Hahnemann wished to avoid these toxic reactions and he began to experiment by diluting the medicines in the belief that he would increase the safety of the medicine without losing its effectiveness. To his surprise he found that as the remedies became more dilute, they became more potent in their therapeutic effect, provided they were diluted in a specific way. This dilution process is termed **potentisation** and involves vigorous shaking or **succussion** at each dilution level.

## Homoeopathic potencies

When you see a homoeopathic remedy you will notice a number after its name. This number represents the potency, or the number of times the remedy has been diluted and succussed. The most common potency used in New Zealand is the 30<sup>th</sup> centesimal - usually shown as 30c.

## Making a homoeopathic remedy

The remedies used in homoeopathy come from many sources but the majority are prepared from plant, animal or mineral base material. Homoeopathic remedies are so highly diluted that only a minute amount of the original substance remains after potentisation.

The preparation of homoeopathic remedies involves specialised processes as outlined in Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia. To ensure that you receive a quality assured product ask your retailer whether the manufacturer of the remedies you want to buy has in place internationally recognised and independently audited quality standards. A GMP

licence or ISO accreditation, which are both internationally, recognised and independently audited, offer some level of comfort that the products will be consistently produced to those standards or above.

### **In what forms are homoeopathic remedies available?**

Homoeopathic remedies are available in a wide variety of forms. The best remedy form for you and/or your family will ultimately be a matter of personal preference.

Liquid remedies (i.e. liquid and oral sprays) are manufactured using a small amount of ethyl alcohol as a preservative in a water base. The quantity of alcohol per dose is so small as to be of no consequence. Liquid remedies are supplied in a special bottle with an integrated dropper or in oral spray form. Oral sprays offer increased absorption and the fastest possible speed of action of the medicinal dose forms. They also provide ease of use as well as a consistent and highly accurate dose.

Tablets are manufactured by using a base of lactose (milk sugar). Tablets should be held in the mouth for a few seconds and then chewed before being swallowed. They are usually safe for diabetics, but not suitable for anyone with lactose intolerance. Professional advice should be sought if in doubt.

Pillules are manufactured by using a base of sucrose (sugar). They are not suitable for diabetics.

Powders are manufactured using a base of lactose powder and are supplied as a number of single dose powders in a box. Powders have been largely superseded by the liquid form but if required they can be specifically ordered from most homoeopathic manufacturers.

If the remedy form you require is not available, ask your local pharmacist or health store if it could be ordered in.

### **External preparations**

Although essentially herbal in nature, there are a number of very useful external or topical preparations available in cream, ointment, gel, lotion or oil forms. Some of these combine homoeopathic potencies with herbal tinctures.

### **Different types of homoeopathic remedies**

Homoeopathic remedies are generally available as either single or combination remedies. Single remedies are often referred to as 'classical' remedies and it is necessary to have a considerable knowledge of the principles and practice of homoeopathy to be able to use them effectively. Some classical remedies, such as Arnica, are useful to treat wide a variety of conditions, these are known as polycrests.

Combination or 'Complex' homoeopathic remedies contain combinations of a number of individual classical remedies and have been carefully formulated to target many common ailments, conditions, illnesses and injuries. Combination remedies have been in traditional use for over a hundred years and are an acknowledged form of treatment. They improve the accessibility of homoeopathy to the general public by identifying remedies for generalised symptoms.

Following latest European research into homoeopathic potencies, some homoeopathic remedy manufacturers have developed a series of classical remedies utilising the potency chord approach. In New Zealand, Naturo Pharm's Classical plus range has been manufactured using a number of carefully selected potencies of the same remedy to produce what is called a potency chord. Such remedies, because they work on a number of different healing levels in the body at the same time, produce a faster and more effective response.

### **Can I treat myself with homoeopathy?**

Together with the basic principles of a healthy living, diet, exercise, hygiene and play, homoeopathic remedies may be used by people of all ages and medical conditions to support the body's natural response to illness and accidents.

After developing a common condition, like a cold sore or a sore throat, we do not generally go and visit a specialist healthcare practitioner, like a GP or a Homoeopath, immediately. Often our first port of call is our local pharmacy or health store. In these environments we are offered a plethora of therapeutic product options - homoeopathic remedies amongst them. Safe, natural and with no side effects homeopathic remedies are an obvious choice.

The broad-spectrum combination homoeopathic remedies, such as the Naturo Pharm "Complex" range of products, offer easy self-selection for many common conditions. Specific product ranges also exist for women's problems, maternity, baby and the active sports person.

Although self-selected homoeopathic remedies can be used to treat many common conditions, if symptoms persist your healthcare professional should be consulted. Many health problems may also benefit from a consultation with a qualified homoeopath.

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