

**It's a wet and windy Winter's afternoon and your child has just come home from school looking tired and seems a bit out of sorts. Later that evening, after dinner, they develop a runny nose, start sneezing and are looking for some attention. When you give them a cuddle you notice that they feel a bit hot. You run them a hot bath and then settle them into bed. A few hours later you can hear them coughing. It is the start of a long night for everyone in the house.**

Winter is the main time for colds, coughs and sore throats, as well as the dreaded Influenza. These are common problems, not only for infants and young children, but also for adults. Usually these conditions are self-limiting, but when one person in the household is up all night coughing or sneezing, blowing their nose, and having chills and sweats often no-one gets a good night's sleep. Stress, from lack of sleep, can lower the body's resistance to disease and suddenly other household members start to develop similar symptoms.

Generally, simple snuffly colds resolve by themselves but complicated colds and Influenza can take some time and may also lead to the development of chronic conditions. Simple self-limiting colds don't usually need professional treatment, and if you do seek out professional advice often you find that there really aren't many options to treat viral infections. So wouldn't it be nice to find an option that genuinely helps ease some of the symptoms?

There are an enormous number of products that are marketed to help with the symptoms of colds and the Influenza, but you might ask ...

- 1) *do they really help?;*
- 2) *what options are there that can be safely used with young children?; and*
- 3) *what can you take if you are pregnant?*

Many seemingly safe everyday preparations can present dangers for infants and young children. Some products are either not appropriate for infants and young children or cannot be used for extended periods. In a misguided attempt to get better quickly, sometimes people are tempted to use several different preparations at the same time, repeat the dosage too frequently or increase the dosage above recommended levels. Some products, that are suitable for adults, can be unsafe for children and sometimes product instructions are unclear or simply inadequate. People concerned about the effects of some over the counter allopathic options are looking for more natural and safer options to meet their everyday needs when it comes to dealing with Winter ills and chills. Unfortunately, not all "natural" products have high safety profiles either and some can be toxic if used inappropriately.

Fortunately, Homoeopathic Science has a comprehensive understanding of the preparation and use of many natural medicines. Homoeopathic remedies are ideal for coughs, colds and Influenza as they have an excellent safety profile, are easy to use, can be used by people of all ages, including pregnant women and can be used together with other medications and/or forms of treatment.

Homoeopathic remedies offer options for colds, coughs, sore throats, headaches, Influenza, aches and pains, fevers, diarrhoea, chilblains and many other problems that commonly occur during the Winter season. In the scenario set out in our opening paragraph, the following homoeopathically prepared oral remedies could be used: Bryonia to assist the body's natural response to the initial stages of the cold and Gelsemium for the run down tired feeling.

Globally, many health professionals, and people generally, are using Homoeopathic remedies for many types of colds and Influenza, for example, Aconite for colds following exposure to cold dry wind and Rhus Tox for colds following exposure to wet cold weather. Some Homoeopathic remedy manufacturers have even formulated combination homoeopathic remedies for common presentations of coughs, colds, sore throats and Influenza, making it easier to select and use appropriate remedies in these situations.

Generally, cold and Influenza symptoms change as the disease progresses and that can mean that any homoeopathic single remedy that is being given may need to be changed accordingly. Combination formulations have the benefit of providing a broad-spectrum approach. For some Winter conditions one single combination product may be all that is required throughout the entire progression of the illness. In more complicated conditions several different combination products may need to be used concurrently as the condition progresses. For example a combination product for diarrhoea may also be required along with a general cold combination product. Of course, not every situation can be attended successfully with over the counter products and if symptoms persist or worsen then professional guidance should always be sought.

The high safety profile of homoeopathy generally means that combination over the counter oral products can be used safely and confidently without the concerns associated with dosage, pharmacological interactions and unsuitability for infants and young children.

