

Homeopathy for Babies and Children

Introduction

Homeopathy is ideal for babies and children as it is a gentle yet highly effective system of medicine. The mildly sweet pills, powders or liquids are easy to dispense, being more palatable than many conventional medicines. The highly diluted natural substances that form homeopathic remedies mean that they are safe to use in the very young, including newborn babies. More than that, homeopathy can raise the immunity of your children to help deal with illness as they grow ⁽¹⁾.

Homeopathy does not only help when your child is ill. It can help children who are angry, unhappy or frightened; who accept change with difficulty or who suffer symptoms during their natural growth and development.

What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine that has been practised in Europe for almost 250 years. Homeopathic remedies are made from plants, animal substances, minerals and salts and are diluted to such a high extent that few or no molecules remain in the medicine. They work at an energetic level, stimulating the body's own healing abilities – rather like a message to the immune system – and are prescribed on the principle of 'like cures like'. A good example is where the remedy *Allium*

cepa (onion) is prescribed for hay fever when the eyes are stinging and hot, which is similar to when you cut up an onion!

What complaints can you safely treat at home?

Homeopathy works fast with children because they are usually full of vitality. Acute complaints, such as fevers, can be resolved rapidly using the right remedies, often avoiding the need for conventional medicines. Babies also tend to respond quickly to homeopathic treatment – there are remedies for colic, teething and nappy rash, for example.

The suggestions below are for minor complaints; if your child's symptoms are severe or chronic (on-going or recurrent), consult a registered homeopath and/or your GP. If your child is already undergoing homeopathic treatment, it is best to check with the homeopath before prescribing at home.

Teething – *Chamomilla 30c* – inconsolable and angry child

Colic – *Magnesium phos 30c* – baby doubles up in pain

Nappy rash – *Calendula 30c* and *Calendula* cream – soothing and antiseptic

Earache – *Pulsatilla 30c* – clingy child, greenish discharge from ear

Fever – *Aconite 30c* – sudden fevers after getting chilled;

Belladonna 30c – very high temperatures with a red face;

Gelsemium 30c – slow fevers with chills, bone pain and fatigue

Coughs and colds – *Bryonia 30c* – miserable, irritable, better for keeping still;

Pulsatilla 30c – plenty of yellow/green mucous; clingy and upset

Vomiting – *Nux vomica 30c* – bilious and bad tempered;

Arsenicum album 30c – after bad food, with diarrhoea and restlessness

Bumps and bruises – *Arnica 30c* – also for shock and exhaustion

The remedies suggested above can be purchased over the counter in most chemists and health shops, as well as some supermarket chains.

Childhood vaccination

Healthy children bounce back from acute illnesses and may even experience a growth spurt or developmental leap immediately afterwards. Homeopaths specialise in boosting your child's natural immunity. They work towards a different health model from the conventional one, which aims to increase "herd immunity". Every child is special and has their own physical and emotional way of dealing with disease. This knowledge requires individual treatment tailored to your child's needs, which homeopathy provides.

The Society acknowledges that there is much anecdotal and scientific evidence to support the arguments presented for and against vaccination. Our members aim to support parents in

making rational, informed decisions on the short and long-term implications of vaccination. Whether you decide to opt for the jabs or not, homeopathic treatment can improve natural immunity or lessen the chance of side-effects from vaccination.

More serious complaints

Complaints that need a proper course of treatment include cradle-cap, recurrent vomiting, sleep problems, digestive trouble, recurrent infections, asthma and eczema, menstrual problems and acne in teenagers, as well as behavioural problems such as attention deficit disorder, temper tantrums, severe shyness and anxiety. In children with such complaints, a full case history is needed for the homeopath to select an individual treatment for your child,

Homeopaths can help children on long-term medication. There is no doubt that asthma is on the increase ⁽²⁾. A cough with wheezing that will not go away may be diagnosed as asthma and before you realise it, your child is put on medication. With support from their GP, homeopathy can help children reduce or come off their conventional drugs.

What will my doctor think?

GPs increasingly welcome the contribution complementary therapies can make – 70% feel they should be freely available on the NHS ⁽³⁾.

In recent years, they have been discouraged from over-prescribing medicines such as inhaled steroids for

asthma and hayfever ⁽⁴⁾ and are encouraged not to over-prescribe antibiotics for colds and coughs. They have been advised not to prescribe certain anti-depressants to the under-18s ⁽⁵⁾.

Concerns about long-term damage to the growing child, coupled with the worry of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria, make homeopathy a safer option. Homeopaths are keen to work alongside other specialists in the health field. The best way forward for all children is to improve their immune system naturally.

References

- (1) Belon P, Cumps J, Ennis M, et al, Inhibition of human basophil degranulation by successive histamine dilutions: results of a European multi-centre trial, *Inflamm Res* 1999; 48 & Saite-Laudy J, Modulation of allergen and anti-IgE induced human basophil activation by serial histamine dilutions. *Inflamm Res* 2000; 49
- (2) *Weekly incidence of asthma episodes up 6% in children in last 25yrs. National Asthma Campaign, Audit Sept. 2001* Asthma UK.
- (3) *GP Magazine*, 12 November 2004
- (4) Systemic adverse effects may occur with long-term use of inhaled corticosteroids. Department of Health website 2005.
- (5) Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are not suitable for the under-18's. Department of Health website 2005.

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