

# Canadian College of Homeopathic Medicine

Offices & Clinic: 1881 Yonge St, Suite 500 Toronto, ON M4S 3C4 Tel. (416) 966-2350 Fax. (416) 966-1724

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## **What is Homeopathy?**

Homeopathy is a system of natural medicine that has been in use worldwide for over 200 years. It is recognized by the World Health Organization as the second most widely used therapeutic system in the world. Millions of people benefit from homeopathy.

The name homeopathy, coined by its originator, Samuel Hahnemann, is derived from the Greek words for ‘similar suffering’. Hahnemann 1755 – 1843, born in Meissen, Germany was a medical doctor and a chemist who became disenchanted with harsh and ineffective medical interventions of the time. Through rigorous scientific experimentation and the application of inductive reasoning, Hahnemann created the homeopathic system of medicine. His careful observations led him to uncover the laws of healing found in nature upon which homeopathy is based.

Homeopathy is founded on two main principles, the first being ‘like cures like’, which means that a substance capable of producing certain symptoms in a healthy person, can be used to treat those same symptoms in a case of disease.

In Homeopathy we trust that the body will always be using its most effective healing response to a given situation. By using medicines which can stimulate a similar healing response, we boost the body’s own vitality, and work with it, instead of against it.

The second main principle in Homeopathy is that only ‘the minimum dose’ should be employed, in order to avoid the side effects. This principle is based upon the understanding that homeopathic medicines are stimuli for healing vital force (qi or chi or life force) and that we need only give enough to produce a response. This ensures that treatment will be as gentle and natural as it is healing and effective.

## **What to Expect From Your Homeopathic Treatment with a CCHM Student**

In homeopathy, we use minute doses of plant, mineral and animal substances to stimulate the body to heal itself. Each stage of treatment should be carefully monitored, so please be aware of and make note of any changes you observe in your physical, mental and emotional health during your treatment. A homeopath selects the most appropriate medicine based on the individual's specific symptoms and personal level of health. With homeopathy, we are treating each person as an individual to encourage healing which is in line, or parallel to, the body’s own attempts at cure. This can sometimes result in an initial, mild amplification of symptoms, which will usually ease within a day or so. In the rare case that an aggravation is persistent or troubling or you have any questions at all, please your homeopathic student, during normal business hours. If you are experiencing an immediate medical emergency, please call 911 or visit your local emergency department.

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## HOW TO REPORT SYMPTOMS

Always describe the beginning of your complaints (or those of your child, if the child is the patient); state just how they began as well as the changes that may have taken place since.

- a) What were the sensations or difficulties you felt when the problem first began?
- b) Did they come on quickly or gradually?
- c) What was happening in your life just prior to the onset of the problem?
- d) How has the problem changed over time?

Mention all previous illnesses. A complete history of your health is important, even of such things as skin diseases, children's diseases and their after-effects; tell of fevers, colds, flu, sores, ulcers, etc; also injuries, if any. Tell their location and what treatment was used.

Tell, if you can, all treatments that have been used.

Describe all mental or "nervous" feelings and conditions, such as likes and dislikes, desires, fears, timidity, hurried feeling, lack of interest, persistent thoughts, discouragements, discontent, over-conscientiousness whether critical, irritable, easily confused, aversion to business or work, absentmindedness, changeable mood, difficulty of concentration, dullness of mind, whether easily startled or starting from sleep or when falling asleep, or from noise or being touched; whether annoyed by noise or talk of others or by children; whether easily affected by bad news; whether better or worse from mental exertion, or when occupied; whether sensitive to offense or contradiction. Describe the state of mind as to the future or to threatening troubles; attitude of mind as to associates and relatives, and the effects of same, and whether better alone or with company. Tell the peculiarities of memory; whether desire to be silent or to talk much. Tell of any emotional shocks, frights, disappointment, etc. of the present or past; how affected by a room full of people. **Which of these have appeared or gotten worse since the onset of your illness?**

Appetite: tell what is craved or disliked, such as salt, sweets, fats, sour, spicy things, eggs, etc. Also, thirst for much, little or nothing, and what drink is preferred.

Do the symptoms remain the same or do they change character or shift from one place to another?

Describe all pain; what kind, what it feels like and whether constant, changeable, or periodical; also in what direction it may go or extend, if any; whether it comes slowly or suddenly and how it leaves.

Write the time of day, night, month or season that you are better or worse, whether better before or after eating, sleeping, moving, resting, when occupied, when thinking of your complaint, etc. Write just what things or conditions make you worse and whatever relieves the pain or sickness. This is important.

Just how are you affected by different kinds of weather, by cold, heat, dryness, storm coming, thunderstorms, frost, cloudiness, seashore, low or high altitudes, etc. ?

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Sensations are important. State just what kind, where, at what time they are better or worse, and whatever makes them better or worse. Tell **all** sensations, however slight or peculiar such as “ It feels as if...” and so on.

In skin, scalp or nail problems, tell the exact locations, colour, whether dry or moist, thick or thin, scaly, crippled, pimply, with or without matter, warts or growth, appearance of surrounding skin; whether itching, burning, worse or better from scratching, and what else makes it better such as heat, heat of bed, cold, exercise, wool, water, etc. Tell of any enlarged veins, etc.

Describe discharges of any part, whether slight or heavy, the colour, odour, thick or thin, gluey or sticky, causing redness or burning, rawness, colour of stain; and what makes it better or worse, and when.

Urine: whether pain before, during or after passing, colour, odour, appearance, quantity, sediment, frequency, urgency (if hurried).

Bowel condition: colour, odour, hard, dry, large, pasty, bloody, frothy, slimy, thin, watery, slender, flat, etc. How often, at what times worse or better, or how affected by certain circumstances; whether difficult, incomplete, urging without result or stool slips back in, prevented by spasm of rectum, anything else peculiar.

Women are to give age at first menstrual period, how far apart then and now; whether pain during, before or after, then and now, and where; also where the pain may extend to, as to the back, sides, groins, thighs, etc. What kind of pain (see No. 7), what relieves or aggravates, how often the pains come. Tell whether there have been miscarriages. Tell how you feel in general, before, during and after the periods; sex desire or aversion, whether intercourse is normal, unsatisfactory or painful.

Men are to give particulars as to male genitals, if anything is not normal, whether any former disease or abuse; emissions, etc.

Tell as to the effects of heat, cold, bathing, lying down, beginning of motion, worse or better from perspiring, from lying, whether lassitude, weakness or weariness, and how affected by activity.

Similia similibus curentur (let likes be cured by likes) implies strict individualization. In other words, the curative remedy is the one that has produced in healthy human beings symptoms most similar to those which distinguish the patient from all others suffering from the same ailment.

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## How are Homeopathic Remedies Prepared?

Remedies are prepared from diluted substances, such as plants, minerals, or animal products, which are repeatedly diluted and succussed (vigorously shaken). As this standardized method of dilution and succession continues, the remedy becomes more powerful. This process is called potentization and it is the hallmark of all homeopathic remedies.

## How Do the Remedies Work?

Although there is no current scientific explanation for how these remedies work, homeopaths believe that within every living person there exists a force, a life energy called the “vital force” (qi or chi or life force) that is responsible for maintaining balance and health in the body, mind and emotions. This idea is ancient and universal, and can be found in every culture and medical system throughout the world (except for modern medicine which ignores this concept). From this point of view, illness can be understood as resulting from an imbalance within the organism, an imbalance of the vital force. The symptoms of a disease, the complaints that we suffer are expressions of that imbalance.

Hahnemann theorized that giving a homeopathic medicine to a patient with a “similar” illness was like giving a tiny push to the imbalanced vital force, stimulating the body’s natural defence mechanisms to put the organism back into balance and heal the disease.

Homeopathy treats people, not diagnoses. When a person is ill, that illness has a unique pattern. Everyone tends to get sick in a way that corresponds to the heredity, environmental factors, stresses and weaknesses that are unique to that individual. As a result, five different people with flu might require five different homeopathic medicines, because they have five different sets of symptoms. Treatment is thus individualized based on the unique way that each of those five people are ill with the flu. The homeopath is not so much trying to eliminate the symptoms, but rather find the right medicine to stimulate the body’s healing powers so that health is restored.

## How Is Homeopathy Different From Modern Medicine?

The conventional doctor views disease as being localized in organs or tissues. Thus arthritis is understood as a joint disease, neuritis is a nerve disease, angina is a heart disease. The treatment involves one or more drugs for each different problem, resulting in multiple drug therapy for patients with more than one complaint. The homeopath, on the other hand, views a person as a physical, emotional, and mental unity, so that all symptoms are considered to be part of one disease process. Thus, the homeopath would treat a patient with many complaints with only one medicine at a time.

Modern medicine tends to view symptoms as something bothersome to be gotten rid of or as a problem to be controlled. In contrast, the homeopath has great interest in the patient’s symptoms because (s)he realizes that they are the organism’s only way of expressing the underlying disease. Each symptom is an intelligent expression of a complex living system out of balance. Thus, the homeopath listens carefully to everything the patient says. The patient is encouraged to speak freely about any problem, complaint or symptom no matter how small or peculiar. Nothing is unimportant. It is by paying attention to the

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totality of symptoms, physical, emotional and mental, that the homeopath can discover the best medicine for the patient.

Another important difference between homeopathy and modern medicine has to do with the way medicines act. Modern drugs are said to have “therapeutic effects” and “side effects”. The “therapeutic effects” are desirable and result from and act on one or more organs to control, modify or suppress symptoms. The “side effects” of drugs result from their undesirable actions on body tissues. These unwanted effects are just as much a part of a drug’s action as the “therapeutic effect”. Homeopathic medicines differ in that they do not act on particular organs or tissues. Homeopathic medicines act on the entire organism to stimulate healing. There are no “side effects” with a homeopathic medicine. Sometimes remedies may result in an initial, mild amplification of symptoms, which will usually ease within a day or so. In rare cases symptoms may be aggravated.

## **Does Lifestyle Play a Role in Treatment?**

Yes! A healthy lifestyle is very important in any program designed to improve your health. Many health problems are caused by unhealthy living patterns and will only be helped by changing lifestyle. Also, homeopathic medicines are most effective if the patient is taking good care of himself or herself. A healthy diet, regular exercise, plenty of sleep and a balance of work and relaxation are an important foundation for treatment.

## **How to Take a Homeopathic Remedy & Work with Your Homeopathic Student**

- One dose of a homeopathic remedy usually consists of two drops of liquid or two pellets (unless otherwise stated on your instructions from your homeopath) to be taken under the tongue. The mouth should be clean; that is, the mouth should be free of food, mints, gum, drink, etc.
- Please take your remedy away from food, at least 20 minutes before, or an hour after any food or beverage is consumed.
- In sensitive patients, homeopathic remedies can sometimes be antidoted by coffee and other strong stimulants and odours in the air such as mint, menthol, tiger balm, essential oils, perfumes, etc. If you use aromatherapy at home, please open your remedy bottle in a separate room far away from the aromatic odours. Please try to avoid using any mint products while you are taking homeopathic remedies. This includes strong mint toothpaste, mint tea, eucalyptus chest rubs, mint lozenges, etc.
- Marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens and other psycho-active drugs have been known to antidote homeopathic medicines.
- If you think your remedy has been antidoted and is no longer active please bring it to your next appointment. If you think that your treatment has been antidoted please phone your homeopath at your earliest convenience during business hours to set up a follow up appointment.
- The pellets should not be handled too much or at all if possible. Touching the remedy may contaminate it. It is best to place the pellets directly into your mouth from the vial without letting your mouth come into contact with the lid. If you are taking a liquid remedy, do not let the dropper touch your tongue or mouth.
- Sunlight and extreme heat may affect the remedy. **KEEP IN A COOL, DARK, ODOURLESS PLACE.**

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- Please **DO NOT** put pellets back in the remedy bottle if they should spill out and fall on the floor. Please discard them.
- Please **DO NOT** reuse empty remedy bottles for another remedy or potency or for any other purpose.
- Please **DO NOT** store your remedy on or near a television, microwave, or other electromagnetic energy source.
- If you are taking your remedy from a glass or dish, please wash it out immediately afterward.
- Please contact your homeopath to make them aware if you are thinking of starting any new supplements or health treatments during the first couple of months of homeopathic treatment (medical emergencies excepted).
- Do **not** take any other homeopathic medicines while under treatment without first consulting your homeopath as they could interfere with his prescription, disrupting the case.
- Please follow your personal instructions carefully. If you have any questions or concerns about your homeopathic treatment, please contact your homeopathic student, during normal business hours. For a change in remedy, potency or posology, patients must always book a follow up consultation.
- Please do not ever put your health at risk! If you have a health emergency, please go to your medical doctor or nearest hospital immediately.