

Homeopathic Healthcare

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Homeopathic Remedies for Arthritis

The homeopathic treatment of chronic arthritis, whether osteoarthritis, rheumatoid or another form, is typically a complicated affair requiring the expertise of a professional homeopath. Such treatment can be quite effective. In most cases the evaluation of a patient with arthritis requires an assessment of the whole person — aspects of personality, stressors, general metabolic makeup, family history, other chronic health conditions, and so forth. In some instances, however, the local arthritic symptoms, symptoms limited to those of the joints themselves, point to the curative homeopathic remedy. The following remedies are some of the more frequently prescribed for such localized symptom indications. (Additionally, there are a number of nutritional and dietary measures that can be extremely helpful for arthritis; unfortunately space is lacking for me to cover these in this article.)

For self treatment of chronic conditions, I recommend individuals proceed slowly and carefully by beginning treatment with a low potency of the indicated remedy, namely 6C taken two to three times daily. Continue your regular allopathic medications if needed. Observe your response over a period of three to four weeks; it may take that long to begin to notice improvement. As long as improvement is continuing and no new symptoms appear, continue taking the remedy. Should you reach a point where all symptoms have subsided, stop the remedy. Resume taking it if and when symptoms begin to return. Should you notice the development of new symptoms or a worsening of existing symptoms while taking a remedy, it is best to discontinue it and wait to see if the symptoms subside; if they do subside, resume taking the remedy. Should the same symptoms recur, again discontinue the remedy. Such an eventuality means either that the remedy is wrong for you or that the multiple daily dosing is inappropriate in your case. Often the answer lies in taking the remedy in a higher potency less frequently; for example, one could take only a single dose of a 30C potency and observe the impact over a few weeks. If the remedy is correct, benefit will often be forthcoming within that time frame. (Occasionally the individual will experience a brief aggravation of symptoms after this dose, followed by improvement; if but a single dose is taken, such an aggravation will typically be brief (a few days) and harmless.) If improvement does not occur, considering trying a different remedy. If at any time a lengthy flare-up of symptoms occurs, please see your physician.

There are, of course, incurable cases of arthritis, instances where the damage to joints is too substantial to be reversed. These unfortunate patients usually must rely on surgical joint replacement for relief. The very best time to initiate homeopathic treatment of arthritis is very early in the course of the disease before joint damage occurs.

The remedies listed below are but a few of those helpful in arthritis cases.

Rhus toxicodendron (poison oak): Pain and stiffness. Stiffness is very characteristic. The pain is aggravated when at rest, with weather changes, especially to cold, damp; by cold, by initial motion (e.g., rising from a bed or a seat). The pains are helped by warmth, continued motion (once "warmed up"). Restlessness with the pain. Complaints are often left-sided.

Bryonia (wild hops): Pains are worse from the slightest motion, better after rest. Pains are also better from pressure or by lying on the painful side.

Ledum (marsh tea): Painful swelling relieved by cold applications and aggravated by warmth. Areas especially affected are the ankles, feet, ball of the first toe, and left shoulder and right hip together. "Rheumatism" starts in the legs and extends upwards.

Kali bichromicum (potassium bichromate): Periodic arthritis and arthritis alternating with other complaints (e.g., sinusitis, asthma, digestive disorders). Periodicity is often fixed; e.g., every spring or autumn, etc.). The pain is often in one small spot, and may wander to different sites and come and go suddenly; pain may occur every day at the same time; pain worse between 2-4 a.m..

Ruta (rue or herb-of-grace): Periosteal (lining of the bones) involvement is typical. It is especially useful for arthritis beginning after trauma (fracture, sprain, bruise). A "lame" feeling in the joints. Ankle and wrist are two special sites of involvement. *Ruta* can appear similar to *Rhus toxicodendron* with marked restlessness and frequent change of position. Leg pains on rising from sitting (as if broken). Back pain better lying on the back. Pains are better from motion, like *Rhus-tox*, but *Ruta* can become exhausted after walking.

Caulophyllum (blue cohosh): Arthritis in women, of the small joints, particularly the fingers, hands, toes, and sometimes the ankles. Pain and stiffness can alternate from one joint to another every minute. Small joint problems plus uterine difficulties are often seen in this remedy.

Colchicum (meadow saffron): Arthritis worse during warm, wet weather, although sometimes cold, damp weather can cause complaints. Worse with the change of seasons. The hands and fingers are mostly affected; the pains are worse from slight motion (like *Bryonia*). The *Colchicum* arthritis is often associated with other ailments; e.g., nephritis, blood in the urine, pericarditis. Aversion to the odor of eggs and fish is a strong symptom not infrequently seen.

Rhododendron (rhododendron): All symptoms are worse before a storm. This remedy also has a symptom picture similar to *Rhus toxicodendron*. Restlessness of the legs. Crosses legs in sleep.

Guaiacum (gum guaiacum): Rheumatic affections of the small joints, especially the wrists and fingers, worse from warmth, and better from cold applications.

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