

Homeopathic Healthcare
by George Guess, MD

Influenza: Its Homeopathic Treatment & Prevention

With influenza season once again upon us, I thought it might be helpful to re-visit a past article written on the homeopathic management of influenza. In the great influenza epidemic of 1918, homeopathic medicine demonstrated remarkable effectiveness. Mortality rates for patients under homeopathic treatment averaged 1.05% for this particularly devastating epidemic while mortality rates for those under the prevailing conventional treatment at that time averaged about 30%. Conventional medicine today has only slightly more to offer for the flu than it did in 1918.

Milder cases of influenza can be benefited by the following natural medicine suggestions below. These methods can successfully reduce both the severity and duration of influenza symptoms; for example, limiting an anticipated five to seven day illness to one of two to three days. For more severe flu symptoms, homeopathic medicine, when properly selected, is remarkably effective, often producing significant relief within hours.

Dietary, Nutritional and Botanical Suggestions

Consume no alcohol or sugar.

Drink plenty of fluids, avoiding concentrated juices such as orange juice. All fruit juices should be diluted with water. (Sugar competes with vitamin C for transport into white blood cells compromising immune function.)

Vitamin C in high doses, about 1 gram every 2 hours until the infection has subsided. (Powdered mineral ascorbate C is preferred to avoid abdominal cramping and gas.) Children: 250 mg three-four times a day. If stomach upset or diarrhea occurs, reduce dosage of vitamin C.

Vitamin A in high doses for 3 to 5 days IF you have no liver disease and weigh over 120 pounds; as much as 300 - 400,000 units per day in divided doses may be taken, but for only that period of time and no longer as vitamin A is toxic at these doses if taken for longer periods of time.

Beta-carotene: 200,000 units per day during the illness. (This is an alternate to vitamin A if one is unable to take A. If there are no contraindications to vitamin A, it can be taken simultaneously.)

Zinc lozenges: approximately 20-30 mg every 2 hours after an initial double dose.

Garlic: 10 deodorized capsules of raw garlic extract in the first six hours, then 2 capsules every four hours. (Fresh raw garlic is even better: one clove = 2 capsules.)

Bioflavonoids: 1 gram per day

Colloidal Silver : 1/2 to 1 tsp 3-6 times a day.

Botanical Medicines

The following are immune system enhancers and have antiviral properties:

Echinacea angustifolia: three 300-400 mg capsules with hot water or tea four times a day, or 1-2 tsp of liquid extract 4-6 times a day.

Lomatium: three to four times per day; it may produce significant improvement within 24-48 hours. This herb can in sensitive individuals produce an itchy rash and/or a skin rash from the sun.

Astragalus radix: dried root, 0.5-1 gm three times/day.

Glycyrrhiza glabra: dried root - 2-4 gm three times a day; fluid extract - 1/2-1 tsp. three times a day. A good counteractant of the immune stress caused by influenza virus.

Homeopathic Medicines for the Flu

All of the homeopathic remedies listed below contain the symptoms which are common to the flu: weakness, muscle and body aches, fever, chills, headache, etc. Below only those symptoms which distinguish one remedy from another will be emphasized. Assume that all the common symptoms of the flu are included in each remedy description.

In general, when treating the flu, take one dose of 30C potency every three to four hours until improvement sets in; at that point, reduce the frequency of dosing to an as needed basis; i.e., repeat a dose at the first sign of a relapse. If one remedy does not effect an improvement within 8-12 hours, try another.

Oscillococinum (duck liver and heart): This unlikely remedy has fast become the leading generic homeopathic medicine for influenza. It acts best when taken at the very first sign of an impending flu. Scientific studies have been conducting which document the effectiveness of this remedy for influenza. The 200C potency is typically sold in health food stores; one dose every 6-8 hours for at least three doses is recommended. Although this remedy can reduce the severity and duration of the flu, other homeopathic remedies, chosen on the basis of symptom similarity, will usually produce more dramatic results.

Gelsemium (yellow jasmine): This is far and away the most frequently indicated remedy for the flu. Symptoms include lassitude, weakness, sleepiness; the patient is thirstless though feverish. There may be chills up and down the back. Head pain is intensified on moving the eyes from side to side. The patient is too tired to talk to company and would as soon be alone. Symptom onset is gradual.

Bryonia (wild hops): The Bryonia patient is also averse to being disturbed, irritable, and averse to answering questions. Symptoms are very aggravated by even the slightest motion. The patient is thirsty for large amounts of liquid. When pain is localized, it is ameliorated by lying on the painful side and being still.

Rhus toxicodendron (poison oak): The Rhus-tox patient's complaints largely consist of aching and stiffness, both worse if he is still for long. He is very restless, largely because motion improves the discomfort. The initiation of motion, however, can aggravate. Cold aggravates, especially wet cold.

Eupatorium perfoliatum (boneset): The pains of this remedy are felt primarily in the bones. There is also severe back pain — "backbreaking." The discomfort is such that the patient is driven to restlessness, but he is worse from motion. There may also be severe aching in the eyeballs.

Aconite (monkshood): For the earliest stages of the flu when the onset is sudden with high fever, perhaps after exposure to dry, cold winds; the patient is restless and anxious.

Belladonna (deadly nightshade): This remedy is also for the sudden onset of early flu symptoms, with high fever, flushed face, throbbing headache, thirst, dry skin with fever; headaches are worse from jarring, motion, light, noise.

Arsenicum album (arsenic): Flu-stricken individuals needing Arsenicum present as anxious and restless (yet they are not better from motion as is Rhus-tox); they are also chilly and are liable to be thirsty for small quantities of liquid (usually warm drinks) often. Frequently there is an aggravation of symptoms from midnight to about 3 a.m.

Nux vomica (poison nut plant): These patients are very irritable and chilly; they are often exquisitely sensitive to chilling when uncovering or putting a hand out of the bed. Cold air and drafts make them miserable. They may display a peculiar fastidiousness during their acute illness.

Baptisia (wild indigo): The Baptisia influenza is a severe one causing great debility. The patient appears drunken; he has a stuporous or sleepy look. Pains feel as if bruised; he may be so sore that the bed feels hard. In the midst of fever some delirium may be present. One delusion which is common to the Baptisia state is the sensation that his body parts are scattered about the bed. Putrid, offensive odors are prevalent — the sweat, breath, discharges. The patient will complain of discomfort in any position.

Mercurius (mercury): The cardinal symptoms of a Mercurius flu are profuse, very offensive sweat; drooling (worse during sleep); foul mouth odor and taste; alternating heat and chills, the patient uncovering from warmth one minute and covering from chill the next. One peculiar sign often found in the mouth is an indented tongue (showing the imprint of the teeth along the sides of the tongue).

Influenza Prevention

For many decades homeopaths have employed infrequent doses of the homeopathic nosode, **Influenzinum**, as an influenza prophylactic. Taken throughout flu season – one dose of 200C potency every two weeks, it can help to prevent the occurrence of flu or lessen the severity of the illness should it occur. This could well prove an invaluable strategy currently with the shortage of flu vaccine. (Influenzinum is prepared from flu virus.) Homeopathic pharmaceutical companies release new batches of Influenzinum each year to correspond with anticipated outbreaks; often, though, older versions of Influenzinum are often similar enough to the disease to have a favorable effect.

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