

Homeopathic Healthcare
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Mastitis

Mastitis (breast inflammation) is typically a problem of nursing women, occurring subsequent to blockage of milk ducts by dried milk. Either a part of or the entire breast becomes swollen, often hard, and tender; there may be redness of the skin of the breast. Fever and/or chills may accompany the complaint. This complaint should not go untreated as some women suffer serious infections as a result. For early and mild symptoms local applications of hot packs or hot towels often suffice to abort the inflammation. Being certain to completely empty both breasts when nursing, not allowing any unused milk to accumulate between feedings, will help prevent the development of mastitis. When symptoms become moderate, prompt homeopathic treatment should be instituted according to the guidelines below (primarily only the principle prescribing indications are covered). Proper homeopathic management of this condition can preclude the need for antibiotics and disruption of breast feeding.

Here is a case from my files illustrating the effectiveness of homeopathy for these infections. A 30 year-old breast-feeding mother came complaining of mastitis of her right breast. The upper outer quadrant of her breast was hot, red, and tender and somewhat sensitive to jarring. There were no other symptoms. The breast, while congested, did not show evidence of any lumps or abscesses. Belladonna 30C, one dose every 3-4 hours as needed, was prescribed. She came back after two days saying that she was much better. The breast was no longer hot and red, and the overall sense of congestion was improved. Now there was some firm lumpiness of the affected area, which was still a bit sore. Phytolacca 30C, one dose every 6 hours as needed, was now prescribed. She called back two days later to say that her breast was essentially normal.

Common Homeopathic Remedies for Mastitis

Dosage: Start with 30C, two to three times a day, until improvement sets in; then observe progress without taking further remedy as long as improvement continues. Repeat the remedy for apparent relapse. If the 30C potency of a given remedy acts well, but later ceases to help and the symptoms remain similar to previously, go up in potency to 200C. One should see improvement within 24 hours, often much sooner. If there is no improvement, please seek medical attention.

Phytolacca (poke root): This remedy is the most common for this ailment, covering approximately 50% of mastitis cases. The breasts become lumpy, with hard knots or nodules, and the nipples cake. Sore, fissured nipples (Graphites, Hepar sulphuris) are common. There is intense pain in the breast as soon as the baby takes hold of the nipple. The pain often extends to the underarm or it can radiate over the whole body. Phytolacca favors the right breast. Damp heat relieves, such as local poultices. Some patients may have flu-like symptoms as well.

Bryonia (wild hops): Bryonia cases usually begin with general chills and fever, stitching pains in the breast and headache. The breast feels hard and stony with stitching, needle-like pains. Any movement aggravates the pain. The patient likes a snug bra. Breast feeding is quite painful. The patient will be quite irritable. Very frequently the patient will experience dizziness or faintness on rising from bed. There is strong thirst and not infrequently constipation.

Belladonna (deadly nightshade): Sudden onset with rapidly rising fever typifies Belladonna. The breast is hot to touch, engorged, swollen, congested — red, hot breast. Throbbing pain in the breasts. The pain is worse from jarring. The right side is more often affected.

Aconitum (monkshood): Aconite is also sudden in onset, like Belladonna, but without the throbbing pain. The onset often follows a sudden change of weather or exposure to cold air or a cold, dry wind. Usually another remedy is required after Aconitum exerts its effects, such as Belladonna or Bryonia, etc.

Hepar sulphuris (calcium sulphide): The mastitis cases needing Hepar are very prone to abscess. These cases show extreme sensitivity to the least touch; mothers can't stand for the baby to nurse. Complaints are worse from cold and exposure to the least draft, and better from warmth.

Arnica (leopard's bane): If the inflammation follows an injury to the breast, consider Arnica. Patients feel sore, bruised, and achy. There is fear to have the part touched.

Mercurius (mercury): Cases of mastitis or breast abscess requiring Mercurius are recognized by the general symptoms — fever, chills, and perspiration without relief (the more common response to a profuse sweat is a drop in fever; in this remedy there is no subsequent improvement); the patient will be alternately hot and cold, uncovering one minute and covering the next.

Lac-canium (dog's milk): These cases display exquisite hypersensitivity to even the slightest touch of clothing on the breasts; jarring also aggravates.

Croton tiglium (croton-oil seed): There is excruciating pain in the nipple which extends straight through to the back (at the level of the shoulder blade) with each suck of the baby. The breasts are very inflamed, swollen, and hard. The nipples may crack.

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