

Homeopathic Healthcare
George Guess, MD

BLADDER INFECTIONS

Let me first be clear as to what I mean by bladder infections — infections confined to the bladder and not involving the kidney. The symptoms of infections localized to the bladder include: urinary frequency, urgency, bladder and/or urethral pain on urinating, dark, odiferous and/or bloody urine. When fever and/or back/kidney pain are present, there is a great likelihood that the infection has ascended to the kidneys. Kidney infections demand prompt medical attention, and I would discourage anyone from attempting self-treatment of that condition. Bladder infections, on the other hand, especially in their early phase are prime candidates for successful self-treatment homeopathically. I would caution the reader, however, to limit his or her homeopathic treatment trial to about two days. If significant improvement is not observed, see your physician. Also, anyone with a first time bladder infection should see a physician to have the diagnosis confirmed and any necessary diagnostic work-up performed. Individuals who have suffered repeated bouts of bladder infections are very good candidates for attempting homeopathic self-treatment. Proper follow-up of any bladder infection is also important; even after apparently successful homeopathic self-treatment I encourage folks to have a follow-up urine analysis, perhaps even culture, to be sure they are not harboring a latent, smoldering infection.

First let's look at some general natural treatment measures which can cure or palliate bladder infections.

Natural Treatment Protocols

Prevention in women: urinating after sex is important: wait until you have a full bladder as a small, forced stream is probably inadequate to cleanse the bladder. One can also wash with two teaspoons per cup of Hydrastis (goldenseal) tea before and after intercourse. Overly large diaphragms or contraceptive sponges may obstruct urine flow and cause infection, so decrease the size of the diaphragm to 65 or 70 mm or use a cervical cap.

Diet: Avoid simple sugars, refined carbohydrates, full strength fruit juice, food allergens. Eat garlic and onions liberally.

DRINK 5 pints of fluids per day and 16 ounces of unsweetened cranberry juice.

Supplements: Vitamin C - 500mg every 2 hours; bioflavonoids - 1g/d; Vitamin A - 25,000 Units/day for a few days only; beta carotene - 200,000 Units/day; zinc picolinate - 30 mg/day.

Botanicals

Uva ursi (bearberry or upland cranberry): contains arbutin (an antiseptic) and a diuretic. (Caution: an excessive dose (15 gm or 1/2 ounce) of the dried leaves can be toxic, causing tinnitus, nausea, vomiting, sense of suffocation, shortness of breath, convulsions, delirium, collapse.

Garlic : has antimicrobial action.

Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*): antimicrobial; works best in alkaline urine.

Sandalwood oil : antiseptic, diuretic. Large doses can be quite toxic. Dosage: 1-2 drops three times a day.

Cornsilk tea : silica soothes inflamed bladder tissue.

An herbal combination for bladder infections with pain and burning is: corn silk tea, uva ursi, buchu (1:1:1) -- 1 tsp three times a day (hot infusions). Another is: dried marshmallow leaf, corn silk, couch grass, and uva ursi infusion -- 1 cup 4-5 times a day.

Horsetail tea may be useful if irritation is primarily between voiding episodes.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

Try the following remedies as indicated in the 30C potency, one dose every hour if symptoms are severe, changing the remedy within 3-4 hours if relief is not obtained. If symptoms are mild to moderate, it would be best to repeat the remedy every three hours, anticipating a favorable change within 12 hours if the remedy chosen is correct. The common symptoms of bladder infections mentioned above can be assumed to be covered by all of the remedies below. Only the distinguishing and characteristic symptoms of each remedy are here listed.

Cantharis (spanish fly): Violent burning in the bladder and constant urging (tenesmus) without satisfactory result. Violent symptoms characterize this remedy. Burning and cutting pains. Sexual excitement may be a peculiar symptom accompanying the infection.

Mercurius corrosivus (corrosive sublimate): Though not nearly as commonly indicated as Cantharis, the symptoms of this remedy are strikingly similar to it. It has the most violent tenesmus (painful urging). Bloody urine.

Nux vomica (poison nut): Urging without result or for very small quantities of urine only. If the urinary urging is accompanied by the urge to stool, the remedy is definitely Nux-v. The pain and urging are better from warm applications and warm baths.

Sarsaparilla (smilax): Urethral burning after urination. There may be difficulty passing urine while sitting; facilitated by standing.

Sepia (ink of the cuttlefish): Characteristic of Sepia is the accompanying symptom of uterine prolapse sensation before urination; as a consequence, the woman holds her legs together. She must keep her mind on the bladder or urine might escape involuntarily (Pulsatilla).

Staphysagria (stavesacre): "Honeymoon cystitis;" that is, bladder infections resulting from sexual intercourse or catheterization (Arnica is also useful for bladder affections after mechanical injuries).

Lycopodium (club moss): This remedy is recognized primarily because of the symptoms associated with the bladder symptoms — abdominal pain, flatulence, and abdominal distention, worse 4-8 pm. Also present might be back pain ameliorated by passage of flatus and urine.

Causticum: Urinary urging with inability to pass anything, until later when they pass urine involuntarily; also incontinence on coughing or sneezing, etc. One peculiar symptom is itching at the opening of the urethra.

Aconitum (monkshood): sudden, violent inflammation, accompanied by the characteristic Aconite anxiety, restlessness, and fear.

Belladonna (deadly nightshade): sudden inflammation; the bladder is sensitive to pressure or jarring.

Pulsatilla (windflower): Desire to urinate upon lying down on the back; great urgency — impossible to delay ("scarcely a drop of urine can collect in bladder but it must be expelled").

Equisetum: (horsetail) Bladder feels too full, not relieved by even copious urination. Severe pain at close of urination.

Dulcamara (bittersweet): cystitis worse from a change in the weather from hot to cold, especially damp cold. Urinary urging if chilled. Whenever the individual catches a little cold, a bladder infection results.

Dr. Guess is a family physician and has practiced classical homeopathic medicine since 1978. He maintains a private family practice in Crozet, Virginia, near Charlottesville. He is the past editor of

the American Journal of Homeopathic Medicine (a professional homeopathic medical journal) and Vice-President of the American Board of Homeotherapeutics (a national homeopathic specialty board). www.drgeorgeguess.com.