

Homeopathic Healthcare by George Guess, MD

Diarrhea

Homeopathy is very effective in rapidly relieving the symptoms of acute diarrhea due to infectious causes. Whether a mild viral gastroenteritis or more severe bacterial dysentery or food poisoning, proper homeopathic treatment can be helpful. For the purposes of self and family treatment however, I would encourage novices to confine themselves to treating only milder cases of diarrhea. Any severe case of diarrhea with copious stools, high fever, bloody stools, protracted vomiting, or severe abdominal pain should seek medical advice. Also, any significant diarrheal illness in small children should be medically evaluated to prevent dehydration.

The medical journal *Pediatrics* published a study evaluating the effectiveness of homeopathic medicine for epidemic diarrheal disease in children; homeopathic treatment was demonstrated to be superior to placebo in shortening the course of the illness.

During bouts of acute diarrhea it is best to limit oral intake to clear liquids. Definitely avoid milk and milk products as acute diarrhea rapidly depletes lactase, the enzyme responsible for digesting milk sugar — lactose. A practice that is often successful in limiting diarrhea is the consumption of lemon water — water flavored with as much fresh lemon juice as palatable, taken liberally.

As the diarrhea subsides, the so-called "BRAT" diet eases the transition to consuming solid foods; it consists of bananas, rice, apple sauce, and toast.

Homeopathic Medicines

The common symptoms of acute diarrheal disease can be assumed for each of the following remedies; only the principle symptoms characteristic of each remedy will be given. The dosage recommended in general is the 30C potency, one dose every three to four hours until symptoms begin to subside, then repeated whenever a relapse is apparent.

Podophyllum (may apple): diarrhea with flatus (gas); yellow, offensive, explosive, spluttery stool, with many spots of liquid stool scattered around the toilet; intestinal rumbling with pain. Emptiness is felt in the abdomen after stool. Early morning diarrhea, around 5 a.m., driving the patient from bed is characteristic.

Veratrum album (white hellebore): Diarrhea with simultaneous vomiting. Copious, frequent, painful diarrhea. Violently ejected stools with cramping abdominal pain, weakness, cold sweat, cold extremities, cold tongue, and cold breath (*Camphora* has similar coldness).

Arsenicum album (arsenic): Like *Veratrum* in that both have coldness, weakness after violent diarrhea, vomiting and diarrhea simultaneously, and thirst. Arsenicum is more likely to pass a small amount of stool each time whereas *Veratrum* passes copious stools. Also, Arsenicum experiences restless anxiety and a time of aggravation of 12-2 a.m. Cold drinks and ice cream aggravate the diarrhea. Warm drinks and warm applications to the abdomen relieve discomfort.

Camphora (camphor): diarrhea with extreme coldness, yet does not want to be covered.

Cuprum metallicum (copper): diarrhea with cramps, in the abdomen and often the extremities. The abdominal cramps are made better by cold drinks. Persistent cramping. Does not tolerate pressure on the abdomen.

Colocynthis (bitter cucumber): Diarrhea with cramping abdominal pain which is better by bending forward, pressure, and warm applications. Abdominal pain is also better from the passage of flatus. Irritability. If these very same symptoms are present, but Colocynthis fails to help, try *Magnesia phosphorica*.

Mercurius vivus (or solubilis) (mercury): Painful rectal urging which continues even after the diarrheic stool. The rectum still feels full after stool. Bloody diarrhea. The remedy may be compared with the remedy *Nux vomica* which has a similar painful rectal urging which is significantly better after stool and better from warmth — applications, bathing, etc.

Sulphur: Like Podophyllum, Sulphur has diarrhea at about 5 a.m. driving the patient out of bed. The stool is offensive and often excoriating, burning the anus. Sulphur usually is a warm-blooded remedy.

Aloe socotrina (aloe): A sense of rectal insecurity; involuntary loss of stool when passing flatus. Spluttery stool, similar to Podophyllum. Early morning diarrhea.

China (peruvian bark): Painless diarrhea with undigested food particles in the stool. Rapid debility from loss of fluids. Flatulence and fullness in the abdomen. Diarrhea worse from fruit.

Chamomilla (chamomile): Diarrhea with severe colicky pains. Irritability and anger. Green, watery stools. More common in children. Shrieks with pain.

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