



Frequently Asked Questions About Homeopathy

1. What is Homeopathy?

“Homeopathy...cures a larger percentage of cases than any other method of treatment, and is beyond all doubt safer and more economical, and the most complete medical science.”
-Mahatma Ghandi

Homeopathy is a unique system of natural medicine which has been in use for hundreds of years. It is a safe and effective form of treatment for a variety of diseases, both acute and chronic.

Homeopathic doctors consider the unique mental, emotional and physical characteristics of the patient and how they are connected. Homeopaths are interested in understanding all aspects of the person, not just their illness they are suffering from. Specific remedies are prescribed that treat the whole individual, and restore the entire system to a state of health

Homeopathic Medicine:

- is safe and non toxic
- removes the cause/root of the illness
- does not suppress symptoms
- treats physical, mental *and* emotional illness
- looks at each patient as a unique individual

2. What Conditions Can Homeopathy Treat?

Homeopathy can treat both physical and psychological illness. The following is a list of some common illnesses that can be addressed by homeopathic treatment. Please note that these are only examples, and that homeopathy can treat many other diseases as well.

Physical Illness

Colds/Flues
Injuries
Digestive Problems (constipation, colitis)
Arthritis
Diabetes
Cancer
Migraine Headaches
Asthma and Allergies

Sleeping Problems
High Blood Pressure
Acne, Eczema, Psoriasis
Fertility/Sexual Problems
Pregnancy Related Conditions
Infancy Concerns (teething, colic)



Mental/Emotional Illness

Anxiety and Panic Attacks
Depression
Bi Polar Disorder
Fears/Phobias
Autism
ADD/ADHD
Delayed Development

3. WHO USES HOMEOPATHY?

Homeopathy is very popular world-wide, being adopted by millions of patients who seek an alternative to conventional medicine. Patients are attracted to homeopathy because it is free of toxic side effects and removes the root of the illness, as opposed to merely suppressing symptoms.

Furthermore, the public is becoming more aware of the value of healthy living, searching for natural ways to enhance their overall well-being. Homeopathy can ***remove disease as well as prevent it.***

Did you know?

- **Homeopathy is the second most practiced medicine in the world, following conventional medicine.**
- **The British Royal Family is among the many supporters of homeopathy, and has used homeopathic physicians for generations.**
- **42% of French physicians use homeopathy in practice**

4. How Does Homeopathy Work?

This system of medicine was founded by the German physician, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). It is based upon the scientific principle known as the “Law of Similars” or “like cures like”..

This law states that a substance capable of producing certain symptoms in a healthy person can be used to treat the same symptoms in a sick person. (like cures like).

For example, imagine you are chopping a red onion. The onion causes symptoms such as burning, watering eyes. In homeopathy we use red onion (*Allium cepa*) as a remedy for hay fever or allergies, when the main symptom is burning watery eyes. When used in this way, the patient’s symptoms are cured through the principle of “like cures like”.



The homeopath matches the symptom “picture” of the patient with the symptom “picture” of the remedy, and in this way stimulates a healing response which frees the body from illness.

Homeopathic physicians regard each patient as a unique individual, With the understanding that every case is different, homeopaths find a medicine that suits each patient specifically. Therefore, ten people may come in with arthritis, however each one could be prescribed a different medicine that fits them specifically.

5. What are Homeopathic Remedies? Are they like herbs or vitamins?

Many people confuse homeopathy with herbal medicine or vitamins. While they are all natural, they are quite different. Homeopathic remedies are made from plant, animal and mineral sources. These substances are highly diluted and “succussed” , a process which removes any possibility of side effects, and activates their therapeutic properties.

The preparation of homeopathic remedies is done according to strict scientific standards. They come in the form of little round pellets or drops that are manufactured in special pharmacies.

In classical homeopathy, only one remedy is prescribed at a time. This system keeps the treatment simple, safe and inexpensive. The remedies taste sweet, dissolve quickly in the mouth and are easy to administer to infants or weak patients.

6. Is Homeopathy Safe? Can it be used with conventional drugs?

Yes! Homeopathy has been practiced safely for centuries. Remedies can be taken by pregnant women, babies and the elderly, with no risk of toxic side effects.

Homeopathy can safely be used together with conventional drugs. There is no risk of homeopathic remedies interfering with or disrupting the effects of conventional drugs.

Many patients who come to homeopathic doctors are already on some form of conventional medication. We do not suggest that the patient discontinue using their regular medicine, and **it is perfectly safe to use homeopathy and conventional medicine together**. There are no contraindications for combining the two.

As the patient’s condition improves under homeopathic treatment, you may be advised to consult with your doctor about weaning off your drugs.

The goal of the homeopath is to make the patient well enough that they no longer need their pharmaceutical drugs. It is a liberating experience for patients to find they no longer need to depend on drugs to feel well.



To illustrate this concept, here is an example:

Mrs. Jones comes in for her initial consultation. She has suffered from chronic arthritis for many years. She has been taking anti-inflammatory drugs to manage the pain, however they are not making the arthritis go away, and they are producing uncomfortable side effects.

She is put on a carefully selected homeopathic remedy and within 3 months, she feels the pain and swelling have diminished considerably. Her homeopath suggests to her that she consult with her doctor about decreasing her anti-inflammatory. Her doctor agrees and gradually she cuts down the dose until she no longer needs it at all.

She continues to need her homeopathic remedy for another 10 months, until her condition is completely clear. From this point on, she only requires the occasional dose (less than once per year) of her remedy during periods of stress but is now completely free of both her disease and drugs.

7. Are there any side effects? What is an aggravation?

Homeopathic remedies do not have any side effects when prescribed correctly.

An incorrect prescription can produce two results: one is that nothing happens, and the other is that *new* symptoms are produced.

The second reaction is called a proving reaction. It is very rare, but can happen in particularly sensitive patients.

An experienced homeopath will know how to prevent this from happening, and if it does happen, it just means you should stop taking the remedy. These symptoms are *not the same as the toxic side effects from conventional drugs and will disappear when the remedy is stopped.*

An aggravation is not a side effect. It is when a remedy is taken, and their symptoms get worse for a period of time. This is followed by an improvement in their illness and is regarded by the homeopath as a very good sign.

An aggravation indicates that the remedy has kicked in and is doing its job. The difference between an aggravation and a proving is that the former is a temporary worsening in the symptoms that the patient already had, whereas a proving is the appearance of completely new symptoms.

Homeopathy has been used for over 200 years on the most sensitive of patients (infants, pregnant women, and the elderly) and there has not been one recorded case of toxicity.



8. What is a Homeopathic Consultation?

The initial consultation is an in-depth process during which you will be asked to discuss your symptoms in as much detail as possible.

You will also be asked to describe your “nature” or personality, and your reactions to the various stressors in your life, in order for the homeopath to clearly understand you. This is a very thorough process that allows you an opportunity to be heard, and enables the homeopath to find a suitable remedy.

The initial consultation usually lasts two hours. Follow-up appointments take approximately thirty to sixty minutes.

9. What accreditation does a Homeopath need?

Homeopathy is not yet a regulated profession in Ontario, which means that anyone can legally call themselves a homeopath without achieving a specific educational standard.

When you are looking for a homeopath, you should inquire about their level of education in homeopathic medicine, and if it does not sound very thorough, you may wish to seek treatment with another more qualified homeopath.

Heather Osler, HD received the highest level of homeopathic training available in Canada at the Ontario College of Homeopathic Medicine. There she completed 4000 hours of homeopathic study, an additional 1100 hour clinical internship, plus extensive training in the standard medical sciences.

Heather Osler, HD is an OHA accredited homeopathic doctor. For more information on the Ontario Homeopathic Association, please visit www.ontariohomeopath.com.

10. How is Homeopathy different from conventional medicine?

Conventional medicine is a term that describes the mainstream form of medicine practiced in North America. It is also known as “modern medicine”, or “allopathic medicine”.

In Ontario, this is the type of medicine we receive when we visit our GP, and it is covered by OHIP for most residents, which means that this form of health care is generally free.

So, how does it differ from homeopathy?



Homeopathic Medicine

- uses all natural remedies which have no toxic side effects
- considers the whole patient as an individual. Homeopathic doctors are interested in taking the time to get to know their patients on a very deep level. They do not just want to know about one particular symptom, but seek to understand the nature of their patient, their likes and dislikes, hobbies, etc. In this way, they are not simply treating a symptom, but they are treating the whole person
- treats several symptoms with one remedy. For example, a patient suffering from depression, migraines and constipation will be given a single remedy that will treat all three symptoms. In conventional medicine, that patient would be given one drug for the depression, one for the constipation and one for the migraines.
- Uses remedies which are very inexpensive. In a typical chronic illness, a month's worth of homeopathic medicine will cost approx. \$5.00, or an acute remedy for an illness like strep throat will cost approx \$8.
- Begins with an initial consultation which takes approx 2 hours. An unbelievable amount of time, care and attention is given to the patient.
- Can often be a slow process when addressing chronic illness, but it **removes the root of the illness**, as opposed to masking the symptoms
- Supports the body's natural immune system, giving vitality to the patient, and working with the body to improve health
- Is easy to take, and taste good, naturally....therefore no artificial colours or sweeteners are necessary in order to appeal to children
- It is safe for weak patients, pregnant women and babies

Though there are some definite advantages in choosing homeopathic health care, there are several situations where conventional medicine is also necessary.

These include emergency situations- though there are homeopathic remedies that can be supportive to injuries, even as serious as comas or hemorrhage, it is essential that the patient seek conventional emergency care.

Furthermore, conventional medicine has amazing technology to diagnose and detect disease, and these tools can be very valuable. Often homeopaths will ask for lab results and use these results to determine how well a remedy is working.

In certain cases, homeopathy can take a long time to work, and not all people in today's modern world have the patience to wait for their symptoms to improve.

Whatever the case may be, ***there is a place for both homeopathic and conventional medicine, and the time is coming where we will see the two working together.***



11. How long does it take to work?

The answer is, it depends on the case. In acute situations like colds or flues, or earaches for example, **a remedy can take effect within minutes.**

For more long term conditions, treatment will usually take longer to see results. While the effects of the remedies may seem to take a long time, they are curative as opposed to suppressive. This means that the end result is removal of the cause of the disease, not just covering up the problem.

Imagine a patient suffering from frequent migraine headaches. A strong dose of conventional medicine such as Tylenol may take the pain away temporarily, but it does not stop the patient from getting headaches. Another one comes again in a couple of weeks and the cycle continues.

The Tylenol in this case has merely acted to kill the pain and mask the symptoms, but it has not cured the patient of the underlying cause of the headaches.

In homeopathy, the correct remedy will actually remove the cause of the headaches, so they will disappear. Homeopathy acts on a very deep level to cure the patient, but keep in mind the process takes time.

Therefore, the number one responsibility of the patient is to be exactly that, “patient”! In today’s modern quick fix society, many people are not used to waiting for results. Keep in mind that any true cure does not generally happen overnight.

Remedies can act over a long period of time, so don’t be surprised if your homeopath prescribes one dose and nothing more until the follow up 3-4 weeks later. A strong dose of a remedy can cause changes in the system for a long time. It is similar to a time released vitamin.

In other cases, particularly acute situations, homeopaths will prescribe a remedy several times per day.

12. What is the difference between modern and classical homeopathy? What are combination remedies?

You may have noticed homeopathic remedies in the health food store, or even various pharmacies or grocery stores. Usually the remedies that are labeled “Cold remedy”, “Sleeping Remedy” or “Allergy Remedy”, for example are called “combination remedies.”

They are made up of a group of remedies combined together in the hope that one out of the group will match the person’s specific symptoms.



They are therefore, not individualized remedies.

This is not classical homeopathy, in which a main principle is to give a single remedy at a time. Combination remedies however can be very useful in some cases, especially acute cases like teething in babies, or coughs. However, **if the symptoms are more long term or chronic, one should consult with a classical homeopath who can use a more individualized approach.**

13. What does “holistic” mean?

‘Holistic’ represents how the practitioner views his/her patient. When a practitioner considers the patient as a whole, not simply of separate symptoms, they understand that all aspects of the patient are connected.

In holistic medicine, we do not give one drug for the mental symptoms, one drug for the knee pain, and yet another for the skin eruption. Instead, when these symptoms appear in a patient, we consider that somehow they are all related, and we look at how they are related.

We are aware that the mind, body and spirit all function as one entity, each influencing the other. This is best exemplified by common examples such as the nausea or queasy feeling many people experience due to the anxiety of a big exam or interview, or a headache that comes on after a period of stress. These examples show us that indeed, the body and mind affect each other.

Therefore when we give a remedy, it is intended to treat the whole person, not just a part. When you treat only a part of the patient, you may alleviate that problem temporarily, but it does not mean that the patient is actually healthy. It is only when you treat the whole of the patient that you create a true state of health.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Heather Osler, D.H.M.H.S., H.D. anytime.