

Acute homeopathic prescribing

by David Needleman MARH



David graduated in 1970 with a BSc in Pharmacy and qualified as a homeopath in 1991 since when he has built a successful practice combined with teaching in England, Japan and the USA. He now also has an international client base. In 1996 he established the Homeopathic Helpline. David is a founding director of the ARH and looks after the political areas.

David set up the Homeopathic Helpline because he was frequently being called for acute advice at the pharmacy where he worked and saw patients. He took his first call on 1 April 1996. His employer had previously said ‘get your own telephone’, or words to that effect and David responded ‘yes but only if I can do it my way and can answer it whenever it rings’. This was agreed and the rest, as they say, is history.

In the first month there was one phone call but, with advertising and word of mouth, it has grown in the last 27 years so that to date almost 350,000 calls have been successfully answered, and many people call back to say that the remed(y)(ies) suggested have worked and to thank us – even at the current cost of £1.55 per minute plus their provider’s access charges.

When someone has an acute situation they need it dealt with as soon as possible. We don’t have the luxury of looking for a fundamental or constitutional remedy. There’s no time to repertorise, to look up notes, to check the materia medica, and also no time to send a remedy. It must be now!

I have always advocated that patients or their families have a remedy kit at home so that at least there are some remedies available, and this should be maintained as there are always times when, whichever remedy is needed, it is the one that has run out and not been replaced.

It’s important to note that everything we were taught at colleges or schools of homeopathy to be crucial in case-taking and patient management can be irrelevant in the acute situation. Over the years I have adapted the ‘2wham’ questions used in pharmacy (**who** is the medicine for, **what** are the symptoms, **how** long have symptoms

been present, **action** taken, **medication** being taken) to my own rules for acute caretaking, which I call the ‘5 Ws’:

Who is it for?

When did it start?

How did it start?

What are the symptoms?

What action has already been taken?

We do not want to contradict or question another healthcare professional, whether homeopathic or not, we just need to know what has been done so far. We need to know what medication is already being taken – either homeopathic, allopathic or supplementary.

We also have to ask ourselves what actually needs to be cured or at least addressed, not in an esoteric way but in real terms. For example, a child with earache:

- is it the pain
- or the congestion that is causing the pain
- or both?



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Let me reiterate that, at this stage, all the rules you have been taught regarding constitutional treatment do not necessarily apply in the acute situation. We don't need to know the family history or food likes / dislikes of a child screaming in pain. We do need to know if this is a new situation or has he / she had it before, is there a temperature with it or is there a loss of balance, a rash or any other symptoms.

You often get answers that do not relate to the question. When asking about pain you need to know the *type* of pain: cutting, burning, chilling, splintering, sharp, piercing and so on, but the answer is often 'it's really bad' which is obvious from the screaming that you see and hear, so you have to make a judgement. Sometimes I try questions such as 'if you wanted me to feel the same pain what would you do to me?' Depending on the age of the child you might get an answer that actually relates. Don't be afraid to give a remedy and then change to something else; also, don't fear using more than one remedy at the same time.

Returning to the ear problem, I often suggest a remedy for the immediacy of the pain, and another to help unblock the ear canal which will, over time, reduce the pressure that is causing the pain, but this can take a few days and the child needs immediate relief from its suffering.

David's first acute experience was with his cat

David has a remedy regime to start labour designed to mesh with moon time

My first acute experience was my cat. I had been at the CoH for three months when my wife said, 'the cat is not well – you are learning homeopathy so why don't you treat her?'

The cat had pain on urinating and the urine was a pinkish colour. She allowed us to touch her left side but not her right, which was obviously very sensitive. With my (very) limited knowledge and having no remedies either I had to check out the symptoms in the few books I had at the time.

It became obvious that she needed *Lycopodium*; the only source was the chemist shop I was working in and they only had a 6C so I bought it. The next problem was how to dose her? This became a farce as I managed to get a tablet into her mouth by trapping her head between my knees, then stroking her throat – a regime I ▶



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held for about 20 minutes. I eventually let her go and, guess what, she looked at me with obvious disdain, spat out the tablet, and walked off in a huff.

Of course I learned later that once a remedy has touched the tongue the patient has had the dose. The cat, however, was cured; today how many of us would even consider *Lycopodium* for a UTI or cystitis? (See chart on p.30) I learned a number of lessons that day.

How did I learn about acutes? By a series of misunderstandings about tests and exams at the CoH I failed my materia medica final by ½%! I did ask for a review and spent hours with the Principal going through the exam, which was upgraded by something like 20%; however, she insisted that I resat. I was, as you might guess, not happy – but in retrospect it was the best thing that could have happened. I forced myself to restudy about 150

remedies, even during the first holiday I had had in 10 years. This was the foundation for everything that was to happen some years later.

What tools are needed to facilitate acute prescribing?

A deep knowledge of the materia medica and not just 150 remedies but, if possible, 300-400 and not just the common or polychrest remedies but some of the smaller and rarer ones as well.

We also need good communication skills and a bit of diplomacy as, when we suggest a remedy, we don't want to criticise anyone for suggesting something else that appears at first to us inappropriate, especially as we don't (on the helpline) know the patient or the patient's history. We prescribe solely on what we are told. We also need to be aware that the picture may change and a different remedy may be called for the next day or sooner.

Once a remedy has touched the tongue the patient has had the dose

COUGHS

REMEDY	TYPE of COUGH	MUCOUS or PHLEGM	TIME of DAY	BETTER or WORSE	OTHER
ANT TART	Feeling of suffocation. Persistent rattling.	Large amounts of sticky phlegm; difficult to expectorate.	Worse evening.	Better sitting up.	Weakness, drowsiness, white coated tongue. As if a 40-a-day smoker's cough.
ACONITE	Short, dry cough or hard ringing cough.	Mucous membranes dry, nose stopped up.	Worse at night and after midnight. Sudden onset.	Worse after exposure to cold, dry winds. Better in open air.	Acute onset anxiety.
BRYONIA	Dry, hard, spasmodic painful cough.	Tough mucous in trachea.	Worse at night and for warmth of room.	Worse for movement. Cold, dry weather. Better rest and pressure.	Very thirsty for cold water. Irritable mood. Wants to be warm.
CAUSTICUM	Hard cough, racks whole chest. Loss of voice.	Inability to expectorate. Swallows phlegm.	Cannot lie down at night. Worse warmth of bed.	Better for cold drinks (sips of water). Worse cold, dry winds. Better for humidity.	Burning, rawness and soreness are characteristic.
DROSERA	Tickle in larynx brings on deep spasmodic (paroxysmal) cough with retching and gagging.	Yellow expectoration. Can be very dry.	Worse at night.	Better in open air. Worse lying down.	Hoarseness. Croup.
HEPAR SULPH	Spasmodic, wet cough. Croup with loose rattly cough.	Loose phlegm.	Worse lying down at night and waking a.m. (see <i>Rumex</i>).	Worse dry, cold winds, cool air, draught. Worse for touch. Better in damp weather. Better after eating.	Blocked nose. Blocked ear.
IPECAC	Spasmodic, suffocating cough, wheezing. Sudden attack.	Blocked nose, chest seems full of phlegm, does not yield to coughing.	Worse periodically, yearly attacks.	Worse for moist, warm wind. Worse lying down.	Particularly useful for young people's acute symptoms. Nausea not relieved by vomiting.
PHOSPHORUS	Dry, hard, tickly cough.	Chronic catarrh with slight haemorrhage.	Worse evenings.	Worse change of temperature. Worse talking and when active.	Tightness in chest. Headache. Patient nervous and anxious.
RUMEX	Spasmodic, dry cough.	Tough, stringy phlegm.	Worse lying down at night and waking a.m. (see <i>Hepar sulph</i>).	Worse cold air. Better head under bedclothes.	Hoarseness and constant desire to hawk.
SPONGIA	Noisy. Rasping cough. Violent and croupy. Paroxysmal.	Tough phlegm, difficult to raise.	Worse before midnight and 3-5 a.m.	Worse talking, singing, swallowing. Better hot drinks and eating.	Dryness of air passages. Phlegm difficult to raise, must reach for it. Sounds like a dog or seal barking.

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COLDS

REMEDY	NOSE	EYE / MOUTH	BETTER or WORSE	OTHER
<i>ACONITE</i>	Frequent sneezing. Nose stopped up.	Thirsty.	Worse in stuffy atmosphere.	Colds of sudden onset from chilling. Often with high temperature.
<i>ALLIUM CEPA</i>	Much sneezing. Nose streams.	Eye streams. Lips sore. Hot and thirsty.	Worse in warm room. Better in fresh air.	Rawness may extend to throat and chest. Tickle in the back of the throat.
<i>ARSENICUM ALBUM</i>	Sneezing frequent and painful. Thin watery discharge, burning.	Thirsty for small amounts of water. Lips sore. Philtrum sore.	Worse in cold air and after eating.	Extremely chilly. Intense tickle in nose at one particular spot.
<i>BELLADONNA</i>	Nose swollen, red, sore and hot. Not much discharge.	Throat raw, sore and hoarse.	Worse lying down and for noise and draught.	Violent headache. Very thirsty. Restless.
<i>BRYONIA</i>	Much sneezing, then tendency to spread to chest.	Eyes red and watery. Lips and mouth dry and great thirst.	Better lying down and keeping still.	If onset delayed and symptoms slow developing.
<i>DULCAMARA</i>	Sneezing severe.	Eyes red and sore throat.	Worse in cold room. Worse in damp room. Musty cellars.	Neck stiff. Pains in back and limbs.
<i>GELSEMIUM</i>	For influenza type cold. Discharge makes nostrils sore.	Eyelids heavy. Coated tongue.	Better near a fire. Often caused by a change in the weather.	Headache and chills. Tickling and tearing cough. Frequent need to urinate. Achy limbs.
<i>HEPAR SULPH</i>	Much sneezing. Watery discharge; later becomes thick, yellow and offensive.	Eyes and lids red and inflamed. Eyeballs sore to the touch. Gums and mouth painful to touch. Feeling of a hair or splinter in the throat.	Worse in the least draught.	Peevish and hypersensitive.
<i>KALI BICH</i>	Pressure and pain at root of nose. Foetid smell. Discharge thick, ropery, greenish yellow. Tough elastic plugs from the nose. Loss of smell. Violent sneezing.	Discharge ropy and yellow. Conjunctivitis. Iritis. Mapped tongue, red, shining, smooth and dry. Feeling of a hair on tongue.	Symptoms are worse in the morning.	General weakness. Catarrh. Tough, stringy, viscid secretions.
<i>MERC SOL / VIV</i>	Much sneezing. Nostrils raw, ulcerated. Acrid discharge.	Sweetish metallic taste. Gums spongy, recede, bleed easily. Foetid odour from mouth. Thick yellow discharge from the eyes. Iritis. Tongue shows indent marks.	All symptoms are worse at night, from warmth of bed, from damp, cold and rainy weather, worse during perspiration.	Breath, excretions, and body smell foul. Tendency to form pus. Inability to cope with small changes of temperature.
<i>NUX VOMICA</i>	Much sneezing. Nose alternately blocked or running.	Mouth dry.	Better outdoors.	Extremely chilly, cannot get warm and excessively irritable.
<i>PHOSPHORUS</i>	Nose alternately blocked or running, or one nostril blocked and the other discharging.	Throat sore, voice hoarse.	Worse for change of temperature.	Cold begins in chest or throat. Streaks of blood in handkerchief.
<i>PULSATILLA</i>	Nose stuffed up. Thick yellow discharge.	Chapped peeling lips. Loss of appetite.	Better outdoors. Worse coming into a warm room.	Cold is persistent. Pains in face and nose. Chills.

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I am often asked **what are the most frequently prescribed remedies.**

Without doubt the number 1 is *Hepar sulph 30C*, which turns up in so many different scenarios, such as:

- Blockages
- Colds (*see chart above*)
- Coughs
- Ear congestion
- Earache
- Mucous
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throats
- Splinters
- Tonsillitis

Wounds, to discharge exudate from ... and many more. It is also in the Narayani *Drawing mix #16*.

The next most frequent remedies are: *Belladonna*, *Bellis perennis*, *Bryonia*, *Phosphorus*, *Staphysagria*. Strangely *Arnica* is very low on the list.

Acutes are often seasonal so **different acutes arise in different seasons**, such as:

Winter

Coughs, colds
 Christmas / New Year: Grief and / or overindulgence.
Nux vomica is great when people call immediately after the royal speech on Christmas Day – also *Ignatia* or *Natrum muriaticum*.

Eating chocolate can cause problems for new mums



Spring

Hay fever (*see chart on p.31*), coughs / colds, chicken pox, Strep A type infections.
 Remedies such as: *Allium cepa*, *Ant tart*, *Arundo*, *Hepar sulph*, *Nat mur*, *Rhus tox*, *Phosphorus*, *Wyethia*, and many more.

Summer

Sunburn, heat problems, dehydration, some emotional issues, travel sickness and jet lag.
 Remedies include: *Ignatia*, *Nat carb*, *Nat mur*, *Sol*.

Autumn

S.A.D., hormonal changes.
Phosphorus is a big remedy for S.A.D., and you may also suggest a light box.
 We can all think of other remedies for all the above. For example, constitutional prescribing can deal with many of these issues before the season arrives, such as remedies to help

CYSTITIS

REMEDY	MAIN SYMPTOMS	BETTER or WORSE	OTHER
<i>APIS MEL</i>	Burning and soreness when urinating. Frequent and involuntary urination. Loaded with casts. Stinging pain.	Worse for heat, touch, pressure and open air.	Scanty urine. High coloured. Last drops burn and smart.
<i>BERBERIS VULGARIS</i>	Burning. Thick mucous. Bright red. Urethra burns when not urinating.	Worse for motion. Worse for standing.	Pain in thighs and loins when urinating.
<i>CANTHARIS</i>	Urging. Cutting. Burning. Scalds.	Worse at the end of urination. Worse coffee. Worse touch. Worse rubbing.	Constant desire to urinate.
<i>KREOSOTUM</i>	Offensive. Violent itching of vulva and vagina.	Worse when urinating. Worse warmth. Worse motion.	Can urinate only when lying down. Must hurry when desire to urinate.
<i>LYCOPodium</i>	Pains in back before urinating. Retention. Polyurea during the night.	Worse right side. Worse 4-8 pm. Worse heat. Worse motion.	Heavy, red sediment.
<i>NITRIC ACID</i>	Dark, scanty, offensive (like horse's urine). Cold on passing but burning, stinging.	Worse evening. Worse night. Worse hot weather.	Can be bloody.
<i>PAREIRA BRAVA</i>	Black. Bloody. Thick mucous. Urging. Straining. Pain down thighs. Violent pains. Itching.		Dribbling after micturition. Itching along the urethra.
<i>STAPHYSAGRIA</i>	Ineffectual urging. Honeymoon cystitis. Burning when not micturating. Frequent urination.	Worse anger. Worse grief. Worse indignation. Worse tobacco. Better after breakfast. Better for warmth.	Pain after micturition.
<i>UVA URSI</i>	Frequent urging with severe spasm of the bladder. Burning, tearing pains. Urine + blood + mucous + clots. Involuntary, green urine.		Urine can be bloody.

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▷ reduce the hay fever problems before they arise, but the client may require acute ones too.

We may want to prescribe **rare remedies**, such as *Hirudo*, *Blatta*, or *Trombidium*. However, these may take time to arrive so we need to have a back-up plan in those circumstances.

Hirudo

This is probably the rarest remedy I prescribe acutely. It is from the medicinal leech and is really good at dealing with young boys with a flaccid but engorged penis. The short term alternative could be *Apis*.

Blatta orientalis

The story goes that this remedy was found by accident to relieve asthma when, in India, a servant's job was to make his master's tea, but he did not regularly clean out the teapot. Apparently a cockroach had entered and became infused with successive makings of tea, and his master's breathing improved during this time. Since then it has been shown to be useful in a wide range of asthmatic cases.

In the acute (when we prescribe it) it is better in low potencies, and higher in more chronic situations. The picture includes suffocation because of the large volume of mucous, and it is also useful in cases of bronchitis and tuberculosis where there is much dyspnoea (laboured breathing).

The short term alternatives could be *Arsenicum album* or *Lobelia inflata* if the caller has access to that. We used to be able to use red Smarties because they contained cochineal which is, of course, *Coccus cacti* so very useful where you are drowning in mucous; sadly cochineal is no longer used in the manufacture of Smarties.

When asking about pain you need to know the type of pain

Trombidium

This very small remedy has just one indication – must pass a motion IMMEDIATELY on eating. While writing this I had to prescribe it for the first time this year. Alternatives are *Aloes*, *Arsenicum*, *Lycopodium*, *Phosphorus* or *Podophyllum*.

I am often asked about **the fastest reaction to a remedy**. A three-month-old baby was screaming in agony, a piercing scream, with a red face, grimacing, arms clenched, knees drawn up; the mother was desperate and had tried all the standard allopathic medicines, including all the colic remedies such as gripe water and Infacol.

She begged me to try something homeopathic (this was when I was working in a pharmacy where I had set up a homeopathic dispensary). I made a bottle of soft tablets of *Colocynthis* 30C and popped one into the baby's mouth. No more than 30 seconds elapsed when the baby burped, sighed and fell asleep, it was that fast.

The most dramatic reaction was a menopausal lady with hot flushes who needed *Lachesis*. I made the remedy for her, and even before I had a chance

HAY FEVER

REMEDY	EYES	NOSE	EARS / THROAT / CHEST	OTHER
<i>ALLIUM CEPA</i>	Burning eyes, smarting, light sensitivity.	Fluent, watery discharge, stuffy nose.	Tickling in the back of the throat, in cold air.	Symptoms better in open air.
<i>ARSENICUM ALBUM</i>	Burning eyes, tears, dislike of light.	Thin, watery, burning discharge.	Burning throat, asthma, fears of suffocation.	Restless, worried, exhausted by symptoms.
<i>ARSENICUM IODATUM</i>	Burning sensation, watery discharge.	Sneezing, watery discharge, sore nostrils.	Burning throat, dry irritating cough.	Burning symptoms. Dry, scaly skin.
<i>ARUNDO</i>	Burning eyes, smarting, light sensitivity.	Itching in nostrils. Sneezing.	Itching in roof of mouth and ears. Pain in ear extending to mouth.	Early hay fever before discharges.
<i>EUPHRASIA</i>	Thick discharge, swollen, burning.	Fluent, watery discharge.	Cough with phlegm.	Symptoms worse indoors.
<i>GELSEMIUM</i>	Heavy, swollen eyes.	Sneezing, watery discharge.	Sore throat, like a lump in the throat.	Apathetic, listless, giddiness, trembling.
<i>IODUM</i>	Inflamed, swollen eyelids, watering.	Sneezing with 'hot', watery discharge.	Stopped up ears, tickling in chest.	Symptoms better walking about.
<i>KALI BICH</i>	Swollen eyelids with ulceration.	Stuffed-up nose. Thick, yellow discharge.	Swollen, sore throat. Cough. Thick phlegm.	Hay fever when discharge is thicker.
<i>KALI IODATUM</i>	Profuse, acrid lachrymation, smarting, swelling. Sinus pain.	Sneezing. Acrid discharge. Red, swollen.	Larynx raw, violent cough, worse morning.	Better open air, violent thirst.
<i>NATRUM MUR</i>	Watery, bruised feeling.	Sneezing violently, watery discharge.	Coughing makes eyes water more.	Depressed and touchy.
<i>NUX VOMICA</i>	Smarting, light sensitive eyes.	Stuffy nose, obstructed breathing.	Itching in inner ear.	Irritable, headache, migraine type.
<i>PSORINUM</i>	Swollen red lips. Photophobia.	Coryza, soreness, obstruction.	Asthma, worse sitting, better lying flat.	Worse from heat, better from cold.
<i>SABADILLA</i>	Eyelids red, burning, watery eyes.	Spasms of sneezing, runny nose.	Sore throat, better for warm drink.	Feeling of chilliness.
<i>SANGUINARIA</i>	Burning.	Watery discharge, congestion, burning.	Burning. Tickling cough, worse lying, better sitting.	Better from sleep. Better in the dark.
<i>WYETHIA</i>	Burning eyes, smarting, light sensitivity.	Itching at back of nose. Dryness of nose.	Dry itchy throat. Dry hacking cough.	Try in early hay fever symptoms. Sensation as if tongue is burnt.

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to say anything, she popped one in her mouth; well – the result was dramatic: Visualise a volcanic eruption on the tongue which went on for a while, then she said ‘what have you done to me?’ She has never needed any other remedy. Sometimes even an acute

remedy gets to the centre of the person and everything changes.

I am often asked about **child-birth, labour and post-childbirth remedies**. There are very good kits available with booklets included so I will just mention a couple of areas

where acute prescribing can be very helpful.

The most common request I get is what to take to start labour, especially when there is a threat of being induced. I do have a regime for that which is successful:

Calc carb 30C or 200C at 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00am. This can be called a remedy for bashful babies (they are quite comfortable in the warmth with their mother’s heartbeat reassuringly close, and don’t necessarily want a change of state). This is followed by *Caulophyllum* 200C at 11:00pm aided by *Gelsemium* 200C at 11:30pm.

The *Caulophyllum* is to tone the uterus and get things moving, and the *Gelsemium* reinforces the *Caulophyllum* without overdosing which can lead to more pain rather than less. The timing is designed to mesh with moon time (3:00 – 4:00am) which is when the moon exerts most gravitational pull on the waters of the earth including the waters surrounding the foetus. I have found that the waters break most frequently at this time. If nothing happens then wait a day and repeat the whole process, so enough time should

***Colocythis* 30C prompted a fast reaction in a three-month-old baby**



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▷ be allowed before any induction may be pursued.

During this process, if labour stalls just because it stalls, then repeat the *Caulophyllum* followed ½ hour later with a *Gelsemium*. If labour stalls because of exhaustion, bruising or trauma then give one dose of *Arnica* 200C.

Mastitis is something I am also asked about a lot. This is more frequent in first time nursing mothers, but not exclusively. The main remedies are: *Bellis perennis* and *Phytolacca*, both in 200C. I use *Bellis perennis* when the breast is hard, full and firm, or *Phytolacca* when the nipples are cracked, and if the milk ducts are blocked I prefer *Silica* 6C to anything else.

Colic (see also chart 'Indigestion and colic' on p.33) in breast-fed babies is also very common and falls into three main categories. First, as in the example earlier, *Colocynthis* is most often characterised by drawing

I am often asked about the fastest reaction to a remedy

the knees up to the chest, with all the other symptoms, as detailed. The second major remedy is *Dioscorea* which is often seen when the baby is stretching out like a board or bending backwards. A third option is when the baby 'bicycles', which often responds to *Chamomilla*.

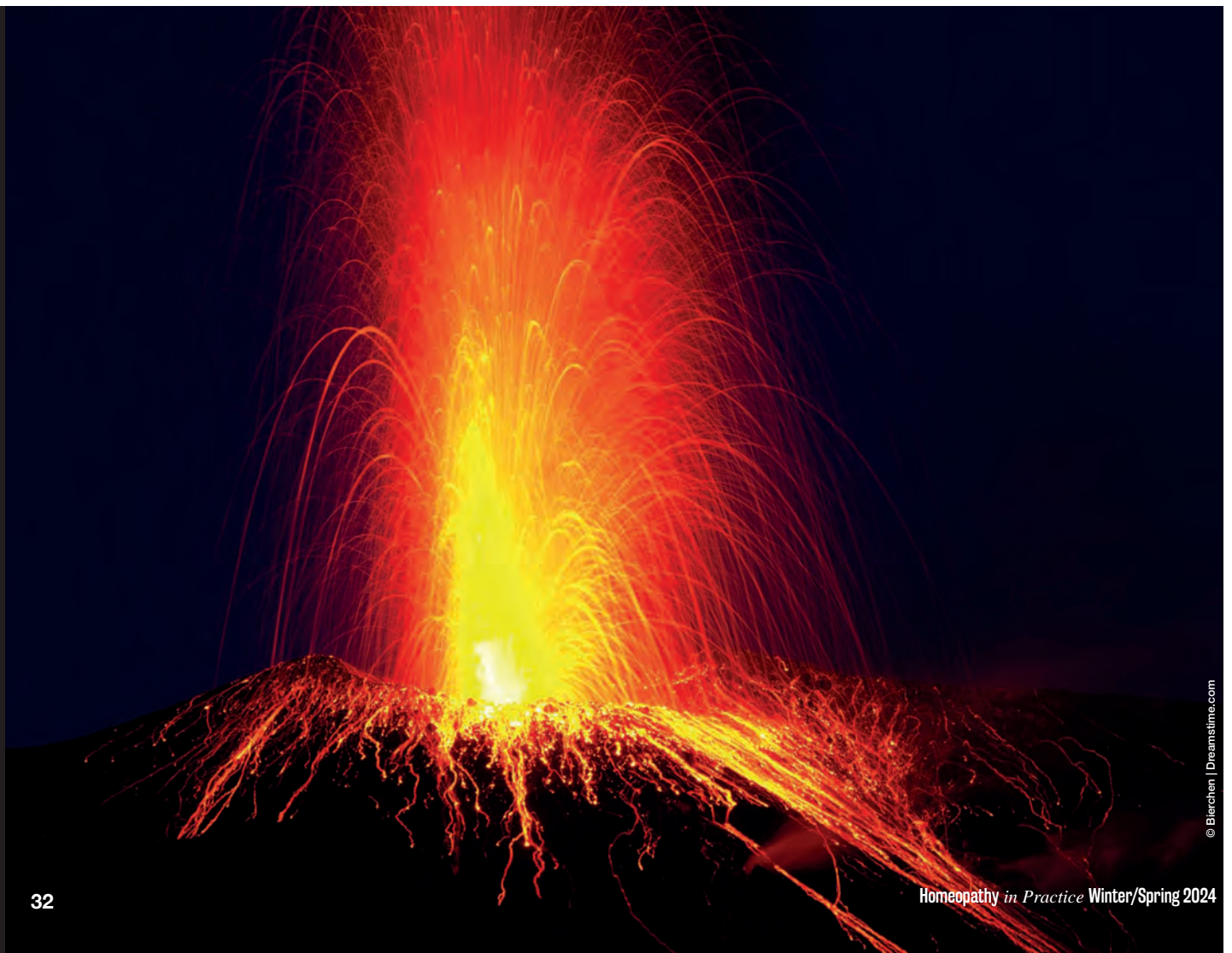
The most dramatic reaction was a menopausal lady with hot flushes who needed *Lachesis*. Visualise a volcanic reaction on the tongue

It's also good to check the mother's diet; we are all very careful during the nine months of pregnancy, but when the baby arrives this is often abandoned. Years ago we used to buy fruit or flowers and take them into hospital but nowadays with Domino deliveries and only short stays in hospital we often buy chocolates, and new mums often indulge. Three areas that can cause problems are: dairy, especially too much milk; chocolate; and also citrus fruits. The other factor is the amount of water that mums intake while breast-feeding.

In bottle-fed babies the biggest issue is inappropriate making of the milk by compressing the powder because baby is hungry, so too strong a mixture leads to constipation and colic.

Constipation in newborns usually responds to increased fluid intake plus either *Calc carb* 30C or *Opium* 200C.

The other big issue I come across is **caesarean** babies. Imagine being



HEADACHES

REMEDY	TYPE of PAIN / LOCATION	BETTER or WORSE	OTHER
<i>ACONITE</i>	Sudden, violent, hot, bursting.	Worse on rising. Worse for light.	From exposure to sun or cold winds. Restless and anxious.
<i>BELLADONNA</i>	Bursting, throbbing, violent. Especially in the forehead.	Worse jarring, movement (but also better moving around, restless), noise, light, lying down. Worse right side. Better with head stretched back. Worse 3pm.	Hot, red face. Dilated pupils. Worse haircutting and hair washing. Hair hurts.
<i>BRYONIA</i>	Bursting, splitting, crushing. Especially affects forehead region or eyes.	Worse least movement, hot room (yet wants warmth), coughing, sitting up. Better for firm pressure (worse release of pressure). Better lying quietly in a darkened room. Better with head forward, chin on chest.	Often helps migraine type headaches with nausea. Thirsty for large quantities of water but will not move to get it. First remedy for appendicitis.
<i>GELSEMIUM</i>	Dull, heavy, aching. As of a band being tightened around the forehead. Affects also back of head, temples and over the eyes.	Worse heat of sun, tobacco smoke, mental effort.	Heaviness of eyelids, limbs. Not thirsty. Fluey headache.
<i>NUX VOMICA</i>	Back of head or over eyes, splitting or sore. Scalp sensitive. Possible dizziness.	Worse movement, draughts. Mental effort. Better warmth, lying down, covered head.	After too much food or alcohol (morning after feeling). Oversensitive and irritable. Good for hangovers and jet lag, as well as disordered stomach.
<i>PULSATILLA</i>	Wandering pains, pressing, congestive, throbbing. Head feels hot.	Worse moving eyes, stooping, lying down, stuffy rooms. Better gentle walking, open / cool air, cool applications.	Depressed and weepy. Not thirsty. Often comes on after eating rich foods (see <i>Nux vomica</i>). May also be associated with periods.

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INDIGESTION AND COLIC

REMEDY	MAIN SYMPTOMS	BETTER or WORSE	OTHER
<i>ARSENICUM ALBUM</i>	Burning pains in stomach. Retching and vomiting. Offensive diarrhoea.	Better for warmth, drinks. Worse after midnight and 12-3 a.m.	Great weakness. 'Holiday tummy'. Food poisoning. May feel cold and restless. Constant thirst for sips of water.
<i>BRYONIA</i>	Stitching pains. Heaviness in stomach, 'like a stone', soon after eating. Nausea and faintness on attempting to sit up. Stomach sensitive to touch. Constipation – no desire to pass stool.	Better lying on the painful part, pressure, rest and cold things. Worse for any motion.	Irritability. Wants to be left alone. Lethargy. Thirst for large amounts of water.
<i>CARBO VEG</i>	Heaviness, bloating, belching flatulence. Pain and tenderness in pit of stomach. Distress comes on after even the simplest food, or bad fish or water.	Better sitting up and by belching. Worse for fatty foods.	Especially useful in pregnancy.
<i>CHAMOMILLA</i>	Great distention of abdomen. Wind passed in small quantities without relief. Maddening pain. Colic of teething infants.	Better for application of local heat. Children better being carried. Often worse 9pm – midnight.	Hot, peevish and restless, inconsolable.
<i>CHINA</i>	Tender, cold. Vomiting of undigested food. Hungry without appetite. Hiccough. Much flatulent colic. Tympanic abdomen.	Better bending double (see <i>Colocynthis</i>). Belching of bitter fluid or regurgitation of food gives no relief. Worse eating fruit.	Ill effects of tea. Milk disagrees. Useful in gallstone colic. Jaundice.
<i>COLOCYNTHIS</i>	Agonising cramping pain in abdomen – must bend double or draw knees up. Spluttery diarrhoea.	Better for hand pressure, warmth, bending double.	Angry and easily offended. Bitter taste in mouth. Redness from grimacing. Infant colic.
<i>DIOSCOREA</i>	Belching large quantities of offensive gas. Sinking at pit of stomach. Pain along sternum and extending into arms. Shifting pains. Pain gallbladder to chest. Renal colic.	Better standing erect or stretching backwards. Better walking about. Worse bending forwards and while lying.	Infant colic. Gallstone colic and renal colic. Hurried desire for stool. Tongue coated, mouth dry and bitter in the morning. No thirst.
<i>LYCOPodium</i>	Dyspepsia. Food tastes sour. Canine hunger. But eating ever so little creates fullness. Constant sense of fermentation in the abdomen. Liver sensitive. After eating, abdomen is bloated.	Food and drink are better hot. Worse at night and 4-8pm. Worse right side.	Cannot eat oysters. Liver remedy. Useful in infantile jaundice.
<i>MAG PHOS</i>	Like <i>Colocynthis</i> , restlessness, often accompanied by belching of gas which does not relieve.	Better pressure, warm applications, bending double, rubbing. Worse at night.	Often works well for premenstrual cramps.
<i>NUX VOMICA</i>	Weight and pain in stomach 1-2 hours after food. Queasy feeling after too much to eat or drink. Nausea and vomiting or wanting to vomit but cannot.	Better after stool, hot food and drink. Worse alcohol, coffee, tobacco, morning (on waking).	There may be irritability and hypersensitivity to noise, light etc.
<i>PULSATILLA</i>	Pains similar to <i>Nux vomica</i> but more flatulence and belching. Especially after eating ice creams, fruits, pastries and other rich food. Vomiting some hours after taking food. Nervous diarrhoea.	Better open air, cold food and drinks. Worse stuffy rooms and evenings.	Thirstless. Odd food cravings. Attack may come on after emotional stress.

David Needleman

▷ warm and cosy in the womb, soothed by mother’s heartbeat, nourished and relaxed, when suddenly everything changes. Someone puts on the lights, picks you up by your feet, slaps you on the bottom, stuffs a pipette up your nose, syringes out any mucous then rubs you all over with a rough towel.

You are bound to be angry, very angry; caesarean babies often show that anger and they may even have a cough, *Ant tart* given early, and cranial osteopathy to stimulate the breathing centre that would have been stimulated by passage through the birth canal, can work miracles.

More acute conditions / remedies that can be useful

Glaucoma (acute)

Cineraria maritima; if you don’t have any, then *Apis* or *Equisetum*, especially if on the way to hospital.

Other acutes might include **nose-bleeds**. You have to ask why, as 95% of them are caused by nose picking, 3% because of leukaemia and 2% of unknown origin which could include violent sneezing or nose blowing. There is always the situation of fragile capillaries in the nose caused by medications legal and illegal. The first remedy would be *Phosphorus* and the back-up, *Ipecac*.

You have the **Coughs** chart (*see p.28*) and, just to expand on this, I have found that most materia medicas appear to confuse *Drosera* and *Spongia*.

Drosera is always dry, like *Bryonia* but more paroxysmal, and *Spongia* is phlegmy and can sound like a seal barking, but it takes a great deal of effort to expel only a small amount. If you don’t have *Spongia* then one of my cheats is to give *Phosphorus* and *Hepar sulph* together.

Also, I remember when I did a project on the homeopathic remedies relating to cartoon characters that Doc (of the seven dwarfs) was always clearing his throat ‘HRRRRRMPH’, and this is a symptom of *Nux vomica*.

For **cystitis** (*see chart on p.30*) or UTIs we always recommend drinking extra fluid. Some people also suggest D-Mannose but I have found the best thing is 1/4 cranberry juice, 1/4 apple juice (demulcent) and 1/2 water.

What doesn’t appear in the Headaches chart (*see p.33*) is the remedy that cured my **migraine** of 30 years. I used to get a migraine every Sunday afternoon around 3:00pm which continued until Wednesday evening. I couldn’t stand light or noise or movement, I wanted to be covered but not too hot, I also often buried my head in a pillow; this happened most weeks. I was examined cursorily and prescribed Paracetamol 500mg two tablets



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four times a day, ongoing, from the age of 12. Sadly this didn't ameliorate the pain so I was prescribed Piriton (an antihistamine) daily which helped a little.

Roll on to 1991 when I promised my fellow CoH students that I would take my constitutional remedy on graduation day. I knew my constitutional remedy was *Nat mur* but had not taken it as I didn't want the emotional straightjacket undone. Anyway, on the fateful day I decided to do a timeline, and realised that the aetiology was that, at the age of 12, I was running around a swimming pool on holiday, slipped and fell backwards onto the back of my head. I was in bed with concussion for the rest of the holiday.

No one had ever asked 'when did it begin' or 'how did it start'. I took *Natrum sulph* 10M, one dose and have not had a migraine from that day to this.

Gout is something you might see as an acute, and when it flares up it can be very painful. The best acute remedy is *Colchicum* 30C, and if you don't have this give *Apis mel*. For more chronic issues use *Benzoic acid* or *Belladonna*.

Hand Foot and Mouth comes along seasonally in summer and autumn. When it is in the mouth, if the spots are white, it could be mistaken for the start of measles (Koplik spots); if red then it's more likely to be Hand Foot and Mouth, which can manifest in one, two or all three places. The thinking is that this is caused by Coxsackie A16 virus, or some think Coxsackie B, so I made a remedy containing as many of the As and Bs as were available, and this works well.

If you don't have this then short-term *Apis*, *Belladonna*, *Borax*, *Mercurius*, *Nat mur*, *Rhus tox* or *Sulphur* could help, and some relief is better than none.

Impetigo, also called pustular eczema, responds to many remedies but I have always had the most success with *Antimonium crudum* 30C which I tend to plus, three times a day for three days then nothing for three days then repeat. I also use a cream made from *Hypericum* and *Calendula*:

Homeopathy accelerates early symptom relief and stimulates rapid healing responses

squeeze out about an inch and add 1-2 drops of tea tree oil, which appears to work better than Fucidin which is most often prescribed. It is important to treat impetigo quickly as the child will be excluded from school until free from it.

I mentioned **Koplik spots** as the first manifestation of measles and the most important remedy is *Morbilinum* alongside *Aconite*, *Belladonna*, *Bryonia*, *Ferrum phos*, *Gelsemium*, *Phosphorus*, *Pulsatilla*, *Silicea*, *Sulphur* and *Veratrum viride* depending obviously on the presenting symptoms both physical and emotional.

Mumps is another disease that can be seasonal (winter and spring in temperate climates) but we see less of it now than in years gone by. The main remedies are routine *Parotidinum* alongside *Jaborandi* (pilocarpus microphyllus) which was used a lot in Philadelphia in the 1860s for right-sided or both. For left-sided the best add-on remedy is *Bromium*.

The main complication with mumps is orchitis, swelling of the testicles, which can result in impotence, and the most important remedies to help prevent this are: *Aurum*, *Bromium*, *Clematis*, *Hamamelis*, *Pulsatilla* and *Rhus tox*. Strangely, of these both *Aurum* and *Clematis* are often used in the dog breeding world as well as in humans to facilitate the testicles dropping.

Ringworm is more of a chronic condition than an acute, but often

causes distress. The main remedies are *Arsenicum album*, *Bacillinum*, *Borax*, *Sepia* and *Tellurium*. I tend to use *Bacillinum* 200C most often, pulsed, but it all depends on the presentation.

Shingles has had an enormous amount of publicity lately with adverts for the vaccination on TV almost every night, and also a push for the chickenpox vaccination to prevent shingles in later life. Shingles can also develop after COVID-19 vaccination. When it presents, the remedies that often come up are: *Cantharis*, *Causticum*, *Hypericum*, *Iris versicolor*, *Mezereum*, *Ranunculus bulb*, *Rhus tox*, *Staphysagria*, *Sulphur*, *Variolinum*, and my favourite, *Box jellyfish*.

Post-herpetic neuralgia (lasting pain in the areas of your skin where you had shingles) is also a problem, but of a more chronic nature. First choice would be *Nat mur*.

Slapped cheek, also called erythema infectiosum, is so-called because it looks exactly as if someone has really slapped the child on the cheek (and used to be mistaken for child abuse). There are two possible remedies for this. One is *Parvovirus* (B19) 30C, and the other is again a mixture of all the available Coxsackie A and B viruses in potency. The other remedies are: *Apis*, *Belladonna*, *Bryonia* and *Pulsatilla*.

Acute conditions (trauma, infections or poisonings) require immediate attention. Homeopathy accelerates early symptom relief and stimulates rapid healing responses. Remedies and dosage can be repeated and changed as often as needed based on response. We don't necessarily need the highest potency for the best result. Use any available potency in an emergency.

The Homeopathic Helpline is available 9am to midnight every day (365 days a year, this year 366) at a cost of £1.55 per minute, plus your provider's access charge, on 09065 343404. It is manned by David and when he's not available, by other fully registered and experienced homeopaths.

There is also a basic website called thehomeopathichelpline.com.

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