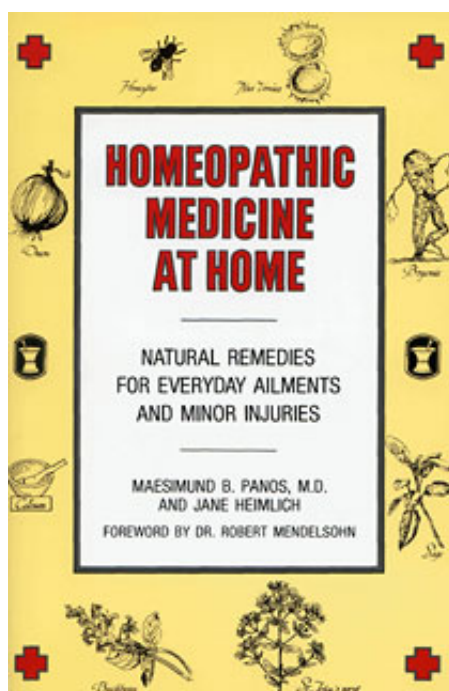


Panos / Heimlich

Homeopathic Medicine At Home

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CHAPTER SIX

How to Prevent and Treat Colds, Coughs, and Earaches

Belladonna



Colds, coughs, and earaches frequently occur at the same time. The "common cold" is an upper respiratory viral infection that affects nasal passages and throat. A cough is an attempt to clear the air passages of irritating mucus. Since the lining of the throat is continuous with that of the eustachian tube to the ear, swelling and discomfort often extend from the throat into the ears.

Homeopathy can help all of these conditions, including flu (influenza), a viral infection that is more severe than a cold. Looking through the group of remedies listed in each section, you may wonder at the duplication. For example, *Belladonna* and *Pulsatilla* are indicated for colds, coughs, and earaches. This is so because these conditions present so many of the same symptoms, and, as you already know, a remedy is prescribed on the basis of symptoms rather than on the so-called disease. Whether the problem is bacterial infection or congestion of the throat or earache, the medicine that most closely matches your symptoms will shorten the course of the ailment and prevent any serious consequences.

COLDS

Homeopathy offers no single remedy for "colds." But we have a choice of safe and effective remedies for the vast number of people who get colds. To select the right one, you must carefully observe symptoms and spend a little time learning the characteristics of each remedy. Armed with this knowledge, you will be able to select a remedy that not only relieves symptoms but also promotes early recovery from the cold.

The following homeopathic remedies are indicated for colds. Make your selection carefully. Although homeopathic medicines are safe and nontoxic, too many remedies in succession are like contradictory orders from a control tower to a pilot; they confuse the defense mechanism.

Aconite. To be taken at the first sign of a cold after exposure to dry, cold wind. Useful only during the onset of a cold. Symptoms are frequent sneezing, burning throat, thirst, and restlessness at night.

Allium cepa. Sneezing accompanied by streaming eyes and nose. Nasal discharge makes the nose and upper lip sore. Patient feels better in open air. Coughing hurts the larynx.

Antimonium tartaricum. You can hear the rattling of mucus in the chest. The patient, if a child or an elderly person, has difficulty spitting up mucus. Is weak and drowsy, with a sweaty, pale face; often gasps for breath. Feels better upon sitting up, worse on lying down and worse in the evening.

Arsenicum. A thin, watery nasal discharge irritates the nostrils and upper lip. The keynote is burning pains that are relieved by heat. The throat is relieved by hot drinks. Patient feels better indoors even though nose is stopped up. Head colds tend to go down into the chest. There may be dry cough; everything feels worse after midnight.

Belladonna. At the sudden onset of cold, patient has a flushed face, skin that feels hot and dry to the touch. Fever often strikes quickly, along with restlessness and sensitivity to light. The sore throat is often bright red, worse on the right side. Patient may suffer from a short, dry, tickling cough that is worse at night. Infrequent thirst is another symptom.

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Bryonia. The Bryonia patient is often known as "the bear," wanting to be left alone and lying perfectly still, growling when disturbed. Symptoms are worse with the slightest movement. Is thirsty for large amounts of cold drinks. The cold tends to travel into the chest. The cough is hard and dry, often accompanied by chest pains and a bursting headache, and is aggravated if patient steps into a warm room. Lips and mouth are dry, but the patient may have watery discharge and a stuffy nose.

Dulcamara. This is the reverse of *Gelsemium*, the cold coming on when the weather or temperature suddenly changes from hot to cold. There is a profuse watery discharge from nose and eyes, and the nose runs more in a warm room than a cold one.

Euphrasia. Contrary to *Allium cepa*, a profuse watery nasal discharge from the nose and eyes makes the eyes but not the nose sore. The discharge is worse at night, when the patient is lying down. Conversely, the cough is worse by day, but better when the patient is lying down.

Ferrum phos. When a beginning cold is accompanied by a slight fever, *Ferrum phos.* is often indicated. This remedy has proved useful in the early stages of many infections, but it is difficult to find any firm guidelines for its use as it did not bring out distinctive symptoms in proving.

Gelsemium. Warm, moist weather often brings on the slow onset of this cold. The patient feels sluggish, chilly, and has a dull headache with a heavy feeling in the eyes and limbs. Wants to be left alone. There is much sneezing and a watery discharge that irritates the nose, but there is seldom any thirst.

Hepar sulphuris. The cold is apt to develop in cold, dry weather, with a sticking sensation in back of throat that feels like a splinter. The cold spreads from throat to ear. Pain extends to the ears on swallowing. Nasal discharge is yellow. The cough has a rattling sound and the patient may cough up thick yellow mucus. Extremely sensitive to drafts, the patient is both chilly and sweaty, with perspiration that smells sour.

Mercurius. For a cold that begins with creeping chilliness. There is much sneezing, with raw smarting nostrils. Either a thick yellow-green nasal discharge or a profuse watery discharge irritates the nose and upper lip. Saliva accumulates because it hurts to swallow. A bad odor emanates from the mouth and the whole person smells sick.

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Natrum muriaticum. Begins with sneezing and a nasal discharge that is either watery or of the consistency of egg white, and irritates the nose. The nose becomes stopped up and there is a loss of smell and taste. A cough may develop, with stitches in chest. Often patient has a bursting headache and fever blisters. Is annoyed by sympathy.

NMX vomica. During the early stages of a cold. Person has sneezing spells; nose runny during the daytime and stopped up at night. Throat is sore and person is irritable. Feels chilly at the slightest movement, is worse when exposed to cold air, and may develop a painful cough.

Pulsatilla (from wind flowers). For "ripe" cold with thick, creamy yellow discharge. The nose is stuffed up at night and indoors, flows in open air. Despite a fever, the patient is not thirsty. Is apt to be weepy and wants attention and sympathy. Craves open air; better from moving about. The lips are chapped, and peel.

If a headache accompanies your cold, consult the section on headaches, in chapter 10 on women. We have placed this subject here because women are more prone to headaches, but this material is also relevant to men.

Linus Pauling believes that large doses of vitamin C are effective in averting a cold. Other researchers disagree. We don't know the answer. Patients repeatedly tell us that they have aborted colds and other respiratory infections by taking high doses of vitamin C. Therefore, I suggest that you take 500 to 1000 milligrams of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) every hour or two. If bowels become loose or burning, this may indicate that you are excreting excess ascorbic acid; cut back and symptoms will subside.

Vitamin A seems to be beneficial for tissue covering and lining the nose and throat as well as the urinary and intestinal tracts. Take at least 20,000 or 25,000 units per day.

To prevent future colds, consider one of the precepts of holistic health: Illness is a signal that some aspect of your life deserves attention and reform. As Edward Bauman, editor of *The Holistic Health Handbook*, expresses it: "We need to allow ourselves the opportunity to rest, reflect, and rejuvenate—and to come to terms with the behavior that was originally responsible for our disease." You might also consider whether this cold may be a handy escape hatch. A young friend repeatedly caught cold until she figured out that this usually occurred when she wanted to avoid an obligation or when she felt stressed. Even though you may recall a specific occasion on which

you were exposed to the highly contagious cold virus, the question remains: why were you susceptible at that particular time.⁷

BEYOND FIRST AID: A cold isn't always a viral infection. Watery nose and eyes may be an allergic reaction, or due to sinus congestion. A sore throat may be the beginning of a serious illness. If symptoms persist, consult your physician.

For the Pain and Discomfort of a Cold...

Aspirin manufacturers have led us to believe that aspirin is good for a cold. These claims, according to a report submitted to the Food and Drug Administration in 1977, are "subtly misleading if not downright deceptive." Aspirin is not safe for everybody and not harmless (see chapter 10).

Heavily advertised cold and cough remedies contain, in addition to aspirin, an antihistamine to dry up nasal secretions. This ingredient, according to Dr. Sol Katz, head of the pulmonary disease division at Georgetown University Hospital, is "worthless, expensive, and harmful." A leading allergist, Ben Feingold, M.D., states that "antihistamine drugs neither prevent nor cure the 'common cold'... Antihistamines may in some cases influence the severity of the symptoms of the 'common cold,' but the cause remains unaffected, and the course of the illness is not shortened."

FLU

Influenza, commonly called flu, manifests symptoms of chills and fever, headache, general aches and pains. In uncomplicated cases, the acute symptoms usually last for only a few days.

If you come down with flu, consider the following remedies:

Arsenicum album. Patient is restless, fearful, aching, and irritable. Is thirsty for sips of water and is better from warm drinks, worse from cold ones. Dislikes the smell, or even the sight, of food. Has burning pains here and there, and usually feels worse after midnight.

Bryonia. Patient has a painful cough and pain in the throat and chest. Everything feels worse from even the slightest motion. Patient is

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irritable, quiet, wants to be left alone. Is usually very thirsty, with dry mouth and lips.

Eupatorium perfoliatum. Patient experiences a deep aching in the bones and even the eyeballs are sore. May feel totally "wiped out," unable to exert the least effort. Is usually thirsty, especially as the chill begins to come on.

Gelsemium. There is gradual onset of chilling, aching, lassitude, and fever. Patient is not thirsty. Persistently apathetic and indifferent to life. Lies quietly, eyelids drooping.

Nux vomica. *Nux vomica* is sometimes indicated when a cold has developed into influenza. The patient is irritable, chilly, sensitive to noises and odors, worse from cold or open air. Is better lying down and from warmth.

Phosphorus. Often the patient doesn't show the severity of the illness. A child, for example, with a temperature of 104 degrees may play happily. Colds that go down into the chest, accompanied by a dry, tight cough, often respond to Phosphorus. Patient may feel very weak. Is thirsty for refreshing ice-cold drinks, but may vomit as soon as the water is warm in the stomach. Has laryngitis with or without pain, and may lose voice completely.

Many people all over the world have avoided flu by taking the homeopathic "cold and flu" tablet. Dosage: one tablet every two to four weeks throughout the flu season. This tablet is made from the combined strains of influenza virus from the major flu epidemics since 1918. The combined strains are then homeopathically prepared and potentized. No ill effects have ever been reported from the "cold and flu" tablet, and the rate of protection has been high. In the flu epidemic of 1918 to 1920, the homeopaths lost only 1 percent of their patients, as opposed to 30 to 40 percent under allopathic care. Fortunately, allopathic treatment today is more effective than in the twenties.

As antibiotics do not affect viral diseases such as influenza, ordinary medicine has very little to offer in the treatment of flu. Judging by the ill-fated swine flu program that began in February of 1976, characterized by bureaucratic confusion and serious side effects, including fatalities, it seems unlikely that the government will attempt another massive campaign to inoculate the public against flu.

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BEYOND FIRST AID: The influenza virus weakens the body's defenses against bacteria, and there is the risk of developing a secondary pneumonia. Therefore, the person recovering from an attack of influenza must be very careful not to get chilled or overtired. If symptoms worsen or linger, see your doctor.

COUGHS

Coughing is an effective way of keeping foreign matter out of the delicate air passages. The presence of an irritant such as bacteria, dust, or pollen in the lower parts of the respiratory system stimulates the production of mucus, which coats and flushes out the undesirable material. Such a cough will sound "juicy," telling you that there is something down there to be coughed up. Do not suppress your cough with any form of cough medicine. By doing so, you are blocking the protective mechanism of the body that is trying to expel the mucus to prevent a deeper infection.

For remedies to help a cough, consider these remedies that have cough symptoms.

Aconite. The cough comes on suddenly after exposure to cold dry wind. A constant short, dry cough with a croupy sound awakens the patient from sleep. Awakens with a sense of anxiety. Cough arises from the larynx when patient enters a warm room.

Belladonna. Person is red-faced, burning hot, with dilated pupils. The cough begins as if a speck had settled in larynx. Sudden onset; dry, teasing cough keeps household awake at night.

Bryonia. A hard, dry cough hurts the chest and necessitates sitting up in bed. As with Aconite, the cough becomes worse when entering a warm room. Worse from movement; patient is thirsty for cold drinks; irritable, wanting to be left alone.

Ferrum Phos. A short, painful cough from irritation or tickling in the windpipe.

Hepar sulph. This is another remedy indicated by oversensitivity, especially to cold air and the slightest draft. Patient wants to be wrapped up and can't bear to be uncovered; even putting a hand out of bed may start a coughing spell. Cough is loose, rattling, and croupy;

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patient may cough up thick yellow mucus. Sometimes a coughing spell causes strangling and gagging.

Kali bichromicum. The cough has a brassy and hacking sound that seems to come from a tickle at the base of the throat. Expectoration is long strings of ropy, tough mucus that may be yellowish.

Nux vomica. A dry, teasing cough; sore larynx and chest. Cough may come in spells and end with retching; more apt to occur in cold, dry, windy weather. Patient often feverish; shivers when moving or uncovered. Oversensitive to noise, odors, light, or music; easily offended.

Phosphorus. This remedy is often indicated when a head cold has gone into the chest. A dry, tickling, exhausting cough may come from the larynx or farther down in the chest. Patient may feel sensation of tightness across the chest or as if a great weight were pressing on it. Cough is induced by talking or by being in the open air. May have a bursting headache. Thirsty for ice-cold drinks and fruit juices.

Pulsatilla. There is a dry cough in the evening but it sounds loose in the morning. Patient may have paroxysms of coughing with gagging and choking, and will bring up thick yellowish mucus. The cough is worse on coming into a warm room and, as always with *Pulsatilla*, the person is better in the open air. May feel as if there is a weight on the chest.

Rumex crispus (made from a plant known as yellow dock). One of its symptoms is the opposite of *Aconite*: cough occurs when going outside. Person has dry, short paroxysms of coughing or a constant hack.

Spongia. Patient awakens from sleep with a suffocating feeling; difficulty breathing. Anxious, as with croup. A loud cough sounding like sawing through a board; worse from talking.

As any concert- or theatergoer knows, coughs can be dry or rattling, or start with a tickle high in the throat. For immediate relief, suck a slippery elm lozenge, black currant pastille or lemon drop. Or, if you're at home, make your own cough mixture of equal parts honey, glycerine, and lemon juice; take a half-teaspoon and hold in the mouth as long as possible. Avoid all medicated cough drops; they contain camphor, menthol, eucalyptus or chloroform, all of which render a homeopathic remedy useless.

If cough remedies temporarily make you feel better, there's a reason: most are loaded with alcohol. Vick's Nyquil contains 25

percent alcohol. It's not the alcohol that's so harmful; it's the action of the medicine, which suppresses the cough. As Dr. Ben Feingold explains it: "Suppression of the cough prevents natural elimination of bronchial secretions."

EARACHES

Occasionally, a common cold may extend into the ears. Warmth from a hot water bottle or propping up the head may relieve the pain.

The following homeopathic remedies have brought relief to persons suffering from earache:

Aconite. Sudden earache after a chill and exposure to cold. Ear is red hot and painful and better from warm applications.

Belladonna. Sudden onset, particularly when the right ear is affected. Patient has a dry, flushed face; dry, burning skin; is restless and thirstless.

Chamamilla. Patient is oversensitive and intolerant of pain, which makes for extreme irritability and even rudeness. The person needing *Chamamilla* is never calm. Sometimes one cheek is red and hot, the other pale and cold. Pain is worse from warm applications.

Ferrum phos. This is the most commonly indicated remedy for the early stages of an earache. The proving symptoms are not very distinctive, but the remedy has proved to be very helpful in the beginning stage of an inflammation such as occurs in an ear infection.

Hepar sulph. Person is worse from any draft, and wants to be well covered. Is irritable, complains of stitching pains, and is sensitive to touch.

Kali muriaticum (potassium chloride). Earache and diminished hearing, with cracking noises on blowing the nose and swallowing. Person has a stuffy sensation in the ear and the ear feels closed. *Kali mur*. is also indicated when the patient's hearing is impaired after the earache has subsided.

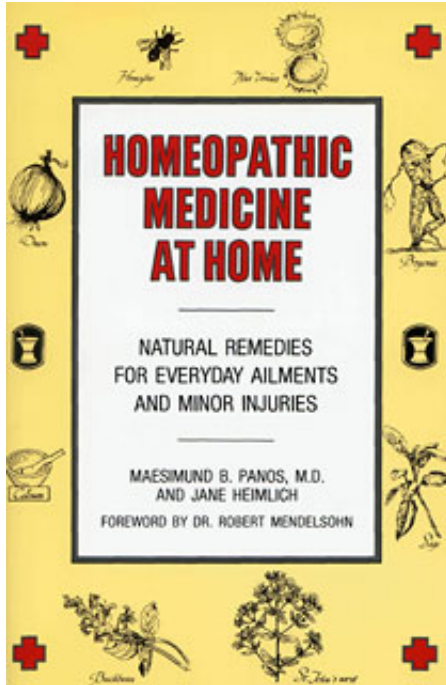
Magnesia phosphorica. This is a nerve remedy. Earache in this remedy is usually from exposure to cold wind rather than an infection. The right ear is most often affected. Pain is worse from washing face and neck in cold water. The strongest characteristic is relief from warmth.

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Mercurius. Earache in damp or changeable weather, worse at night. Patient is sweaty and smells sick. A large, flabby tongue shows imprint of teeth on the edges; there is much saliva and bad breath.

Pulsatilla. Redness and swelling in the external ear. Person experiences severe throbbing pains and ears feel as if they are stopped up. Worse from warmth and from becoming overheated, worse in the evening and at night. Patient craves fresh air and is often weepy.

BEYOND FIRST AID: Although a rare occurrence in an adult, an earache may be a warning of a middle-ear infection. Occasionally, the external ear becomes inflamed and painful. If you experience such symptoms, see your doctor.



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