

Health Reflections



Winter Coughs

A friend recently sent me this message -

“Oh man...wee girl coughing in supermarket...deep bark like I never heard before!”

That cough must have been striking because my friend is both a trained nurse and busy homeopath who has treated scores of coughing children over the last few decades.

During winter especially, a homeopath's ears become tuned in to the nuances of rasps and hacks and wheezes in clinic and – subconsciously - in public. In an article on baby and toddler health, another homeopath and GP, Jenifer Worden, confirms this tendency to pick up on coughs -

“When my children were little and off school with a cough I would take them shopping with me. It seemed that every other child had the same persistent cough and that up and down the supermarket aisles, the same wan faces were looking out over the top of the shopping trolleys.”

So, what do we do? Personally I tend to refrain from offering homeopathic advice to strangers in the shops, but when parents bring their children to my chronic case clinic, or when parents attend my acute prescribing classes, we find that there is a *lot* that can be done to alleviate respiratory complaints.



I often work in partnership with GPs who can monitor the physical aspects of a child's illness whilst the family and I address the underlying susceptibilities. In this way, reliance on gut-compromising treatments can often be safely avoided, and the benefits of holistic care can extend to the child's

long-term health rather than providing a quick-fix.

Homeopathic treatment is never based on the typical symptoms of a viral cough or croup or bronchitis, but on each child's unique pattern and reaction to the malady. This is true whether we are dealing with acute, self-limiting coughs, or with chronic cases where the cough has been present for many weeks or months.

As advised by the NHS, children exhibiting severe coughs, breathing difficulties, persistently high temperatures or a hot yet shivery body should be taken to A&E. But when a cough is tiresome but not serious enough for emergency medical attention, many parents turn to their home-prescriber's kit and consider the following:

Where is the problem? (e.g. chest);

How did it start? (e.g. suddenly or over a few days or in a cold wind);

Other clues or symptoms

(e.g. phlegm, thirst, fears);

Likenesses (e.g. feels like burning, feels like crumbs in the throat);

Easing or Exacerbating factors

(e.g. cold drinks ease cough but warm bed exacerbates).



Acute homeopathic prescriptions should be based on the most complete picture possible and professional advice should be sought if matters don't improve in response. It is also a wise idea to follow up the acute illness with a visit to your local homeopath for constitutional care.

In the case of a chronic, longer lasting cough, a homeopath will take care of a bigger totality. Naturally, each case is different but might reveal issues such as a history of premature birth, experiences of grief in utero, fraught family dynamics or environmental factors which need addressing.

So may the lights cast light, and go well.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ♥ READ BEFORE YOU THINK*

Baby and Toddler Health, Jenifer Worden: (www.britishhomeopathic.org - 2020);

The Homeopathy Handbook For Children, Didier Grandgeorge: (Narayana Publishers, 2012);

Homeopathic Medicine for Children and Infants: Dana Ullman (Tarcher Putnam, 1992);

Coughs and Colds: National Center for Homeopathy (www.homeopathycenter.org - 2017);

Colds, Coughs and Ear Infections in Children, NHS (www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/coughs-colds-ear-infections - 2018);

Essential Oil Safety: Tisserand & Young (Churchill Livingstone, 2014).

*Fran Lebowitz - Social Studies

Quick Word on Camphor

Many books and guides to homeopathy warn against the use of camphor during treatment. The old physicians like Phatak and Kent associated it with a shocking and antidoting nature, but for parents, it might be enough to understand that the smell of camphor acts as a cough suppressant. If you have read my article on **Auntie's Panties** you will understand how suppressing symptoms can undermine the body's good work and prolong illness.

This, of course, will bring into question the suitability of using conventional vapour rubs in your household. It is one of those personal choices best based on informed understanding of ingredients lists. As you do your homework, you might also encounter other ingredients which are not to your taste, such as synthetic fragrances, age-inappropriate essential oils, turpentine oil and petroleum-based paraffin (sometimes linked to asthma).

A gentler chest rub recipe is provided on the right.

Remedies for Children with Acute Coughs

Aconite 30c – Offer this at the first sign of a dry or barking cough, especially if the child is awakened by it at night. The Aconite state is often accompanied by anxiety and dryness of mouth and often preceded by cold and dry weather.

Bryonia 30c – Another remedy suited to a dry cough but often preceded by snotty snouts. A tickling in the larynx irritates the cough and the child holds the ribcage firmly in attempt to lessen the pain that the movement of breathing brings.

Phosphorus 30c - A persistent tickle behind the sternum is one of the clues leading to Phosphorus. The cough is hard and dry and forces the child to sit up in bed. The child asks for icy cold drinks, but going into cold air aggravates.

Pulsatilla 30c – Poor old Pulsatilla's cough is often worse at night and in warm places. This child wants to be cuddled and held and the cough might produce greenish expectoration at night and upon waking.

Kali bich 30c – Unlike Aconite, this remedy is more suited to an advanced stage of cough. It finds relief in warmth, in lying down and in bringing up a rosy, yellow expectoration. Often there is a sensation of a hair caught in the back of the throat.

The above is a starting point and there are many more acute remedies that can be considered. Give your child one pillule of the most fitting remedy, repeating once every 30 minutes until relief is obtained. If no relief is observed after 3 doses of the same remedy, choose the next best match. For on the spot advice in the UK, the Homeopathic Helpline is open 9 a.m. until midnight and can be reached on 09064 343 404.

Natural Chest Rub

With Lavender, Rosalina, Fragonia and Sweet Orange



Here's an alternative to conventional vapour rubs. At roughly 1% dilution, the mixture is generally suitable for children from 2 years of age, provided that the youngster in question has no known allergies to any of the ingredients.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoonful organic goosefat or shea butter;
1 tablespoonful coconut oil;
1 drop Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) essential oil;
1 drop Fragonia (*Agonis fragrans*) essential oil;
2 drops Rosalina (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) essential oil;
2 drops Sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*) essential oil.

Method: Over a gentle heat, melt the goosefat or shea butter with coconut oil. Pour into a clean glass jar, add the essential oils and stir. Lid, label and store out of reach of small hands.

If you wish, the amount of each essential oil may be doubled or tripled for children over 6 years old.

Application: Use your fingers to massage gently into the child's chest and soles of feet. Use as little as needed, reapplying every few hours during acute respiratory illness.

Please use this recipe responsibly and check with a reputable source before substituting any essential oils with others not listed here. Never use old or oxidised oils and avoid oils from endangered species of plants.

Remember that essential oils are powerful agents, even in seemingly small doses. Consult a qualified aromatherapist if your child has asthma or epilepsy or any allergic disposition or skin condition, to ensure the suitability of each constituent ingredient.

Each Health Reflections article and blog has been written for those who wish to learn about the true meaning of health, who desire to think broadly and who are ready to take responsibility for their own personal choices. All information shared is of educational nature and should not replace medical advice. No guarantees are made regarding accuracy or completeness of content, or its applicability to any condition or personal circumstance. If you choose to implement any of the ideas or principles described, you are taking full responsibility for your actions. In times of illness, seek professional healthcare.

AUDE SAPERE – MENTRA WYBOD – DARE TO GET IT

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