

## Homeopathy Simply Explained

Homeopathy is an effective and scientific system of healing which assists the natural tendency of the body to heal itself. It recognizes that all symptoms of ill health are expressions of disharmony within the whole person and that it is the patient who needs treatment, not the disease.

Different people react in different ways to the same illness. In order to find the correct remedy, your naturopathic physician or homeopath will need to know not only your physical symptoms but also about yourself and how your symptoms affect you.

Homeopathic remedies cannot cause side effects and you cannot become addicted to them. This is because only a very minute amount of the active ingredient is used in a specially prepared form.

### What is homeopathy?

In 1796 a German physician, Samuel Hahnemann, discovered a different approach to the cure of the sick which he called homeopathy (from the Greek words meaning "similar" and "suffering"). Like Hippocrates two thousand years earlier, he realized that there were two ways of treating ill health: the way of opposites (allopathic) and the way of similars (homeopathic).

Take for example, a case of insomnia. The allopathic way is to treat this by giving a drug to bring on an artificial sleep. This frequently involves the use of large or regular doses of drugs which can sometimes cause side effects or addiction.

The homeopathic way is to treat insomnia by giving the patient a minute dose of a substance which in large doses causes sleeplessness in a healthy person. Surprisingly, this will enable the patient to sleep naturally.

### How does it work?

Homeopathic remedies work by stimulating the body's own healing power. This power is very great and many complaints heal themselves unaided. However, when the healing process is faulty, blocked or slow, the homeopathic remedy acts as a stimulus to the curative powers of the body. To provide this stimulus your physician must prescribe the right remedy and the right dosage for you.

### What will your naturopathic physician need to know?

In order to find the right remedy, your physician will want to know all about you. The initial consultation can sometimes take as long as an hour. She/he will ask you many questions about yourself as well as your illness and will also want to know about the health

of your family, both present and past. Do not be afraid to mention something that is seemingly unimportant or unusual. Remember that anything you say is confidential.

### **What will the treatment be like and what do I have to do?**

Your naturopathic physician will give you a remedy, often in the form of pills which should be allowed to dissolve under your tongue. Nothing else should be put in your mouth for 30 minutes before or after taking the remedy, including toothpaste or cigarettes. Your physician will usually advise you that while having homeopathic treatment, you should not take any coffee or peppermint, or use eucalyptus oil, camphor, or menthol because these strong smelling substances can antidote the effects of most homeopathic remedies. For the same reason, she/he may ask you not to take any other form of medication without asking first. This may include over-the-counter medications for colds and coughs. If you are given homeopathic pills to take at a later date, be sure to store them in a cool dark place well away from anything with a strong smell.

### **What can I expect to happen?**

After taking your remedy you should notice some changes. For instance, it occasionally happens that your symptoms appear worse for a short time. This is the remedy taking effect and you should feel the beginnings of recovery when this period has passed. Alternatively, patients often experience a period of well being and optimism after taking the remedy.

If you develop a runny cold, rash, or some form of discharge, this is probably the remedy cleansing the body. These new symptoms will pass and should not be treated, as they are an important part of the healing process.

If you feel worried by any changes that you notice, contact your naturopathic physician. Whatever your reaction may be, your physician will need to know. You can help by making a few notes of your changing symptoms as a reminder for your next appointment.

### **How quickly will I be cured?**

This depends very much on what sort of illness you have. A very slowly developing complaint, such as a stomach ulcer, will not disappear overnight. Acute complaints can get better quickly. Complicated cases are cured from the inside and working outwards. This means that superficial or outer symptoms, such as skin disorders are often the last symptoms to go. Be patient. It is much better for you to be cured of both the cause of your illness and its symptoms than merely to relieve the symptoms. Every case is different, just as no two patients are alike.

### **Can I treat myself with homeopathic remedies?**

You can learn to use some homeopathic remedies at home. There are a number of excellent remedies which deal effectively with first aid problems such as cuts, stings, burns, bruises, stomachaches and childhood complaints. Ask your naturopathic physician for further information or find out more at one of many courses and seminars on this subject. If any minor complaint does not respond to your first aid treatment, consult your physician.