

Homeopathy *frequently asked questions*

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a safe and effective holistic treatment that can be both alternative and complementary. It has a wide range of uses in first aid, acute and chronic conditions and can be used to treat adults, children and animals.

What are Homeopathic remedies made from?

Remedies are mainly made from plants like Pulsatilla (the Pasque Flower), animal products like snake venom, minerals like calcium carbonate, metals like iron and some poisonous substances like arsenic and phosphorous.

Are Homeopathic remedies safe?

Even though Homeopathy uses some products that would be highly poisonous in crude form i.e. arsenic, the remedies are made safe by repeated dilution and succession (vigorous shaking). After the remedy has been prepared in this way, it is tested or 'proved' by healthy people, who take the remedy until symptoms arise. Mental, emotional and physical symptoms are carefully noted and a holistic (whole person – mental, emotional and physical) symptom picture of the remedy is formulated. When the remedy is then given to a person who is ill, it has a curative effect because it has been selected on the basis of the natural 'law of similars' – e.g. substances which can cause symptoms in a healthy person, can cure similar symptoms of disease.

What is the history of Homeopathy?

When Homeopathy was introduced as a medical art by Samuel Hahnemann over 200 years ago, it laid the groundwork for modern day holistic thought. Although earlier religious and philosophical thinkers had put forward the concept of the mind, body and spirit being intrinsically linked, such thought was not valued in a medical culture of the crudest form, when blood-letting, leeches and poisonings were all common place methods of 'treating' illness – although they frequently led to chronic ill-health or death. It was his abhorrence for these inhumane treatments, that led Samuel Hahnemann, himself a physician, chemist and translator of medical texts, to seek to find a gentler way to alleviate a patients' suffering and bring about cure.

What about modern day Homeopathy?

In the UK 5.75 million people a year see a complementary practitioner (not just homeopaths). 1 in 4 members of the public would like access to complementary medicine on the NHS. The Royal London Homeopathic Hospital is the largest of four NHS-funded homeopathic hospitals in the UK, treating around 2000 patients each week.

Is there real evidence that Homeopathy Works?

There is a good evidence base for homeopathy. By the end of 2007, 134 Randomised Controlled Trials of homeopathy had been published in peer-reviewed journals. Of these trials, 59 are positive i.e. demonstrating that homeopathy has an effect beyond placebo, eight are negative and the remaining 67 are inconclusive. This is despite the fact that RCT's are not a good way to trial homeopathy because it is an individual treatment. In 2005, the largest service evaluation of homeopathic treatment, carried out at Bristol Homeopathic Hospital, reported that 70 per cent of 6500 follow-up patients experienced improvement in their health.

(Source of information: The Society of Homeopaths – one of the registering bodies of professional homeopaths)