

## Swine Flu and Homeopathy – can it help?

Many people have been asking if homeopathy can help prevent or help with the symptoms of Swine Flu in any way. This information sheet has been put together to help answer some of the key questions.

NB You should always follow the advice given by the NHS, but homeopathy may be able to offer help in addition to this, particularly with easing the symptoms and possibly reducing the length of time that someone is ill.

### ***What should I do if I'm worried about Swine Flu?***

There is plenty of information available online at the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) You can also contact the Swine Flu information line on 0800 1513513

### ***What are the symptoms of Swine Flu?***

They are very similar to those of any other flu. The key symptoms that you need to look out for are:

- sudden fever (over 38C/100.4F)
- sudden cough

You may also see some or all of the following symptoms:

- fatigue/tiredness
- loss of appetite
- headache
- chills
- aching muscles or joints
- upset stomach – nausea, diarrhoea or vomiting
- sore throat, runny nose, sneezing

### ***What should I do if I think I have Swine Flu?***

First, check your symptoms. Stay at home and do an online assessment on the National Pandemic Flu Service website at [www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk](http://www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk) or phone 0800 1513000. This will help confirm your condition, and give you access to a prescription for the relevant medicine, usually Tamiflu or Relenza. You should get someone else to collect your prescription so as not to spread the illness yourself.

You only need to contact your GP if you:

- have a serious underlying illness
- are pregnant
- have sick child under 1 year old
- suddenly get more ill
- are still getting worse after 7 days (5 days for a child)

### ***Can homeopathy prevent Swine Flu or treat the symptoms? Is there any evidence?***

Some clinical trials have been done to look at whether taking homeopathic remedies, particularly a remedy called **Oscilloccinum** (also known as **Anas Barbariae**), can help prevent people getting influenza or reduce the severity of the symptoms. The research did not find any significant effect in prevention, but did show promising signs in reducing the length of the illness. You can read a summary of the research at

[www.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab001957](http://www.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab001957)

See also the information on the next page, giving details of a number of homeopathic remedies commonly used to treat flu and other similar conditions.

### ***I'd like to give homeopathy a try – what do I do?***

If you feel confident in using homeopathy, a list of some of the most commonly used remedies is given below. You can order remedies from Helios Pharmacy [www.helios.co.uk](http://www.helios.co.uk) or buy many of them from chemists or health food shops. Alternatively, you can contact a qualified homeopath like myself for advice. My contact details are on the website – see the [About my practice](#) section.

### **Common homeopathic remedies for flu and flu-like illnesses**

There are also a number of homeopathic remedies that can often help reduce the severity of flu symptoms. Different people will need different remedies, depending on their particular symptoms – choose the one that matches your symptoms most closely.

#### **\*Arsenicum-iodatum (Ars-iod)**

Burning discharges, irritating the nose and throat – mucus membranes red and sore  
Exhaustion, collapse  
Recurring fever and sweating – particularly heavy sweating at night  
Feel very chilly – can't bear cold  
Tendency to diarrhoea, may also be vomiting  
Hoarse racking cough – difficult to cough anything up

#### **Belladonna**

Sudden onset of symptoms, often in the middle of the night  
High fever, with flushed face and glassy eyes – may be delirious  
Patient will feel burning hot and red, but often not much sweating  
Throbbing headache  
Thirsty  
Symptoms are worse for touch, light or any jarring movement

#### **Bryonia**

Symptoms come on slowly  
Feel worse for any kind of movement, even talking or opening eyes  
Irritable, want to be left alone  
Feel very dry and thirsty – want lots of cold water  
Dry cough with stitching pains on coughing  
Intense headache, especially round forehead  
Pains may feel better for firm pressure on the affected place

#### **\*Eupatorium-perforatum (Eup-p)**

Sudden onset of illness  
Deep aching pains in the back and bones – feel like they are broken or bruised  
Bursting headache at back of head, with nausea  
Shivering chills down back, especially in the mornings  
Hoarseness in the mornings, and pain in chest when coughing  
Very thirsty for cold water, but may vomit after eating or drinking  
Very chilly

#### **\*Gelsemium (Gels)**

Symptoms come on slowly.  
Aching, heaviness and weariness throughout the body, especially limbs – legs may tremble when try to stand up.  
Drowsy, fuzzy headed, forgetful – drooping eyelids  
Clammy skin, with flushes of cold and hot – chills running up and down spine, flushed face  
Congestion in the head, especially starting at the back of the head  
Dry lips but not thirsty

### **Nux vomica (Nux-v)**

**Many people seem to be finding this remedy most helpful for this flu outbreak, so it may be the first one to consider, so long as there is a good match with your symptoms**

Severe chills throughout the body and limbs – feel freezing inside, even when covered up with blankets, but feel even worse when uncovered

Aching in the body, which doesn't feel better for movement

Sore throat which feels better for warm drinks

Thirsty, with dry mouth, throat or lips

Nausea

Fatigue, feel better for sleep

Dull, flat, indifferent mood, or may be irritable

### **Rhus tox**

Symptoms come on slowly

High temperature – may feel hot inside yet cold to touch

Pain and stiffness in joints

Very restless, constantly moving around in bed

Feel worse for any cold drafts

Want small sips of cold water

\* These three remedies can be used separately, or bought in a “combination remedy” from Helios pharmacy ([www.helios.co.uk/swine\\_flu](http://www.helios.co.uk/swine_flu)). This combination has traditionally been used to prevent and treat the early stages of flu, although no formal trials have been carried out.

**Anas barbariae** (see above) can also be purchased from Helios – 200 potency is recommended - and tried in a similar way – see the next section for guidance on how to take remedies.

Other remedy suggestions for flu are also given on Helios's website.

#### *How do I take the remedies?*

- Choose the remedy that matches your symptoms best
- Take the remedy in a clean mouth – when you have not eaten or drunk anything for at least 10 minutes – and don't eat or drink for at least 10 minutes after
- Take one pill and let it dissolve in your mouth
- Repeat the dose 3 times a day for a couple of days – if there is no change after this time you probably need to stop and try another remedy
- If the symptoms are much improved you can stop the remedy and only take it again if/when things worsen again

#### *What else can I do to help recover quickly?*

- Rest as much as possible
- Drink plenty of clear fluids
- Eat as little and often as you feel you need to
- Only take as much aspirin, paracetamol etc as you have to – these drugs are very useful in relieving symptoms but they also stop your body's natural healing processes to some degree
- Consider using Echinacea, Vitamin C (at least 1000mg a day), Zinc or other vitamin and mineral supplements to boost your immune system