

Homeopathy: What is it?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine developed in the 18th century by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann. Unlike conventional medicine where drugs are given to work against the body and its symptoms, homeopathic medicines work by reinforcing the body's own natural healing capacity.

In medicine, there are two basic ways for treating illness (i) the way of opposites (ii) the way of similars. Consider a patient with a cough. The way of opposite is to use anti-cough medications that suppress the cough. The way of similars (homeopathy) is to give a medicine to help the body recover from the cough. A homeopathic substance that will cause a cough in healthy person can cure a similar cough and restore health in the ill patient.

In homeopathy, your uniqueness is very important. Using our cough example, conventional medicine treats all cough alike. In homeopathy, how you uniquely express the cough is important to your treatment, as are the other symptoms associated with your cough. All of the symptoms you experience are important in helping select the correct homeopathic medicine for you.

To help your Naturopathic Doctor identify the appropriate homeopathic medicine, accurate observation and reporting your symptoms is essential. Here are topics that you can think about before your next visit:

- Unusual symptoms and the characteristics of your illness
- The pattern of your symptoms and the cause of your illness
- Anything that makes your symptoms better or worse (other than drugs)
- Your level of energy and what effects it
- How your energy changes during the normal day
- Your body's response to weather
- Your sleep position and patterns
- Recurrent dreams
- Foods that you especially like, dislike, or that effect you
- Your thirst and fluid intake
- Your bodily functions (menses, elimination)
- Your personality

Homeopathic medicines are made from plant, animal or mineral preparations, which are very dilute. After taking the homeopathic substance, your symptoms may become worse before they improve. The worsening is usually a good sign that the medicine is working and your body is "house cleaning" in order to restore your health. If this occurs, please contact your Naturopathic Doctor.

Important tips for storage and use of all homeopathic medicines:

- 1) Avoid coffee, camphor, mint, perfume, strong odors, essential oils, or recreational drugs since these substances are known to antidote the effects of many homeopathic medicines.
- 2) Store your homeopathic medicine away from light, strong odors and extreme heat or cold.

- 3) Take your medicine at least 10 minutes before or after eating or drinking since food and drinks may interfere with its activity.
- 4) Do not touch the pellets with your hands. Gently tap 2-3 pellets into the lid and then toss them into your mouth so they can dissolve under your tongue. If you have liquid homeopathic medicine, take 2-3 squirts under your tongue.
- 5) Take your homeopathic medicine **ONLY** as prescribed.