

Preparing for Your Homeopathic Consultation

This handout has been prepared to help you participate effectively in your homeopathic treatment. It contains instructions for preparing *for* your homeopathic consultation, and practical information about the course of treatment. Please read the material carefully and keep it to re-read occasionally, especially if you have not been in for some time.

The information that you provide the physician is essential for effective homeopathic treatment. The homeopathic consultation involves extensive questioning that may cover unfamiliar ground for those who are used to a few quick questions from a busy doctor. To better prepare you for the consultation, the kinds of information the homeopathic physician requires are described below.

First you will be asked to briefly list the conditions that have caused you to seek treatment and for how long you have had these problems. It is a good idea to mention these main problems in order of importance. Next, you will be asked to describe each of these conditions in your own words, as fully as possible. Include everything that is characteristic of your problems. Precise details are best, but only if you can be definite about them. If applicable, your account should include, but not be limited to:

1. **CHARACTER OF SENSATION:** Does it feel tingling, burning, numb, crawling, pressure or itching, etc.? Is the pain cutting, dull, aching or cramping? These are suggestions only.
2. **LOCATION:** Where is the complaint located? For example, 'pain in the left temple' is more helpful than simply 'headache'.
3. **DISCHARGE:** Is there discharge from any part of the body? Give color, consistency, quantity and odor of the discharge.
4. **AGGRAVATING OR AMELIORATING FACTORS:** What makes your complaint better or worse? Does your condition vary with time of day or night or season of the year? Is it affected by your position (sitting, standing, lying etc.) or by activity (motion of any body part, walking vigorous exercise etc.)? How does temperature, weather, eating, and sleeping affect your condition? Anything that clearly influences the intensity or pattern of your symptoms should be reported.
5. **CONCOMITANTS:** Does anything regularly occur in association with your symptoms? Are you always nauseated when you have a headache? Does your skin clear up when you have your premenstrual symptoms?
6. **ONSET OF SYMPTOMS:** Do you associate the onset of your condition with any emotional upset, prolonged or pronounced stress, lack of sleep, exposure to weather, an injury, drug use, or surgery, or any other factors? Does anything cause a recurrence of symptoms?

7. **GENERAL INFORMATION:** In addition to information about your primary problems, the homeopathic doctor needs to know a lot about you in general. This is important, and may be decisive when choosing the remedy. How vital and energetic do you feel? How does your sense of well-being change as a result of environmental or emotional factors? How are you affected in general by temperature, weather, time of day, activity level, eating and sleeping? What makes you feel better; worse? This may be different from what makes a particular symptom better or worse.
8. **LIFE HISTORY:** The doctor will also want to briefly know your life history, including any traumatic emotional event or significant patterns.
9. **MENTAL / EMOTIONAL NATURE:** During what activities do you feel most emotional? What are your most characteristic emotional patterns? What limits your ability to express yourself fully? What about your memory, clarity of thought and ability to create? Dreams are often helpful and it is often useful to bring in dreams from the week before the consultation.

Previous medical records are always helpful. Please bring copies along with you if possible. The first determination that the homeopathic doctor must make is an accurate diagnosis of your condition. For this reason a physical examination may be done and laboratory tests and x-rays are ordered when they are deemed necessary.

Homeopathic consultation for chronic disease takes between 90-150 minutes (1.5 – 2.5 hours). Acute diseases require a shorter visit, usually 30 minutes. During this type of visit, chronic symptoms will be ignored and only those symptoms that have arisen at the time of the acute disease will be considered. You will still need to relate your symptoms as precisely and with as much detail as possible. The physical exam is usually limited to those procedures necessary for that particular acute condition. Again, lab tests or x-rays will be ordered as required.

Based upon the information you provide, you will be given a remedy to begin stimulating the healing process. If you are being treated for a chronic condition you will usually be instructed to take a single dose of your remedy in the office. The single dose will be all that you require for a month or more. Acute cases and certain chronic cases often require more frequent doses. Please follow the instructions you will be given about how to take and store your homeopathic medicine as well as what to avoid during treatment. If you have any questions please feel free to call.

During an acute illness, you should notice improvement within the first 24 hours, though you will still require a normal, gradual convalescence. While undergoing chronic treatment, each individual reacts to the remedy in a different way. Usually the effects are gentle and gradual, though at times more rapid or dramatic changes occur. Since the remedies work to improve your general health, you should not be concerned if local symptoms do not change immediately. **Patience is a necessary** ingredient you must add to treatment. Temporary minor aggravations of symptoms or recurrences of previously experienced symptoms sometimes occur. These are not side effects of the remedy, but an indication that the body is responding to the medicinal stimulus. If any reaction occurs that concerns you, do not hesitate to call.

People with chronic symptoms improve over widely varying periods of time, usually 3-24 months. This is the time necessary to complete the cure. You will, however, experience definite improvement in your symptoms within a few weeks of starting the correct remedy. During the whole of this time, regular follow-up visits are essential to nurture the healing process through the inevitable remedy changes and occasional

setbacks that occur. These follow-up visits are scheduled at varying intervals anywhere from three weeks to six months depending upon the individual characteristic of each person's progress.

Follow-up appointments are very important. Often they will be scheduled even when you are doing well or continuing to make progress. This sometimes seems unusual or unnecessary to patients unfamiliar to homeopathy. We're all used to the conventional idea of going to the doctor only when we are sick. However, our observation has been that those patients who return for their regularly scheduled follow-up appointments complete their homeopathic treatment in shorter time and with better results. Although you may be taking homeopathic medicine and be under active care for as long as two or sometimes three years, it is important to keep in mind that the ultimate goal of homeopathic treatment is to reach a high level of health without being dependent upon any medication.

Homeopathy can be used as a comprehensive medical system as well as for the treatment of specific complaints. Once the treatment of a specific disease is complete, the homeopathic remedies can be used to strengthen the person's mental and emotional life. This will help to prevent disease in the future by increasing the person's resistance to emotional stress. Of course, lifestyle and diet are also important in preventing disease.

Dr. Rowe offers Introductory classes in Homeopathic Theory. Please ask if you would like more information. Homeopathic study groups are also available. It has been our experience that the more individuals learn about homeopathy the better they are able to assist the progress of their own treatment. Another way to learn about homeopathy is through the many books that are available.

Good books to start with include:

Everybody's Guide to Homeopathic Medicine, by Cummings and Ullman.
Discovering Homeopathy, by Dana Ullman,
Homeopathy: Medicine of the New Man, by George Vithoulkas
The Patient Not the Cure, by Marjorie Blackie.
Impossible Cure, by Amy Lansky