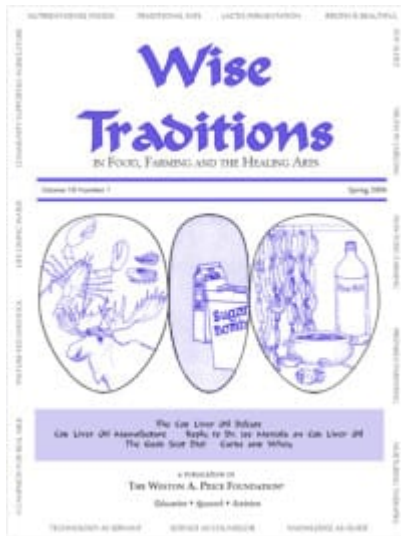


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Homeopathy treatments for urinary tract infections

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I love ants. You know the kind. The big, crunchy ones called carpenter ants. “Eew!” you might think. But for homeowners, they’re actually useful creatures because they only feast on rotten wood. If carpenter ants have invaded your home, it’s because your wood is bad. The ants are merely symptoms that reflect an inner, structural weakness. This gives you information from which to act accordingly.

When we bought our home nearly thirty years ago, we were alarmed by the large numbers of carpenter ants that swarmed over the bedroom draperies and the living room furniture. They were strapping, full-sized specimens, looking as though they'd been raised on a steady diet of X-factor butter and cod liver oil.

Carpenter ants can destroy a house, so it was tempting to call an exterminator. But I resisted. I knew toxic pesticides were not only dangerous, but were also just a temporary and cheap quick fix. Because I had been an anti-pesticide activist in my youth, I knew the real problem was the rotting wood, not the ants. We needed to discover an alternative solution.

One morning, I sat on the floor to observe the ant goings-on. At first it seemed they were randomly scattered about, but after an hour or so I discerned a pattern of behavior as they

entered the room and then vanished under the toeboard. It was evident that their ingress was somewhere near our bedroom window.

That weekend, my husband pried open the window sill with a crow bar. What was revealed was shocking. It looked like a National Geographic special on the colonization of African killer ants! Now it was obvious what needed to be done: 1) scoop out the nest (yuck); 2) gut out the soft wood, of which there was plenty; 3) gird the front of the house with fresh wood and a new stone foundation.

When the project was completed, our old home had a new side, stones that girded the foundation, fresh lumber, and not a single morsel of unreliable wood. Now we could rest assured that the house would stand for another eighty years and not suffer the symptoms of ants, even though we never extinguished them.

ANTS WERE THE SYMPTOMS

Had we annihilated the ants with pesticides, we might indeed have purged that particular colony. But then we'd have been left with the same compromised wood, which would sooner or later attract others of their ilk to colonize anew. The ants were a symptom. The true cause of the problem was the decay.

Shortly after this incident, I ran into the previous owner of our home and asked if he had ever seen ants. "Of course," he reported. "We saw them every spring and just had the exterminator spray around the house. They'd disappear for the rest of the year until we'd call him the following spring for the next show." Unbeknownst to him and the exterminator, the ants had become a disproportionate symptom and had nearly eaten away the entire front of the house because the rotted wood had never been addressed.

This scenario is not unlike what happens in our bodies. If we

recognize and know how to read symptoms, we can determine the appropriate call to action. Without knowing how to interpret indicators of danger, we're lulled into accepting a quick, and perhaps ultimately costly fix.

ANTIBIOTICS AND PESTICIDES

Angela had been to her doctor, who confirmed what Angela already knew. Another urinary tract infection (UTI) was at hand and her doctor, yet again, prescribed antibiotics and a strong analgesic. This was the fourth recurrence that winter. The repetition of these infections had taken front stage in her life for the last five years. At first Angela believed that it was her faulty body that was the cause of the recurrences. She often felt that way after a visit to her doctor. An "anatomic abnormality" was the diagnosis last year. "Congenital reflux" had been another guess. But then if that was so, why didn't she have these infections her entire life, instead of only in the last five years? The last diagnosis was that it was an *E. coli* infection in her urinary tract. "What?! I've been on antibiotics nearly all winter! Antibiotics are supposed to kill bacteria, aren't they?"

Answers slowly revealed themselves when Angela did her homework and took the matter into her own hands—a necessary step in gaining control of one's health. She found studies that showed that UTIs commonly recur and coincide with previous antibiotics use. "That's it!" she suddenly recalled. "This all began around five years ago when I had my wisdom teeth removed and took a round of antibiotics." She concluded that the antibiotics were not relieving her present condition, but worsening it month by month, year after year. What she read next confirmed this: *E. coli* infections can actually be caused by the use of antibiotics. In other words, the drug was the agent of this contradictory effect and had worsened her overall condition.

This time she decided to use the homeopathy I taught at a

weekend seminar which she attended. For the first time she learned to appreciate symptoms as indicators. I had called them gifts. That's when she understood that her symptoms were a representation of what was occurring in her urinary tract, as well as of the way she was feeling in general.

HOW ANGELA CHOSE HER REMEDY

At first glance, Angela considered *Sarsaparilla* because of the pain that occurred at the end of urination. Yet she also recognized that her front stage symptom was anxiety. One of the more important aspects of choosing a homeopathic remedy is that when emotional aspects attend illness, they need to be given more weight in the case. That meant *Cantharis* came to the forefront because of her anxiety. This was particularly noteworthy because being anxious was unusual for her; normally her demeanor was calm. She had originally disregarded that symptom by chalking it up to the fact that she had had her customary coffee, not once, but twice daily for the last week or so.

But that information led her to consider another key remedy: *Nux vomica*. This was more fully confirmed since her sleep was peppered with wakefulness from about 3-5 a.m. for the past several months.

Yet Angela was nearly frantic. "I'm riddled with worry. It feels as though this could get really serious if I don't take the antibiotics, but I know it will only return again, perhaps worse, if I do take them. Will the remedies really work quickly, or will I have to wait a week? Maybe I should have something for this intense pain I feel on urinating." I assured her that when there's an infection, homeopathic medicines have a reputation for addressing the underlying issue. That meant that a first level of relief can be noticed within a day or so and often within hours.

Angela considered both *Nux vomica* and *Cantharis*. One indicator

for *Nux vomica* was the fact that she was craving coffee and had been irritable as well as wakeful for the last few nights. Coupled with her firm belief that antibiotics had caused a deepening of her pathology, *Nux vomica* again seemed the likely first choice.

Angela made the decision to begin with *Nux vomica* 30 every two hours for up to five doses. This would be followed the next day by *Cantharis* 30, taken four to five times that day, and if there was still no improvement, she'd continue it for another day or so. She kept a journal to document her experience, complete with dates and dosing times.

THE OUTCOME

Angela was surprised and delighted with what happened next. Within a few hours of taking the third dose of *Nux vomica* she fell asleep for a three hour nap. This gave her a bit more calm and although the urethral pain remained, she wasn't quite as frightened by it. This is a good sign, since symptoms, particularly mental ones, represent the pathology. On taking *Cantharis* the next day, the pain was about half improved by late afternoon, and gone by bedtime. On the third day Angela returned to work. "My sleep was fully re-established, and it was then that I realized my urine had had an odor. Only after the remedies did I notice that odor was conspicuously absent for the first time in months...maybe even years."

It's been over three years now and Angela has not experienced another infection, not even one annoying, little twinge. The reaction to the remedies stimulated a deep, curative, and gentle conclusion to her chronic condition. A legitimately sturdy body that is able to resist infection is a hallmark of honest health. When we tap into the clues that symptoms provide to find the correct remedy, we must bow to the body's wisdom. How intelligent symptoms are! We love 'em. Just like those ants.

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SOME HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES FOR URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

SARSAPARILLA 30

This is one of the more important remedies to consider when a woman has a urinary tract infection with pain most concentrated at the end of urination. The urine flows in dribbles and sometimes she is unable to void completely unless standing. This remedy is useful for pain that burns, but pain may not be the most pressing symptom.

STAPHYSAGRIA 30

Here's a remedy most chosen for women who frequently get cystitis after sexual activity. It represents the common ailment called "honeymoon cystitis." This remedy also has a reputation for aiding women who suffer UTIs after being

abused, either physically or emotionally, or have recently been embarrassed. So common is Staphysagria in this malady that it ought to be considered if no other remedy seems to fit the “picture” of the symptoms.

CANTHARIS 30

This remedy is most useful for those who have a strong sense of urgency, yet very little is voided on reaching the bathroom. The sufferer may be compelled to rush to the toilet and may even lose urine on the way. Sometimes there’s a sense of frenzied desperation that accompanies the infection and the pain may make this symptom worse. Oddly, the woman may find herself interested in sexual activity during the infection.

NUX VOMICA 30

This common remedy has a reputation for addressing UTIs when the woman has overindulged in stimulating foods such as alcohol, coffee, or foods that are of poor quality. It’s also useful for those who live a fast paced life or experience anxiety or frustration when ambition is impeded. Most important, Nux vomica is a remedy for abuse of drugs, whether they are over-the-counter, street, or prescribed. Over indulgence in alcohol can also set up a state that would require this remedy. People who need Nux vomica are often irritable and wake in the night at about 3-4 a.m. Sometimes a concomitant symptom is the need to have a bowel movement at the same time as the urine urgency. Chills often accompany the infection and the urgency can be extreme.

ACONITUM 30

I call this the remedy for “quick shock.” It’s useful anytime when there might be a shock to the system that has a sudden onset. Imagine a hot day of swimming in warm water and then hopping into a cold, air conditioned car while still wet. If a urinary tract infection ensues, you might immediately think of this remedy. A fright, such as after an accident, can also be

a call for Aconitum. Burning before urination as well as a sense of pressure in the bladder will also point to this choice.

ARNICA MONTANA 30

This is the quintessential remedy for injuries, such as from child birth. Women who contract cystitis after the birth of a baby are often aided with a few days of this miracle remedy. One remarkable characteristic calling for the need of Arnica is an inability to empty the bladder, usually due to injury to the perineum. There may be some dribbling of urine as well.

PULSATILLA 30

This is the remedy of choice if the woman has urine leaking on coughing, laughing or sneezing. She's often a soft, round and feminine-type and gets a bit weepy when she gets these infections. Nausea and other gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present, particularly from eating ice cream, or other rich, creamy foods. Urination may smart, but it's not nearly as painful as in the picture of other remedies.