



Homeopathy for Colds and Flu

By Fran Cudlipp

'Tis the season to sneeze and shiver! Seasonal colds and flu are back again!

Flu symptoms come on rapidly, and may include: severe headache; chills; aches and pains, particularly in the back and legs; fever, often with a high temperature, warm skin and flushed face, and the eyes may be sore and red. Respiratory symptoms are fairly mild to begin with, consisting of a scratchy sore throat, burning sensation in the chest, dry cough and runny nose. There is a feeling of profound malaise, with a desire to stay in bed. The symptoms usually disappear rapidly after 2-3 days, though the bronchitis and coughing may last for several weeks, and the weakness and fatigue may continue even longer.

Cold symptoms, on the other hand, begin with a feeling of discomfort in the nose and throat, with sneezing and a runny nose; fever is unusual, though may be mild in the early stages. Initially, the nasal secretions are watery, clear, and copious, later changing to thicker, yellowy-green. Sometimes there is a cough. The symptoms usually disappear in 4-10 days, though the cough may last an extra week.

Both colds and flu are caused by viruses, and therefore do not respond to antibiotics, however, antibiotics are often prescribed for the secondary bacterial infections, such as ear or sinus infections, bronchitis, and pneumonia, which may subsequently develop. Treatment mostly consists of bed-rest, warmth where desired, and plenty of fluids whether thirsty or not, to keep the catarrh loose and easier to expel.

Homeopathic remedies may be helpful in many cases of flu or colds. There is no one specific remedy for flu or colds, because each person's symptoms are unique, and the homeopath will prescribe a remedy which fits the particular symptoms of that individual person. However, *Oscillococcinum* or *Ferrum phosphoricum* taken at the very onset may significantly ameliorate symptoms.

Some of the most common flu remedies are: *Eupatorium*, where there is high fever, unbearable aching as if the bones would break, thirst for cold drinks, with chills worse after drinking; *Belladonna*, where the onset is rapid, very high fever, worse at 3pm, flushed face, hot face and body but icy hands and feet; *Gelsemium*, where there is extreme weakness and sleepiness, chills running up and down the back, headache like a band around the head; *Bryonia*, with slow-onset, severe headache, thirst for large amounts of cold drinks, irritability, desire to be left alone.

Cold remedies include: *Allium*, for sneezing, streaming eyes and nose where discharge burns the nose or lip; *Aconite*, where there is frequent sneezing, nose drips hot, clear fluid, burning throat, and throbbing headache; *Pulsatilla*, for ripe colds, where the catarrh is thick and creamy, eyelids stick together on waking, and there is loss of smell and taste.

Homeopathic remedies may also help reduce the after-effects of flu shots, and antibiotics.

Flu is a potentially serious illness, especially for the elderly, young and immuno-compromised, or if you have heart, lung or nervous system disease: complications may make it more dangerous, so you should always consult your doctor if the symptoms do not clear. Similarly, you should seek medical advice if your cold lingers or worsens.

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