

HOMEOPATHY

by Charlotte Hensel

What is Homeopathy?

“ A system of medical practice that treats a disease especially by the administration of minute doses of a remedy that would in larger amounts produce in healthy persons symptoms similar to those of the disease.¹ ”

The 2 Theories of Homeopathy

Like Cures Like

“The notion that a disease can be cured by a substance that produces similar symptoms in healthy people.”³

When someone is suffering from a certain symptom, the practitioner will give the person something that, in greater quantities, would produce the same symptom. This is why many times red onion (which causes one to tear up) is often used to treat allergies.

The 2 Theories of Homeopathy (cont.)

Law of Minimum Dose

“The notion that the lower the dose of the medication, the greater its effectiveness. Many homeopathic products are so diluted that no molecules of the original substance remain.”³

“Homeopathic doctors (who also are called “homeopaths”) weaken these ingredients by adding water or alcohol. Then they shake the mixture as part of a process called ‘potentization.’ They believe this step transfers the healing essence. Homeopaths also believe that the lower the dose, the more powerful the medicine. They come in a variety of forms, like sugar pellets, liquid drops, creams, gels, and tablets.”²

The Treatment

Like most holistic medicine treatments, homeopathy takes into account the whole being, not just the physical symptoms. “During your appointment, a homeopath will ask a number of questions about your mental, emotional, and physical health. He’ll prescribe the remedy that best matches all of your symptoms. Then he’ll tailor the treatment for you.”² Because all people are different, two people with similar symptoms may receive radically different treatments.

The Medicine

The medicine can consist of plants (red onion, poison ivy, stinging nettle), minerals (white arsenic), and even animals (crushed up bees). “Homeopathic products are often made as sugar pellets to be placed under the tongue; they may also be in other forms, such as ointments, gels, drops, creams, and tablets.”³



Ailments That Homeopathy Relieves

Some conditions that are improved with homeopathic remedies include:

- Allergies
- Migraines
- Depression
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Asthma
- Anxiety Disorders
- Dermatitis and other skin disorders
- Thyroid and autoimmune disorders
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Premenstrual Syndrome

Along with more minor issues like:

- Bruises
- Toothaches
- Nausea
- Coughs

A Brief History of Homeopathy

“The practice of homeopathy has been around for more than 200 years and is still practiced in one form or another in nearly every country on earth today. The creation of homeopathy dates back to a man named Samuel Hahnemann, who in 1796 used ideas originating from Ancient Greek medicinal practitioners to form his theory of homeopathic medicine.

His philosophy and practice were based on the idea that the body has the ability to heal itself naturally, and that symptoms are its way of showing a patient what’s wrong and going on internally. Homeopathy is, therefore, different than conventional medicine because it views symptoms of illness as normal responses from the body as it attempts to regain health.

Symptoms are viewed as “messengers” and are meant to be interpreted, in addition to being treated. At the time of his original work, Hahnemann didn’t base his theory on many scientific studies or facts, but rather on his own logic, observations of patients and reasoning. The laws of homeopathy originally devised by Hahnemann are still in use by homeopaths practicing around the world today.”⁴

What Science Says About Homeopathy

“Homeopathy is a controversial topic. A number of its key concepts don’t agree with fundamental scientific concepts. For example, it’s not possible to explain in scientific terms how a product containing little or no active ingredient can have any effect. This, in turn, creates major challenges to rigorous clinical investigation of such products. For example, researchers cannot confirm that an extremely dilute mixture contains what is listed on the label; nor have they been able to develop objective measures that show effects of extremely dilute products in the human body.”³

“While there’s been much debate in the medical community over the years regarding whether or not homeopathic medicines work, many patients are able to find relief from illnesses like food or seasonal allergies, insomnia, fatigue and so on using very small doses of natural, safe homeopathic solutions.”³ Though critics chalk this up as placebo.

What are the Risks?

“The FDA oversees homeopathic remedies. But it doesn’t check to see if they’re safe or effective. In general, most are so watered down that they don’t cause any side effects. But there are exceptions. Homeopathic medicines can contain a large amount of an active ingredient, like a heavy metal, that can be dangerous.”² Make sure to research and ask a professional before you start taking homeopathic medicine so as to avoid these risks.

¹ “Homeopathy.” *Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homeopathy>

² Ratini, Melinda. “What is Homeopathy?” *WebMD*, 22 March 2019, <https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-is-homeopathy#1>

³ “Homeopathy.” *National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health*, July 2018, <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/homeopathy>

⁴ Levy, Jillian. “Homeopathy – How it works and 5 major benefits.” *Dr. Axe*, 26 June, 2017, <https://draxe.com/health/homeopathy/>