

Homeopathy in pregnancy

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Following on from a recent NCT article I have been asked to suggest some homeopathic remedies for common ailments in pregnancy. So, with a little explanation about homeopathy to start off, here are a few self-help ideas.

Homeopathy is great in pregnancy because it can be used when, often, 'normal' medicine is not advised. Homeopathy is a natural and gentle system of medicine. It is great for babies, children and pregnant mums. Some of the ailments I have witnessed homeopathy work wonders on in pregnancy include heartburn, morning sickness and – here we go with the less savoury complaints (sorry if you're eating!) – constipation and piles. Many scientific studies demonstrate homeopathy's effectiveness.

Homeopathy has been practised in Europe for over 250 years since Dr Samuel Hahnemann, who was a little hacked off being a doctor in the days of leeches, blood-letting and high mercury treatments (he found quite a few of these patients didn't do so well), stumbled upon it. It involves using a very dilute remedy – so dilute it causes quite a few scientists problems in accepting it – to stimulate the body's own ability to cure. Common remedies are available in most chemists or online through homeopathic pharmacies. You can choose a remedy on the principle of 'like cures like'. An example of this principle is using a homeopathic dose of coffee (both diluted and also 'succussed') to treat headaches and insomnia. I often get students in my classes to make their own remedy from coffee just for a bit of fun.

On the topic of homeopathy, this form of medicine has also been used to treat fertility problems in men and women, as well as grief around miscarriage and stillbirth. It's also great for use in labour. Maybe I'll write an article on that for the next issue?

Common remedies

For you at home there are a few basic remedies that you may wish to try to during pregnancy. (Remedies are available from chemists, and from homeopathic pharmacies, which are also online). N.B. If you try them and they don't work, it could well be that it's not quite the right remedy. A homeopath can advise you if this is the case as homeopaths have a choice of about 2000 remedies to select from!

Morning Sickness

Ipecac: constant, deathly nausea with empty belching and retching. Vomiting is difficult and doesn't ease the nausea. The tongue looks clean.

Nux vomica: Nausea with retching that is relieved by vomiting, sour belching, retching, indigestion and heartburn; there may be a sensation that there is a knot in the stomach. Feels very irritable.

Pulsatilla: nausea (with little vomiting) which is worse after eating and drinking; and better in the fresh air and for company; person feels generally weepy, moody and is better for being comforted.

Sepia: intermittent nausea which is worse in the mornings and worse for the smell or thought of food; there is an empty, sinking feeling in the stomach which is temporarily relieved by eating; feels apathetic, exhausted and heavy but oddly is better for vigorous exercise. Indifferent and cross with partner.

Constipation in pregnancy (sorry, graphic details coming up!)

Bryonia: large, hard, dry stools which are difficult to expel, with a headache which is worse for the slightest movement, and irritability.

Nux vomica: frequent urging to pass a stool but cannot, in spite of straining, or passes only small amounts each time; feels as if some is left behind; with piles that itch and bleed.

Sepia: strains to pass a large, hard stool. Stomach feels full and there is a sensation of a lump in the rectum that may remain even after passing a stool. Person feels generally sluggish.

Sulphur: constipation with piles that itch and burn and are worse for heat. Generally restless, thirsty and sensitive to heat.

Treating more serious complaints

Antenatal depression, carpal tunnel syndrome, anaemia, to name just a few, need a proper course of treatment where the entirety of symptoms, personality and preferences are taken into account. Always seek advice from a homeopath if trying to treat something like this. As ever, never stop a prescription given by a GP without discussing this with your GP first!

How to give remedies

A remedy should be given straight from the remedy bottle (or packet) and tipped directly into the mouth. In general, give a remedy once you notice the symptom and repeat after an hour or so. If the remedy seems to help, then repeat when it seems to wear off. If you are still unwell or sore after 3 remedies then consult a homeopath or GP for further advice.

A remedy should be given on an 'empty' mouth (10-15 mins before or after food). If it doesn't work for you, either try another well matched remedy or consult a homeopath.

What next?

If you have any questions then consult a qualified, registered homeopath. There is also a Homeopathic Helpline on 09065 343404 open from 9am to midnight which can give speedy homeopathic advice in a few minutes, although it does charge £1.50/min.

Summing up

I hope this gives you the confidence to try and treat some minor complaints at home. A homeopathic remedy kit can be a useful addition to bring on holiday or when travelling to provide you with a first aid option. It's a great idea to keep some *Arnica 30c* in the house – great for bumps and bruises!

I wish you and your family the very best of health – on every level.

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