My Top Ten Homeopathic Remedies.

by Karen Leadbeater RSHom

Homeopathy is a system of medicine which has been around for over 200 years, and is used worldwide by many millions of people.

It is based on clear principles, which with some guidance anyone can use for first aid situations and many everyday ailments. The aim of this booklet is to provide the knowledge to get you started, and know when you need to seek professional help.

When you can safely self-prescribe

It is usually safe to self-prescribe for acute illnesses and first aid situations. Acute illness can be defined as illness of recent onset, with clear causative factors and 'self-limiting' - in other words, if left untreated the body would eventually recover by itself (or in the most extreme cases you may die). The list is long, but might include: earaches, coughs and colds, 'flu, diarrhoea and vomiting bugs. First aid situations relating to trauma can also be included, such as: wounds, bruises, burns, bites and stings, sprains and strains, emotional shock.

Always use your common sense. If there is cause for concern, it would be advisable to seek professional medical attention without delay: call the homeopath, GP, or 999 according to the urgency of the situation. You can give a remedy on the way to hospital if you wish.

If your symptoms do not resolve quickly, it may be that your complaint is beyond the scope of self-prescribing, and you may need a remedy to address your overall state of health, or the first aid remedy needed is a more unusual one. In this case you are welcome to get in touch with me for further advice.

Many illnesses that are apparently acute in nature (such as an earache or a cough) still relate to your underlying level of health and constitution. If you are regularly ill, or there is a pattern apparent (respiratory infections since starting your new job, for example), it makes sense to seek some professional homeopathic treatment to address the deeper issues.

Summary: self-prescribing is fine when your complaint is

- Of recent onset
- Has a clear cause
- There is no immediate cause for concern

And consider seeking help if your symptoms do not resolve quickly.

Basic principles

Like cures like

Each remedy is capable of producing a unique pattern of symptoms, and your symptoms need to match as closely as possible to those of the remedy in order for it to stimulate a healing response.

The minimum dose

Homeopathic remedies are potentised medicines. Dosage is different than with conventional drugs. The remedy provides a stimulus or catalyst to your own innate healing mechanism, rather than a dose which needs to be repeated frequently. One tablet often provides enough stimulus to produce a healing response if the remedy is well matched (see below 'Will I need to repeat the remedy?' for when to repeat). The minimum dose principle is a beautiful illustration of the innate intelligence of the body. Only the tiniest amount of the appropriate stimulus is required for it to rebalance itself.

Microdoses of powerful medicines are used, which are frequently toxic in larger material doses. To produce homeopathic medicines, these substances are precisely diluted and shaken in order both to release their healing potential and remove their toxicity.

The single remedy

One remedy at a time is given. This is because each person in every instance of ill health produces symptoms that have a unique pattern. This pattern is matched to one remedy which has the potential to address the whole symptom picture and restore health.

How to take the remedy

Choosing a remedy involves matching the symptoms the person is experiencing to the symptom picture of a remedy. All the listed symptoms need not be present, but what you are looking for is a match for the key features of your complaint to a remedy that shares them.

Take one tablet of the selected remedy, making sure that only the person taking the remedy touches the tablet. Don't swallow it down with liquid, but allow to dissolve slowly in the mouth. Ideally avoid eating or drinking anything for 15 minutes before and after each dose (this is not essential in an urgent situation, when the remedy should be given without delay and repeated as necessary).

Will I need to repeat the remedy?

Once the remedy has been taken, wait and see. If after one tablet you feel better and continue to improve, take no more. If you improve but then symptoms return, repeat the remedy with one tablet as before, continuing in this way until the problem is resolved, or the remedy no longer seems to help. If there is no improvement after the initial dose (everyone is different, but you will know fairly quickly in an urgent or acute situation), repeat it. If there is still no change try one further dose, but then stop if no change is apparent. You will need to reconsider your remedy choice, or seek professional advice.

What potency to use

Most homeopathic first aid kits have remedies in 30c potency. This is a good place to start, as 30c can safely be repeated if necessary. Some kits contain 200c potency, and these can be helpful in more intense, painful or high energy situations, such as during labour, or for injuries. If the only potency you have is 30c, give this and bear in mind it may need repeating more frequently according to the situation.

About me

I am Karen, a registered homeopath and School of Homeopathy tutor with 20 years experience, and a clinical practice in Tavistock, Devon. I see people at my practice rooms in Tavistock, or worldwide via Skype. I am keen to help you experience the healing benefits of homeopathic medicine, and empower you to use it to help you and your family thrive.

Homeopathy workshops

I run regular introductory workshops that teach you all you need to know in order to use homeopathy successfully at home. I also run a monthly study group in Tavistock and online. Details of upcoming workshops and dates can be found at my website, where you can also get in touch with me for treatment advice and appointments: www.karenleadbeater.co.uk

Karen Leadbeater DSH, PCH, RSHom
Registered Homeopath
01822 870834 or +44 (0)1822 870834
www.karenleadbeater.co.uk

Aconite.

Aconitum napellus. Monkshood. Wolfsbane.

The plant is highly poisonous, and the name is said to derive from *akontion,* a dart used for poisoning. One of its old names, Wolfsbane, derives from the idea that arrows tipped with the juice would kill wolves. It is mentioned in some early English medical recipes. The older herbalists described it as 'venomous and deadly'.

The Remedy.

Aconite is often used in acute and first aid situations. Complaints that will respond to Aconite are typically associated with shock, fright and exposure. Complaints from facing fearful situations, or from exposure to cold, dry wind.

Symptoms come on suddenly and violently (both emotionally and physically). If there is pain, it will be intense, with prickling, tingling and burning, or numbness. Fevers, when present, will be high and peak at night around midnight in many cases, and accompanied by a burning thirst. Symptoms are generally worse or come on at night. Complaints are often characterised by extreme fear/panic, and restlessness. Palpitations. There may be fear of death. Main remedy for the early stages of croup, with barking cough, and difficult breathing with stridor (noisy in-breath).

Common Aconite situations.

- Earache or toothache after exposure to cold, dry wind.
- Acute inflammatory infections (especially after exposure) with high fever, intense restlessness and fear, worse around midnight.
- Acute anxiety when facing a fearful situation: eg dentist, surgery, flying.
- Complaints from sudden shock, with fright: eg receiving bad news, car accident.
- Early stage of croup - barking cough, difficulty breathing with grating sound.

At a glance Aconite picture with key words.

Ailments from shock, fright and exposure. Sudden, violent, intense. Fear of death. Panic and terror, with restlessness. Tingling, burning or numbness. Worse at night.

Did you know?

Aconite can be used in the treatment of chronic long term anxiety disorders (this requires professional treatment), and has been known to release a shock or fright that has been held in the mind or in the body for many years.

Apis.

Apis mellifica. Honey Bee.

Apis is made from the honey bee. The sting of the bee produces redness, swelling, burning and stinging pain, and great sensitivity to touch. The affected part may feel enlarged, as if it will burst. If we bear in mind the typical effect of a bee sting, this gives strong clues to its key medicinal uses: like cures like.

The Remedy.

Apis is an important first aid remedy, most commonly used in the treatment of insect bites and stings, and local allergic reactions triggered by bites, food or medications, etc NB in case of a suspected allergic reaction, do not delay in seeking urgent medical treatment. You can continue to take the homeopathic remedies on your way to the GP or hospital.

The characteristic symptoms of Apis are fluid swelling of the locally affected parts, with great sensitivity to touch. The affected area will typically show rapid swelling, rosy pink discolouration and heat, and extreme sensitivity to touch. The area feels worse for heat, and better for cold applications. Insect bites which produce rapid swelling and stinging pains will usually respond quickly to a dose of Apis.

Apis has a strong relationship with complaints affecting the eyes, face and back of the throat. Thus acute ailments (either allergic reactions or acute inflammation in response to infection) with rapid swelling, heat and sensitivity to touch will often respond quickly to Apis (compare Belladonna). Burning, stinging pains; extreme sensitivity; restless irritability and thirstlessness are also characteristic of an Apis complaint.

Common Apis situations.

- Bites/stings with rapid swelling, sensitivity to touch, better for cold applications.
- Local allergic reactions with rosy pink rapid swelling.
- Acute complaints affecting the eyes, with puffy fluid swelling under the eyes.
- Sore throat/tonsillitis with swelling/constriction, better cold, sensitive to touch.

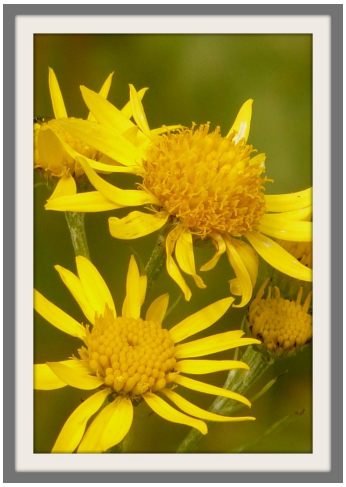
At a glance Apis picture with key words.

Allergic reactions. Rapid rosy pink swelling, or bag-like fluid swelling. Extremely sensitive to touch. Better for cold. Restless, irritable. Thirstless.

Did you know?

Apis has an important place in the treatment of chronic long term inflammatory conditions.

Arnica.



Arnica montana. Fall Herb. Leopard's Bane.

Arnica is a well known herb, long used by herbalists and homeopaths. It is found in mountain pastures of central Europe, and has been used locally for centuries as a topical application for sprains and bruises, hence its colloquial name 'Fall Herb'. It should not be used topically where the skin is broken, as this can produce irritation and inflammation. In homeopathic potency it is safe to use in any case of physical or emotional trauma.

The Remedy.

Arnica is the first homeopathic remedy to think of in injuries - with bruising, bleeding and swelling. In potency it is useful in the treatment of wounds, injuries resulting from blows or concussion(eg falls, head and back injury, black eye, etc), as well as sprains and fractures. In all injuries it will boost the body's ability to respond to the damage. In a more severe injury seek urgent medical attention and give frequent doses of Arnica (in the highest potency available) while waiting for help.

Arnica is also indicated in pain and bruising resulting from over-exertion or physical ordeals (eg during and after childbirth, long distance running or other heavy physical labour). Surgery and dental work also calls for Arnica to assist with post-operative healing, and it will reduce pain, swelling, bruising and haemorrhage.

Arnica is a great remedy for shock too - after an injury, accident or emotional trauma (eg hearing bad news), the person may say they are 'fine', when clearly they are not. Arnica will help them to deal with the trauma to their mind and body.

Common Arnica situations.

- First treatment for injuries with bruising, swelling, bleeding (internal use only).
- Post-op healing after surgery and dental work.
- During and after labour to help mum and baby to recover.
- Sprains, strains and fractures.

At a glance Arnica picture with key words.

Physical and emotional trauma/injury. Bruising, swelling and bleeding. Sprains and fractures. Over-exertion. Post-op healing. Childbirth. Shock.

Did you know?

Arnica has been used successfully in the treatment of the long term after effects of injuries, even many years after the event (eg epilepsy dating back to a traumatic injury).

Belladonna.

Atropa Belladonna. Deadly Nightshade. Devil's Herb.

A UK native plant, Belladonna is rarer than it used to be, often found growing in waste ground. All parts are deadly poisonous, and the name derives from the Greek *Atropos*, one of the Fates who held the shears to cut the thread of human life. Belladonna is so named because it was used historically by Italian ladies to make their eyes shine more brightly by dilating their pupils.

The Remedy.

Complaints that respond to Belladonna come on suddenly and violently. Affected parts are typically burning hot to the touch. Fevers will be high and dramatic, and tend to spike 12 - 3am, and 3pm. Fevers are often accompanied by delirium and frightening hallucinations. They may also be angry and lash out. Complaints are accompanied by a rush of blood to the head and face: flushed face; right sided throbbing headache; pulsating sensations; dilated pupils. The person is oversensitive to noise and light, and wants rest and quiet. They are thirsty, aggravated by external heat (including heat of the sun) and stooping, and also by cold drafts or chills to the head (eg washing hair or hair cutting).

In acute febrile illness Belladonna is one of the main remedies. However, it should not be given to reduce fever alone, or where fever is the only apparent symptom. Fever is an important part of the body's immune response, and should not be suppressed. Avoid giving a remedy until a symptom picture appears, and choose a remedy which matches the symptoms, not just the fever.

Common Belladonna situations.

- Acute febrile illness in children, if the symptom picture matches.
- Sunburn or sunstroke, with burning heat, right sided throbbing headache, and possibly delirium [NB give the remedy, but seek medical help without delay].
- One of the main remedies for scarlet fever, where the picture matches [bright red tongue and throat, high fever with delirium].

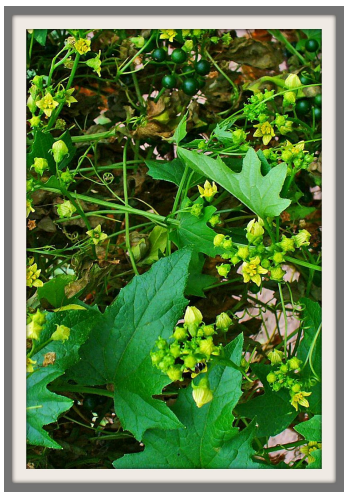
At a glance Belladonna picture with key words.

Sudden and violent symptoms. Burning heat and red face. Delirium. Dilation and throbbing. 3am and 3pm.

Did you know?

A clinical trial published in The Lancet in 1829 showed that homeopathic Belladonna is highly effective in preventing epidemics of scarlet fever.

Bryonia.



Bryonia alba. Black-berried White Bryony. European White Bryony. Wild Hops.

Bryony is a European native plant, and the type used in homeopathic medicine is the black-berried variety. The shiny black berries are unpalatable and poisonous. It is a vine-like climber in the cucumber family.

The Remedy.

Bryonia has a wide ranging use in homeopathic medicine, especially in the treatment of acute conditions (particularly respiratory infections) and injuries. It is indicated where even the slightest movement is painful. This includes stress fractures; ankle sprains; shoulder and knee injuries, after surgery. Pressure and bandaging tend to help a little. Used for first aid, Bryonia will relieve the pain quickly. The person typically wants to lie still and be left alone, avoiding anything that requires movement or effort. They are usually better for pressure, bandaging, or lying on the painful parts.

A Bryonia cough is worse for deep breathing, eating or exertion, and is typically a hard, painful cough. The person will hold their head or chest during coughing to relieve pain. Bryonia is a useful remedy in influenza and respiratory infections where the symptoms fit. Fever with a dry, painful cough, dryness of mucous membranes (eg dry lips), great thirst for cold water, irritability and worse from movement. Complaints with a bursting or pressing headache, which is worse even for moving the eyes, and tends to be worse in the morning. The person tends to be aggravated by warmth (eg a warm room or weather), except for the headache.

Common Bryonia Situations.

- Dry painful cough, worse for motion (deep breathing, exertion, eating).
- One of the main remedies for 'flu where the symptoms match.
- Important remedy in sprains and strains, shoulder and knee injuries.

At a glance Bryonia picture with key words.

Slightest movement painful - must hold on. Dryness and thirst. Headache worse movement. Irritability. Wants rest and quiet.

Did you know?

Bryonia has an important place in the professional treatment of more serious conditions including pneumonia and pleurisy. I have also used it successfully in treating mastitis, with the keynote of worse for movement - must hold the breast firmly when walking.

Chamomilla.

Matricaria chamomilla. German or Wild Chamomile.

German Chamomile is used by herbalists as a nerve sedative, and it is commonly used as an infusion (herbal tea) to relieve neuralgic pain, including earache and teething. It is used in similar situations in homeopathy, but can also be used in a wider range of complaints where the symptom picture fits.

The Remedy.

The remedy Chamomilla is best known for infant teething. However it has a broader sphere of action, and is helpful in many complaints which have severe pain with intense irritability. In acute complaints of childhood, including teething and earache, the child is typically hot and irritable. They may have one red cheek while the other is pale. They will want to be carried constantly, and because of the pain will be very hard to please, wanting one thing then another, but throwing it away when offered. Teething is often accompanied by diarrhoea. They will be hot and thirsty, and very sensitive to cold and to touch.

Chamomilla is also one of the main first aid remedies for toothache, with pain felt especially at night, and may radiate to the ears. It can help the person cope while they wait to get to a dentist.

Chamomilla can be a useful remedy in labour, where the pain is felt very intensely, and it makes her frantic and angry, perhaps with fear of death (compare Aconite). The cervix may not dilate due to exhaustion and distress. It is also used for first aid in painful periods, especially where the the pain is felt very intensely, sometimes with vomiting and faintness. Professional homeopathic treatment is advisable here - and can regulate the periods and reduce pain and discomfort.

Common Chamomilla situations.

- Infant teething, with irritability and diarrhoea.
- Intensely painful earache, worse for cold air.
- First aid remedy for intensely painful periods.
- Toothache with pain radiating to ears, especially at night.

At a glance Chamomilla picture with key words.

Intense pain with irritability and anger. Infant teething and acute toothache. Earache. Hot, thirsty and worse for cold. Painful periods with excessive pain.

Did you know?

Chamomilla is one of a small group of remedies that is used in the treatment of complaints that come on after anger (eg convulsions, asthma).

Hypericum.

Hypericum perforatum. St John's Wort.

Found growing wild all over Europe, in woods, hedgerows and roadsides. The ancients believed it had the power to banish evil spirits. It is best known for its herbal use in treating mild depression, but in homeopathic potency it is a very valuable first aid remedy.

The Remedy.

Hypericum is known first and foremost as the 'Arnica of the Nerves'. It is the first remedy to consider with injuries to fingers, toes, nails, eyes and lips, and also spinal injuries, especially to the coccyx. Injuries to these parts are typically accompanied by intense tearing or shooting pains, with great sensitivity to touch. There are often shooting pains along the nerves, extending from the site of the injury, especially with the spine.

Hypericum is also used in the treatment of puncture wounds, bites and lacerations, especially where the characteristic shooting pains are present, and shoot upwards in the body. There may be inflammation and slowness of healing. Hypericum will prevent tetanus in susceptible cases. A further use for Hypericum is after any dental work or surgery, where nerves are affected, and the site is very painful (eg root canals, tooth extraction, Caesarean section in childbirth). It is helpful to give Hypericum in cases of intensely painful boils and abscesses (this is first aid only - you will need professional treatment to prevent further recurrence).

Common Hypericum situations.

- Painful injuries to parts rich in nerves (eg fingers, nails, eyes and lips).
- Puncture wounds, bites and lacerations with shooting pains (give Arnica first).
- Pain following dental extraction or root canal work.
- Pain following c-section or episiotomy in childbirth.

At a glance Hypericum picture with key words.

Injuries to nerves. Very painful injuries. Intense, shooting tearing pains. Puncture wounds and lacerations. Root canal and tooth extraction. Sensitivity to touch.

Did you know?

Hypericum is of major importance in the treatment of spinal injury, and in my opinion should be available to prescribe in accident and emergency departments of all hospitals.

Ledum.

Ledum palustre. Marsh Labrador tea. Wild Rosemary.

Ledum is a flowering shrub of the Rhododendron family, and is found all over the Northern hemisphere. Its use in homeopathy is chiefly for first aid, and it has several specific and invaluable applications.

The Remedy.

Ledum is used mainly in the treatment of puncture wounds and insect bites and stings (compare Apis). The site will typically be cool to the touch, and without marked swelling (unlike Apis), and feels better for cold applications. Pain is usually stinging, itching and crawling, and the area may appear mottled. Ledum is almost a specific for wasp stings. It is also said to be preventive of tetanus [NB tetanus is best prevented initially by exposing punctured wounds to oxygen via thorough flushing with clean water].

Ledum also has a strong relationship to the eyes, and is an excellent remedy for black eye caused by a blow, and better for external cold application. NB If the pain is felt in the eyeball itself the remedy is Symphytum.

Common Ledum situations.

- Puncture wounds and insect bites, parts cold to touch and without marked swelling.
- First remedy for wasp stings.
- Black eye from a blow, better for cold applications.

At a glance Ledum picture with key words.

Stings and puncture wounds. Wasp stings. Better for cold applications and feels cold to touch. Black eye from a blow.

Did you know?

Ledum is one of the main homeopathic remedies used in the treatment of Lyme Disease.

Pulsatilla.

Pulsatilla nigricans. Pasqueflower. Windflower.

Pulsatilla grows in dry upland pastures of central and northern Europe. It is also known as the meadow anemone, and is a member of the buttercup family. The plant has a soft and shy appearance, being entirely covered in fine silky hairs, and with bell-shaped pendulous mauve flowers.

The Remedy.

Pulsatilla is one of the most commonly indicated remedies in acute infections, especially in children. It has a very wide application in both acute and chronic health problems which have characteristic Pulsatilla features. In acute illness including middle ear infections, colds and sinusitis, for example, discharges will typically be yellow/green and profuse, and symptoms will tend to be worse in a warm room and better for fresh air. The person will usually be thirstless (even with a fever and dry mouth), and if there is a cough it will be wet, and aggravated from lying down and in the evening and at night.

Those needing Pulsatilla may be emotionally changeable, weepy and want reassurance and comfort, especially if they are not like this when well.

Pulsatilla is often indicated in conjunctivitis and other eye infections, with thick yellow discharge, better for cold sponging and worse in the evening. The remedy is also useful in digestive upsets which are aggravated by rich or fatty foods, warmth, and lying on the left side. Abdominal pain and cramps are worse for pressure.

Common Pulsatilla situations.

- Middle ear infections: pain disturbs the sleep, weepy and needs comfort.
- Digestive upset aggravated by rich or fatty foods.
- Conjunctivitis with thick yellow discharge.

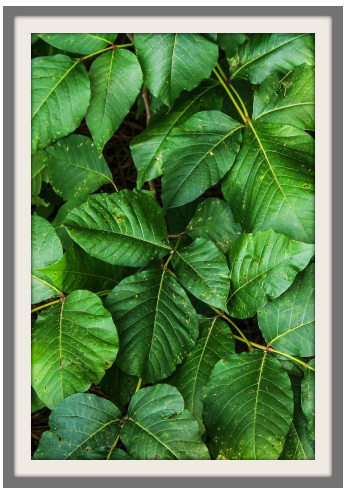
At a glance Pulsatilla picture with key words.

Thick yellow discharges. Soft and changeable. Worse in a warm room, better for fresh air. Thirstless. Weepy, wants comfort.

Did you know?

Pulsatilla is one of the main remedies for complaints during pregnancy, including morning sickness, fatigue and indigestion. It is also used often in the treatment of premenstrual syndrome and painful periods.

Rhus tox.



Rhus toxicodendron. Poison Ivy. Poison Oak.

This plant is widely found right across North America, and is well known and feared due to its properties: contact with the leaves produces redness, swelling and blisters.

The Remedy.

Rhus tox is mainly known for its effect in skin eruptions and joint problems. In first aid use it is one of the main remedies used in sprains and muscle strain. Think of it in injuries and strains from over-exertion. There may be pain, swelling and stiffness. Pains are typically sore, burning or tearing, and worse at night, with restlessness - the person can't get comfortable in bed. Symptoms tend to be aggravated by cold, damp conditions (think of working outside in wet weather, for example), and better for warmth and warm applications. There may be painful swelling of joints. Rhus tox will often provide temporary relief in arthritis where the affected parts are stiff and painful after rest and on first movement, but loosen up gradually once the person gets moving.

Rhus tox is also used in acute skin eruptions with blistering (reminiscent of the blistering caused by contact with poison ivy). In more severe cases of chickenpox with much blistering and intense itching, especially at night, Rhus tox will usually reduce the itching and make the individual more comfortable.

Common Rhus tox situations.

- Joint sprains and muscle strain with stiffness.
- Acute swelling of joints in arthritis.
- Chickenpox with extensive blistering and intense itching.

At a glance Rhus tox picture with key words.

Pain and stiffness in joints and muscles. Over-exertion. Worse cold and damp, better warmth. Painful swelling of joints. Restless and worse at night. Blistering and intense itching.

Did you know?

Rhus tox is not only used in the acute and long term chronic treatment of arthritis, but it is also an important remedy in the treatment of depression.

For further information about homeopathic treatment or workshops get in touch with me at:

Karen Leadbeater DSH, PCH, RSHom
Registered Homeopath
01822 870834 or +44 (0)1822 870834
www.karenleadbeater.co.uk