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What is homeopathy? A brief introduction.

Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine which involves treating the individual with highly diluted, potentised, substances, given mainly in tablet form, with the aim of triggering the body's natural system of healing. Based on their specific symptoms, a homeopath will match the most appropriate medicine to each patient.

Key concepts

Holistic, individualised medicine:

Homeopathy is a holistic medicine: it treats the *totality* of your symptoms. Most disease is not a single isolated event but is an expression of disharmony in the *whole person*: individual symptoms are related to the way that we react to and cope with the stresses of our environment, our situation, our life. The homeopath looks beyond the 'main complaint', beyond the label of the disease (e.g. migraines, sinusitis etc) to look at how that particular person's experience of their condition is different from that of another person with the same complaint. This includes the person's constitution, past medical and life history, mental and emotional state, life-style and much more.

Like cures like:

Homeopathy is based on the principle that you can treat 'like with like', that is, a substance which causes symptoms when taken in large doses, can be used in small amounts to treat those same symptoms. To give a simple example, drinking too much coffee can cause sleeplessness and agitation, so according to this principle, when made into a homeopathic medicine, it could be used to treat people with these symptoms. I think the most important consequence of this approach is that homeopathic medicines work with the immune system and the body's own healing powers to stimulate healing.

Minimum dose

Homeopathy uses ultra-diluted solutions of natural substances derived from plant, mineral and animal sources. It is a dynamic, energetic medicine. This is the most controversial bit of homeopathy and the bit that's hardest to explain. Homeopathic remedies are diluted to the point where there is no obvious material substance remaining. At the same time they are repeatedly succussed (vigourously shaken) and we believe that this potentises or energises the medicine.

One of the key consequences of the minimum dose is that remedies are not toxic. But it's a bit of a myth that homeopathy is completely safe. It does not have side effects but it is possible to make a condition worse by taking *too much* of a remedy: over a period of time, after an initial alleviation, you may start to worsen from the symptoms that the remedy was meant to cure. And a badly chosen remedy taken too often can cause new symptoms to appear.

Who and what can homeopathy help?

Homeopathy can help with acute and chronic problems, physical, mental and emotional. Homeopaths often

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see patients with long-term, chronic problems, many of which have failed to respond to conventional medicine. It can be considered in almost any ill health, where tissue has not been irrevocably damaged. Some people see a homeopath because they have side effects from conventional drugs, and others because conventional tests have failed to find the cause of their problem.

Final note:

Personally I believe that restoring health is a process and a journey. Whilst homeopathy can certainly make a big difference with even just 1 remedy its not a 'quick fix' solution and especially in complex and long term illness it requires a level of commitment from the patient as well as from the homeopath. The homeopathic process can help a person explore some of the causes/triggers of their disease. It can help people take responsibility for their own health, re-balance their life. Being involved in our own healing processes gives us self-confidence, increases our personal strength and enables us to make choices.