

dental health & homoeopathy

The maintenance of healthy teeth and gums and regular dental care is vital to the overall health and well being of you and your children. Homoeopathy cannot take the place of oral health care and dental treatment but rather it helps support the body's own healing process. When dental procedures are necessary, homoeopathic medicine comes to the fore; starting with the anxiety and anticipatory stress before the procedure, right through to recovery.

Homoeopathy is a medical system developed by Samuel Hahnemann 200 years ago. It is well known in the UK, America, Europe and India and to a lesser extent Australia. Homoeopathy follows definite scientific laws of preparation, prescription and cure, which are as true today as they were in Dr Hahnemann's time.

Homoeopathic medicines are provided in either pilules or drops. The dose varies depending upon the patient's individual need and the patient is usually the best judge of this. These medicines have been prepared in a specific way by a process called potentisation.

This is an activating process involving dilution and succussion (shaking hard), which makes the remedies non-toxic and free from side effects. This means that the Homoeopathic medicine will not affect or influence the medicines prescribed for you by your doctor or dentist.

The information and remedy pictures that follow are available in traditional homoeopathic texts. If a homoeopathic remedy picture matches your individual symptom picture the remedy may offer symptomatic relief. Homoeopathic principles should be applied when using any homoeopathic remedy. Always read the product label. If symptoms persist consult your dentist promptly.

Abscess & Toothache

Firstly ascertain whether the condition is acute or chronic.

Acute: Repeat the indicated remedy often. Sudden

onset, swelling, redness, intense heat and throbbing, especially right sided - **Belladonna**. Swelling and oedema, rose coloured like a bee sting - **Apis**. Tooth pain, without obvious cause during pregnancy - **Sepia**. Marked intolerance to pain - **Chamomilla**. **Chronic:** Repeat a 6c potency of the indicated remedy several times a day to help resolution. To encourage drainage and resolution of pus - **Hepar Sulph**. After pus has discharged - **Silica**. When the abscess involves an infected wisdom tooth, extraction is often the best solution. Treat the acute phase with **Belladonna** and then follow with **Hepar Sulph** until extraction is possible.

Accidents & Injuries to the Mouth & Teeth

Seek immediate emergency dental treatment and use **Arnica** plus **Ferrum Phos** as required. Add **Hypericum** if the nerve is exposed or damaged and **Ruta Grav** to aid ligament repair if the tooth is loose. **Hepar Sulph** to help minimise infection. If a tooth is knocked out it needs to be replaced in the tooth socket or stored in milk to prevent dehydration and other cellular changes until dental treatment is available.

Fractures: Use **Arnica** routinely. Once the bone is set use **Symphytum** to encourage union and start taking a quality nutritional supplement. For the pain and stiffness alternate **Rhus Tox** and **Bryonia**. For contused pain - **Ruta Grav**. Nerve damage, numbness or tingling - **Hypericum**. To aid calcium metabolism **Calc Phos** regularly.

Anticipatory Anxiety

For many people a visit to the dentist is a cause for anxiety. Choose from the following remedies and take a few times on the day prior to and again immediately before treatment. Or every 15 minutes until feeling calm. Acute anxiety, great fear and dread - **Aconite**. Trepidation, hurried, incessant speech, diarrhoea - **Argent Nit**. Children who are disagreeable, capricious and throw things. Adults who are nervous, sensitive and angry when in pain - **Chamomilla**.

Silent, motionless, trembling and weak - **Gelsemium**. Fear and anxiety in sensitive children - **Phosphorus**.

[contd over page]

Anaesthetic Effects

Local anaesthetic: If the bone feels injured by the needle - **Ruta Grav.** Shooting pains - **Hypericum.**

Swelling with burning stinging pains - **Apis.** Stiff and cold at the puncture site - **Ledum.**

General anaesthetic: The most useful remedy for those prone to adverse effects after a general anaesthetic is **Phosphorus** – a few doses prior to and after the anaesthetic, can be very helpful.

To help reduce chest complications in vulnerable people consider **Antimonium Tart.**, twice daily from three days before the anaesthetic.

For nausea with excess salivation - **Ipecac.** To protect against external bacterial influences, especially if antibiotics are undesirable, take **Pyrogen** starting before the procedure and continuing for several days.

Antibiotics & Drug Toxicity

Ill effects of antibiotics can be reduced by taking extra garlic or garlic capsules, plain organic or bio-dynamic yoghurt and acidophilus. When antibiotics produce diarrhoea - **Nitric Acid.** When antibiotics produce thrush - **Borax. Sulphur** for several days following antibiotics may help rebalance the system. The main remedies for reactions to and toxicity from medications are **Nux Vomica, Arsenicum** and **Sulphur.** Continued problems relating back to courses of antibiotics can be treated very successfully by your homoeopath.

Diet & Nutrition

The most satisfactory diet is one which is low in sugars, but high in fibre and fruit. An adequate dietary intake of calcium is necessary for the development and maintenance of teeth and bone and the regulation of calcium metabolism requires adequate Vitamin D. Diets low in calcium or magnesium may contribute to bone loss. Oral disease which continues may indicate an underlying problem such as nutritional deficiencies (e.g. iron, B1, B6, zinc) or hormonal irregularities.

Remedies such as **Calc Carb** or **Calc Phos** assist children in the uptake of nutrients and the regulation of calcium metabolism during periods of rapid growth. Demineralization in older people is helped by **Calc Carb, Calc Phos** and **Silica.**

Oral Health

Attention to diet and oral hygiene from birth along with regular dental checks is essential in the maintenance of our dental health. Plaque forms daily even

in a healthy mouth and is best removed by regular and thorough brushing and flossing. Sugar reacts with the bacteria in plaque and causes decay. It is recommended that foods rich in sugar be minimised for the sake of dental and general health.

Bad breath: Usually this is due to: poor oral hygiene, smoking, consumption of pungent foods, sinusitis and upper respiratory tract infections or the presence of oral disease. If the problem persists despite attention to these factors, a Constitutional remedy is indicated. **Nux Vomica** – bad breath after a stomach upset, meals or alcohol. **Aurum** – in pubertal girls. **Mercurius** – breath offensive, excess saliva, tooth decay.

Bruxism: Tooth grinding or clenching in adults can be the result of circumstantial disturbances such as grief or may be related to the personality. Treat the underlying cause. Abandon coffee to reduce tension. In children you may also consider remedies such as: **Cina** – jumpy and cross. Worms may be present. **Phytolacca** – intense desire to clench particularly during teething. **Arsenicum** – grinding in sleep, particularly in anxious people, worse between midnight and 2a.m.

Cold sores: Infections often recur when the immunity is at a low ebb and for this, constitutional treatment is the best. **Nat Mur** – pearl like blisters, puffy and burning. **Rhus Tox** – tingling blisters, mouth and chin may be infected, ulcers at corner of mouth. **Hepar Sulph** – promotes healing of infected sores.

Gingival (Gum) health: There is no substitute for regular check ups, scaling, efficient cleaning and flossing in the maintenance of healthy gums and teeth. However some people, despite good oral hygiene have a disproportionate degree of gum disease and/or tooth decay. These people are often helped by a Constitutional prescription from their Homoeopath and may need to assess their nutritional status especially Vitamin A, C, E and Zinc.

Bleeding gums usually result from gum disease associated with inefficient oral hygiene technique, however at times this can be an indication of generalized ill health or the use of medication. It is important to gently brush the areas of inflammation to remove plaque and encourage healing. Plaque not effectively removed hardens when in contact with minerals in the saliva and will eventually affect the gums. Ask your dentist for a map of the areas which you are routinely missing and instruction in the correct use of toothbrush and dental floss.

A disproportion of hormones at the time of pregnancy or menopause can also affect the gum tissue and the remedies **Nat Mur**, **Phosphorus** and **Sepia** are the most commonly indicated.

Arnica given before and a few doses after scaling may reduce soreness and bleeding. The main remedy for bleeding gums and chronic inflammation is **Phosphorus**. Bad breath with coated tongue, peculiar taste and excess saliva. Active infection with redness and loose teeth - **Mercurius**. For open wounds - **Calendula**. With pain - **Hypericum**. For repeated infections - **Silica**. Stained teeth, bone loss, bleeding gums and a high rate of decay - **Staphysagria**.

Mouth ulcers and cracked lips: Need to be treated for the immediate complaint and for the predisposition to recurrence - **Arsenicum**. Thrush and ulcers that are hot, tender and bleed easily - **Borax**. Foul breath, ulcers, tongue large and imprinted by the teeth - **Mercurius**. Base of the ulcer bleeds, stinging pain. Cracks at the corners of the mouth - **Nitric Acid**. Lips chapped and dry, crack middle of the lower lip, cold sores - **Nat Mur**.

Mouth washes and tinctures: Care needs to be taken when using commercial mouthwashes as they can be quite astringent and toxic. They can also neutralize homoeopathic medicines. **Calendula** and **Hypericum** tinctures are very effective and can be diluted, 30 drops in 500ml warm water 3-4 times daily, as a wash, or gauze may be soaked in the solution. For mouth ulcers, gingivitis and ulcerative conditions try **Myrrh**, 5ml in 45ml water or an infusion of dried or fresh **Sage** leaves.

Sensitive teeth: Usually caused by advanced decay, gum disease or over-enthusiastic brushing. In the latter cases the delicate tissue covering the roots is exposed causing sensitivity. Attend to the cause and use the indicated homoeopathic remedy. **Plantago** tincture, applied 3x daily to the sensitive area helps.

Teething: Nutrition has a great significance at the time of teething and tooth development in children because the teeth will not grow healthy and strong if there is malnutrition. Even baby teeth need regular, gentle cleaning with a soft brush from the time of their first appearance. Toddlers and young children need daily help with brushing to ensure effectiveness. Permanent teeth begin to appear at about 6 years of age. Monitor the position of the teeth and

seek Orthodontic advice early for irregularities.

For acute symptoms; **Chamomilla** - unbearable pain. Fretful and angry. Inconsolable. One cheek hot and one pale. **Belladonna** - child irritable, flushed, restless and delirious. On a deeper level use **Calc Carb** when teething is slow in plump, fair, sweaty children. **Calc Phos** helps thinner children. **Borax** - teething with mouth ulcers. **Cina** children wet the bed and grind their teeth. **Mercurius** has red gums and excessive sweat and saliva.

Thrush, oral and/or systemic: Candida can thrive when resistance is low after illness, antibiotics or medications. Take **Borax** at earliest sign and include acidophilus or plain yoghurt daily. Excess saliva, trembling tongue - **Mercurius**. With cold sores - **Nat Mur**. With mouth ulcers and fatigue - **Arsenicum**.

Tooth decay: A predisposition to tooth decay despite adequate oral hygiene and nutritional status may be reduced by appropriate homoeopathic constitutional treatment. The most likely people prone to dental decay are the very young and teenagers. Infants are susceptible to decay as soon as teeth appear. The most important factor to cause decay is the prolonged presence of sugary fluids, including syrupy medications, in the mouth. Infants sleeping with a bottle are at risk as are those who sleep in the parents' bed and breastfeed often. This form of decay can be very rapid causing severe damage in a matter of months. Teenagers are likewise affected by sugary snacks and carbonated soft drinks in between meals and may develop a reduced interest in their oral hygiene. Regular checkups are important.

Oral Surgery

Follow the same principles and remedies as for other surgery. If possible prepare in advance for the surgery and recovery process with appropriate remedies, tissue salts, vitamins and mineral supplements. Exercise caution with herbal medicine and tinctures which can cause complications such as bleeding. Due to their high dilution homoeopathics usually do not affect the body in this way as they work by stimulating the healing process.

Arnica is the most important remedy for bruising, haematoma and haemorrhage, it has a mild central analgesic effect and is recommended routinely for all people affected by accidental or surgically induced physical trauma.

Hypericum is indicated for its effects on damaged nerves, controlling pain and promoting regeneration.

[contd over page]

dental health

& homoeopathy

Oral Surgery [contd]

These two remedies facilitate healing and reduce infection.

To help protect against infection take **Pyrogen** on the day prior to surgery and continue for several days. Where there is a bleeding tendency and for people who have adverse reactions to anesthetics use **Phosphorus**, starting with a few doses prior to the procedure.

Post operative recovery: **Arnica** is an excellent remedy for surgical shock, and for the bruised sore feeling following surgery. **Hypericum** is for nerve damage and repair. For pain at the incision site and to promote repair after any incised wound - **Staphysagria**. **Pyrogen** assists in the prevention of post operative infection and complications. Useful where antibiotics are undesirable or refused. If there is threatened infection at the site take **Hepar Sulph** followed by **Silica**. To assist in repair of bone and periodontal tissue after difficult extractions, oral surgery or even after orthodontic adjustments, use **Ruta Grav** regularly. **Silica** twice daily may help the expulsion of any retained bone or tooth fragments.

Convalescence

Depending on how complicated and difficult the procedure was you should expect some moderate swelling and pain.

If you suspect infection then immediately start **Hepar Sulph** or other indicated remedies under Abscesses and contact your dentist. Dry socket is relieved by **Ruta Grav**.

If recovery is slow or complicated despite support from your dentist and using the indicated remedies then consult your homoeopath to treat the underlying problem.

Digestive function: After fasting there can be difficulty and discomfort in re-establishing digestive function. **Carbo veg** and **Lycopodium** as needed can help restore normal digestion.

Haemorrhage: Be sure to follow the post operative instructions. Persistent bleeding that you cannot control needs attention or advice from your surgeon. If necessary use **Phosphorus** for bright red bleeding.

Lachesis – persistent dark bleeding. Once arrested, continue with **Arnica**. For recovery after a haemorrhage or any loss of body fluids take **Ferrum Phos** or **China** until fully recovered.

Vomiting and nausea: Post-operative vomiting often responds well to **Phosphorus**. If the vomiting occurs after and because of eating - **Ferrum Met**. Nauseous, thirstless and chilly but worse from warm air - **Ipecac**.