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## Chickenpox

While it is true that we cannot select a homoeopathic remedy merely on the basis of the name of the disease - we need to select the one remedy that is homoeopathic to the disharmony of the patient we are treating - it is also the case that the epidemic illness of chickenpox impresses a distinct enough stamp on the organism that we - even in our individuality - have a small enough range of common responses that it is meaningful to talk about them. With some understanding of acute-care prescribing & a rather small materia medica, it is possible to effectively treat most cases of chickenpox at home.

Good resources for the materia medica (information on appropriate remedies) needed for home prescribing for patients with chickenpox can be found in any of the following books:

-Miranda Castro, *The Complete Homeopathy Handbook* (my favorite home-care reference by a long shot - this takes a classical approach to acute-care prescribing, and if you only have one home-care book, it should be this one). If you find my comments below interesting, and wish to proceed with preparing yourself to do homoeopathic home care, buy this book and perhaps one or two of the following list as well.

- Phyllis Speight, *Homoeopathic Remedies for Children*
- Christopher Hammond, *How to Use Homoeopathy*
- Cummings & Ullman, *Everybody's Guide to Homeopathic Medicines*
- Dana Ullman, *Homeopathic Medicine for Children and Infants*
- Panos & Heimlich, *Homeopathic Medicine at Home*

Knowing that the following list does not include *\*every\** remedy that a homoeopath might use to treat patients with chickenpox, I would recommend you have the following in your medicine kit to be reasonably prepared:

(1) "An empty bottle" (I'm kindof teasing here) - not every person with chickenpox needs to be treated, and in my experience most do not. A very healthy response to this virus involves a small smattering of spots, a runny nose, a low-grade fever & perhaps some small drop in energy that may last a few days. If the picture of a homoeopathic remedy does not emerge clearly in the child, don't treat them. Give them hugs, fluids, baths with oatmeal\* for itching, one of those really neat bed-tables you make out of a cut-out cardboard packing box with cut-outs for a bowl & cup, read to them from Winnie-the-Pooh, etc. (especially "Wheezles & Sneezles" from Now we are Six). For my oldest boy (now 10), raspberry sherbet & a backrub is the most consistently effective remedy for any ailment that comes along.

\* - grind rolled oats in a blender or food processor, put a couple tablespoons in a hank or dishrag & hang it from the faucet when you draw the bath.

If the illness takes a course departing from this normal pattern of response - e.g. excessive itching, horrible-looking eruption, a disturbing cough, mental/emotional difficulties such as excessive irritability or clinginess, difficulties with sleeping, or whatever, the organism is asking for help, and the appropriate remedy will get things back on track. The following short list of 8 remedies will cover about 95% of the cases of chickenpox you'll encounter; the remaining 5% will need any one of a huge variety of remedies at the discretion of a trained homoeopath. I generally recommend that my patients who stock remedies for home care get them in 12C potencies. Most of the following will be in a kit put together for homecare, such as the 50-remedy kit of 12C potencies put together by Washington Homeopathic Products. Dosing, repetition of dose, etc. are discussed in the home-care manuals above, most thoroughly in Miranda Castro's book.

These are listed in order of the frequency with which I've prescribed them for patients with chickenpox, from most frequent to least frequent. The pictures below are fragmentary pictures of how kids needing these remedies will look in a bout of chickenpox - don't rely just on them, but use them as a jumping-off point in working with your reading resources.

(2) Pulsatilla nigrans (perhaps 60% of the cases I've treated)

When the child has developed the disharmony calling for this remedy, it is usually the mental/emotional and general symptoms of the person that identify the match to this remedy. The classical symptoms of "Chickenpox" are not that remarkable - modest rash, modest fever. However, the child is weepy, clingy, wants to be held & to sleep with the parent. The itching is worse from heat, such as a hot bath or heat of the bed, so they are likely to uncover, sleep poorly in a warm room, prefer a tepid bath, etc. Bedtime is especially hard, because of separation from the parents & warmth of the bed, but it's just a hard time of the day for them anyway. Despite fever they may not be very thirsty. There may be some cough, worse on lying down at night & from the heat of the bed, better with cooler & moving air & on sitting up.

(3) Rhus toxicodendron (perhaps 15% of the cases I've treated)

The striking symptoms indicating that the child is in a state calling for this remedy are generally tremendous itching and a physical and emotional restlessness. Bedtime may be hard again, but this time because restlessness makes it difficult physically to lie in bed & fall asleep. They may wake exhausted with busy dreams & have to get up - they may come into the parents' room, but not so much for the snuggle as out of restlessness driving them out of their own bed. Itching is awful, especially at night, but not because of the heat of the bed; itching is worse with cold, and relieved by an extremely hot bath, worse when at rest, and they feel they have to scratch & will excoriate their rash by scratching. The pox may be especially large & filled with thin or thick pus-like fluid which may run when the blisters break. I have never seen the red-tipped tongue keynote reported in the literature in this acute presentation of a Rhus-tox picture.

(4) Antimonium tartaricum (<10%)

Here it is the cough that will most often alert you to the need for this remedy. the cough may be very moist-sounding and rattly, raising the concern about bronchitis or pneumonia (both of which may complicate Chickenpox - this will often be the remedy when that is the case, but do not ignore conventional medical supportive care [I'm referring to supportive

care, not to allopathic treatment] if this is a concern). The rash may be large, and may weep a yellow fluid crusting like dried honey - sometimes it is only the appearance of an extensive eruption of this character that alerts to the need for this remedy, even in the absence of problematic cough. The child will often be mildly ill-tempered, not wanting to be looked at or touched. A white coating is often seen on the tongue.

(5) Antimonium crudum (pretty unusual)

Very much like Antimonium tartaricum, above, but when the ill-temper is much more evident.

(6) Mercurius vivus (or Mercurius solubilis) (<5%)

High fevers, at night, with profuse sweat. Large eruptions with pus-filled blisters and pus-like discharge that may be irritating, with soreness of the affected skin. Much redness about the eruptions. Narrow range of temperature comfort - worse with cool and with heat. These kids are normally pretty sick.

(7) Aconite

Usually a phase very early in the illness, folks in this state generally are well past it & onto another phase of the illness by the time they get into my office, so when I've given this it's usually an 11pm phone prescription. Very sudden onset of high fever, most often around 11pm to midnight, with fear, night-terrors or nightmares, & tho apparently awake they don't respond as if they were, being inconsolable in their fear. The illness often begins following exposure to cold wind. At this point, you probably wouldn't know it's chickenpox yet, they probably won't break out until the next day; if the rash has already come out, the symptoms above eclipse the concerns that the rash might raise directly.

(8) Belladonna

Very hot, dry fever, without thirst, usually of rapid onset, worse in the mid-afternoon & on into evening (3pm, fever on waking from the afternoon nap). Dry, flushed red skin, burning up tho the hands & feet may be cool. Headache. Twitchings & startings in feverish sleep. Usually early in the illness, & tho the rash has often come out at this point, the rash itself

doesn't seem as significant as the feverish symptoms above.

(9) Sulphur

Usually recognized as the remedy when the illness has dragged on with slow recovery, the eruption crusty & weeping after scratching. Warm, uncovering at night, worse from heat (itching & generally), itching with redness about the eruption which is worse with heat of bed or bath.

Good luck with your kids! Working with an illness such as this, where you can exercise a classical homoeopathic approach within a limited range of possible remedy pictures, is a great way to introduce yourself to learning good homoeopathy.

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