

# *Cantharis* (Spanish Fly) [picture]

So far you have been introduced to a plant remedy (*Arnica*), a mineral remedy (*Cuprum*) and now you will learn something about the animal remedy *Cantharis*.

This insect is a member of the beetle family. It has evolved a highly irritant secretion as a means of self-defence. If the beetle, or its secretions, come into contact with skin or mucus membranes, it causes a sudden and quite extreme reaction. This is characterised by severe local inflammation with blistering and pain. On delicate tissues this progresses to serous exudation and local bleeding.

Irritation of the afferent nerves can cause local spasms of muscles and sphincters.

## Regions most affected:

Skin, genito-urinary tract, mucous and serous membranes, right side

## Most Common Homeopathic Indications:

Vesicular eruptions, eg **burns**, scalds, erysipelas, sunburn

**Cystitis** with burning and constant desire to urinate

Passing only drops of urine at a time

Haematuria

Dysentery with burning pains and shivering and bloody stools

## Features:

**Raw, burning, cutting pains** – before, during, and after urination

Rapid and destructive **inflammatory processes** associated with **irritable bladder**

Constant **urging** to urinate

< Coffee

Burning thirst, but averse to drinking

**Vesicular eruptions**

Thick tenacious discharges

## Mind symptoms:

**Angry**, anxious, restless

**Violent behaviour with violent burning**

< Slightest touch or approach, can lead to abusive behaviour

Strong sexual desire

Fear of bright objects and mirrors

## Modalities:

< Touch or approach

< Urinating

< Cold drinks and coffee

> Rubbing

## Notes:

This remedy has been promoted as a homeopathic treatment for Cystitis. In reality, only a minority of urinary infections present with such severe symptoms. Those cases which respond best to *Cantharis* will have quite dramatic onset, with stangury, urging pain and microscopic haematuria or perhaps even frank blood in the urine.

Less dramatic cases are likely to respond better to remedies like *Copaiva* (discussed later in the course).

*Cantharis* can also be used (highly diluted) in an ointment base for napkin (diaper) rash. Some infants encounter a severe episode of nappy rash, with blisters and rawness. These infants have contracted a local opportunistic infection with urease producing microorganisms (eg *Proteus*) The breakdown of urinary urea results in ammonia, which causes ammoniacal burns with local blistering and pain.

*Cantharis Ointment* provides an oily barrier which reduces further burning from the infected urine and has a highly effective anti-inflammatory effect, which settles a poor screaming infant within a very short time.

## Activity:

Undertake a web-search on the Spanish Fly and read the remedy in your course materia medica.