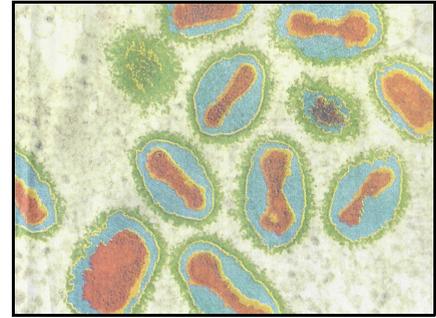


INFLUENZA

Influenza is a real threat at the present time. It is no longer a question of 'if' there will be a pandemic, but 'when'. You may already be aware that the UK government has encountered a shortfall in the availability of 'flu vaccine. The protective value of existing vaccine stocks is also uncertain, since Influenza A virus is now present in a new strain.



If you are exposed to influenza there are a number of important considerations which may determine how you fare. It is in your hands to decide how you deal with the challenge.

Orthodox treatments are restricted largely to symptom-control using *Paracetamol* based drugs. Anti-viral drugs are also possible in severe infections, but they are expensive, limited in their availability, of uncertain effectiveness, and contra-indicated in many people. Secondary infections might be treated with antibiotics, but there are questions around their appropriateness in primarily viral illnesses. There is also risk of intolerance, the emergence of resistant germs and the suppression of your normal bowel organisms, which can lead to fatigue and bowel complications.

Our advice is to avoid *Paracetamol* and Aspirin completely. As a drug, *Paracetamol* controls fever to give short-term symptomatic relief. However, *Paracetamol* has **no curative power at all** and does nothing to stimulate improved resistance. The body's ability to produce a fever on demand is a normal physiological process which assists in an efficient immune response. There is evidence that interfering with this process can lengthen the illness and increase the incidence of complications.

Beware using *Echinacea* for too long. There are some short term benefits from using *Echinacea* for a few days, shortly after exposure to the virus. But the beneficial effects of *Echinacea* diminish quickly and there is evidence that *Echinacea* has a negative effect if it is continued. There is no benefit to using *Echinacea* after 'flu symptoms have started.

If you catch 'flu

If you catch 'flu, keep your fluid intake up, and eat little and often - just as you are able. Avoid *Pseudoephedrine*-containing drugs and avoid *Paracetamol*. Never give aspirin to children with fever, since there is a risk of Reye's syndrome. Wrap them only lightly and encourage them to drink. If you are on quinine from your doctor, you should discuss stopping it at the first evidence of 'flu. If you develop respiratory difficulties, seek early medical advice.

There are a number of effective homoeopathic treatments. These are best chosen on the basis of your own particular reaction to the virus. High fevers can be treated with *Aconitum*, *Belladonna*, *Duboisinum*, *Baptisia*, *Ferrum phos* and others - depending on the pattern of fevers and the associated symptoms. Debility can be treated with *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, *Gelsemium*, *Chininum salts*, *Chinin officinalis*, *Causticum* etc. Problems of recuperation may require *Influenzinum*, *Oscillocochinum*, *Syc co.*, *Bacillus 7*, *Scutellaria*, *Parthenium*, and a variety of other treatments including constitutional remedies.

In the event of 'flu, contact your medical homoeopath as early as possible, since the correct sequence of acute medicines can make an enormous difference to your recovery.

Dr Russell Malcolm FFHom. January 2005 revised 2009

- Do not control the fever with paracetamol-containing drugs, these make you feel better in the short term, but delay the body's primary response to the virus and can prolong the illness overall. If you have been in contact with flu, but have not developed symptoms take *Anas Hepar et Cordis Barbarae* or 'Oscillococcinum'.
- If the onset is gradual, but debilitating, with paleness, shiveriness, and weakness, but without much fever - take *Homoeopathic Gelsemium 30c* (or higher every hour). If deep 'bony' aching is predominant, consider *Eupatorium perf.*
- If there is a sudden high fever with redness, take homoeopathic *Belladonna 30c* (or higher every hour).
Note: most adult influenza does not present in this way.
- If the early onset of the illness is associated with a mild catarrh and a less precipitous fever, take *Ferrum phos 30c* (or higher) every hour for the first day.
- **REMEMBER to rest, avoid paracetamol, aspirin and steroid nasal sprays during an acute influenza, or you will increase your risk of contracting a serious persisting fatigue state. Flu is not a headcold.**
- If symptoms are changeable and paradoxical then stop any symptomatic medication you are using including creams ointments and antiperspirants and take a few doses of *Camphora*.
- As the illness progresses, if there are shivers alternating with heat and muscle aching, take *China officinalis* every hour. Clammy night sweats with salivation and respiratory mucus can be treated with *Merc sol.*
- If the illness progresses to produce tender swelling of the neck glands, with fever and sore throat, take *Phytolacca 30c* or above 2 hourly for a day. If the face is dusky red; the head congested and muzzy and especially if drugs like Aspirin, Paracetamol (Tylonol) and Ibuprofen have been used inappropriately - consider *Baptisia tinctora*
- If the muscles get crampy, take *Cuprum met. 30c* as required. There may be diarrhoea in these states with some abdominal cramps. Really crampy, hypersensitive states with chills and irritability may respond well to *Nux vomica*.
- If infection sets into the sinuses, take *Aconitum* if it is sudden and *Dulcamara* if it is slower in onset. Consider *Pulsatilla* for one-sided congestion and pain in sinuses or ears, perhaps accompanied with some pink-redness thirstlessness and when there are aggravations of sinus pain in the evening when lying down.
- If infection sets into the chest, consider *Bryonia* especially if there is congestion, dryness and chest pain. Consider *Sanguinaria* if there is difficult catarrh and fever with perspiration. Consider *Squilla* if there is infection with wheeze. Consider *Antimonium tartaricum* if there is not much fever, but a lot of sticky catarrh which is difficult to shift. Consider *Ipecac* if there is a persistent remittent cough which culminates in vomiting, perhaps of glairy foamy frothy catarrh. If there are swinging fevers and green catarrh, or a flare up of a background bronchitic tendency, consider *Chininum sulph 30c*, or higher, every hour.
- When you are at your most infectious, there may be shifting symptoms, changes of thirst, catarrh, coughs and sneezes, as well as fatigue, restlessness and muscle aching aggravated by cold damp surroundings: think of *Rhus tox* in this phase. Remember to rest - and stay away from public areas while you are infective.
- If there is persisting deep bony pain, chilliness and debility, consider *Eupatorium perf.* There may be thirst. If there are persistent low-grade fevers with shivering and weakness, consider *China officianalis*.
- *Veratrum albumin* low potency may be helpful to support cardiac patients with influenza.
- *Scutellaria* or *Causticum* can be helpful for persisting debility after Influenza. Persisting catarrh or respiratory symptoms can occur, especially when antibiotics have been used. This can be treated with homoeopathic *Influenzinum* and homoeopathic *Sycotic co*, in single doses (at least 10 days apart if they are both used).

More accurate and individualised treatment advice is available by calling the clinic on **0141 331 0393**.