



# In the dentist's chair

*Phil Wander* discusses how homeopathy can help make dental treatment more comfortable

“hole” in the tooth. No longer should dentists be regarded as “drillers, fillers and billers” and thankfully our previous gruesome image is becoming confined to history.

I first became interested in homeopathy about 20 years ago when my wife gave me Arnica following a skiing accident and the healing was spectacular. I felt I had to learn more about homeopathy – just how could a couple of tablets placed under my tongue produce such remarkable healing and what other homeopathic remedies would be useful in my dental practice?

I attended regular seminars at the Manchester Homeopathic Clinic, a charitable institution and teaching centre allied to the Faculty of Homeopathy in London, under the tutelage of Dr George Burns and was inspired by his knowledge and humour (“dentists are collectors of old magazines who run a filling station”) and also at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital. Together with a small group of like-minded dentists, I began a tremendously exciting journey on the road to dental homeopathy.

The homeopathic dentist is concerned about the “whole” patient not just the

## *Remedies in dentistry*

Although Arnica is the major remedy in dentistry (I give it to my patients routinely before and after treatment), many other remedies are in fact used: from Aconite for shock, panic and fear of dentists to Zingiber, an excellent remedy for nausea and gagging. If you have the collywobbles at the thought of going to the dentist and have to keep running to the loo, try Gelsemium, one tablet under the tongue every hour or so beforehand depending on the severity.

Homeopathic remedies are proving valuable in making treatments more comfortable. For instance, when local anaesthetics are used, Chamomilla is an excellent antidote. Patients can begin taking it every fifteen minutes after dental treatment is completed to reduce the numbness. Ledum is particularly important for people who have soreness from the local anaesthetic needle (puncture wound) in the area of the injection.

Another problem is sensitivity. Since almost any

preparation of the tooth can involve minute nerve tubules, these fibres rather than the main nerve of the tooth are often sensitive after treatment. Bonding restoratives and other materials used in these techniques often cause some post-operative sensitivity. Two homeopathic remedies are beneficial here: Hypericum because of its nerve injury healing properties is also very useful after root canal therapy, and Magnesium phosphorus, which is often referred to as the “homeopathic aspirin”.

Plantago tincture is a remedy I have found most beneficial when rubbed onto or around a tooth or teeth that are sensitive to hot or cold, or applied as a “toothache tincture” into a cavity.

## *Long appointments*

Modern dentistry can accomplish much more in less time, and it is not unusual for a dentist to do in one appointment what he used to do in half a dozen appointments years ago. The trend in modern high-tech treatment is towards “cosmetic” dentistry: “Hollywood” smiles, porcelain crowns, inlays, facings and tooth whitening. These procedures improve and enhance appearance and

increase confidence and can have a very positive effect on personality.

However keeping the mouth open for extended periods does cause problems for some patients. Magnesium phosphorus or Causticum may be prescribed to relieve cramping of the jaw or inability to open the mouth. Arnica should also be given if there is soreness or bruising. For a soothing mouthwash try a few drops of Hypercal (Hypericum and Calendula tincture) in a small glass of warm water to relieve dryness and make the mouth feel much more comfortable after any dental procedures, particularly those involving surgery.

### *Gum disease*

Dental decay is not the only cause of tooth pain. Periodontal (gum) disease can be painful and is a major cause of tooth loss. Treatment can be complex and the remedies depend on your constitutional prescription and require the attention of an experienced homeopathic dentist.

### *Remedies for children*

Chamomilla is a remedy most used for teething infants. Frustrated parents have discovered that a teething fractious baby very often falls asleep after a dose of Chamomilla. However it is better to prevent the trouble by looking out for a rise in the baby's temperature (reddened cheeks) and not giving any milk to drink after mid-day. It is the combination of the growing tooth and the curdling of the milk in the stomach, caused by the raised temperature, that really troubles the baby. The growing tooth by itself will not be a problem.

Chamomilla also helps soothe an irritable child and even children with painful abscesses respond to this remedy.

Nux vomica is indicated for children who vomit before going to the dentist. As a temporary measure to treat caries (decay) apply Plantago tincture to the cavity. For allergic reactions I would suggest trying Anacardina.

After any adjustment of braces or wires use Ruta and if the wires have cut into the cheeks or lips use Staphysagria (a good remedy if there is cutting and stitching). Calendula tincture is soothing and healing to all damaged tissue.

### *Oral surgery*

After surgery Silica 6 twice daily is useful to help root fragments or splinters of bone exfoliate. Ruta is tremendously helpful in implant surgery, particularly when the bone is surgically prepared for the implant. If you have had implants inserted do not take Silica as this may cause the implant to be rejected.

### *Neuralgia*

Tension, anxiety and anger can cause tooth clenching (bruxism) which may also bring on neuralgic pain of dental origin. A number of homeopathic remedies are very useful but are best prescribed by a homeopath.

### *DIY emergency treatment*

Fortunately, dental emergencies are not very common but the safest course is to call your regular dental surgery; they may be able to see you. If this is not possible, because the trouble occurs outside of normal working hours, or you are far from home, here are a few tips,

which may help. Take one tablet, either potency 6c or 30c, if there is no improvement after ten minutes, repeat the dose. If there is still no relief consult a homeopath.

### **Pain and/or swelling**

This must be the most common emergency after dental treatment. Arnica is the remedy here. You can anticipate trouble by always taking an Arnica tablet just before entering the surgery and taking another as soon as you leave, if there has been any treatment done under local anaesthetic, or any deep scaling.



### **Toothache**

Toothache has several remedies depending on the symptoms experienced. For example, throbbing pain will be relieved by Belladonna. If heat brings on the pain, Pulsatilla will ease it. If cold eases the pain, Coffea will help. If clenching the teeth eases the pain, Staphisagria will help. If rubbing the cheek over the tooth eases the pain, Merc sol will help.

### **Other remedies include:**

- Aconite for toothache which comes after being out in cold dry winds.
- Arnica for where there is ➤

bruising, soreness and pain.

- Magnesium phosphate for relief from heat, pain shoots like lightening.
- Silica for toothache with swollen face and glands, abscess at root of teeth; sufferer wants the face to be warm.
- Chamomilla very useful in tincture form for acute toothache of pulpal (nerve) origin.

### **Bleeding**

If you have had a tooth extracted and later in the day the socket starts to bleed, apply pressure to the wound by biting on a damp, rolled-up handkerchief and take a Phosphorus tablet.

Phosphorus is indicated when the blood is bright red, which it is likely to be in this case. If the blood is bluish, then Lachesis is the indicated remedy. This latter remedy is more often indicated when there is bleeding from the gums from gum disease.

### **Infection**

If, after tooth extraction, some infection gets into the socket and it becomes painful and a bit smelly, then Gunpowder is the remedy that will stop the pain and infection. (Soldiers in the Crimea knew about this and used to take gunpowder from a bullet if they had a gunshot wound.)

### **Abcess**

If you are ever unfortunate enough to have toothache with a gum boil which is red, swollen and throbbing, then Belladonna will bring relief. If, in the acute stage, the swelling from the abscess runs down into the neck, Myristica is an absolutely magical remedy. When the abscess has occurred before

and the condition is more chronic, then Hepar sulph will quickly bring relief. It must be potency 6c. This is very important as the higher potency will make the gum boil discharge through the skin. Potency 6c makes the body's lymphatic system drain the abscess.

### **Mouth ulcers**

These can be extremely painful. They are relieved very quickly with Feverfew. Some people have repeated attacks of mouth ulcers and they should continue to take the Feverfew for a few days after the ulcers have gone. This will break the cycle of repeated attacks

### **Cold sores**

A painful cold sore (herpes) on your lip can be cured very quickly with Rhus tox.

### **Amalgam fillings**

Merc sol is a wonderful remedy for eliminating mercury from the body. Anyone who has anxieties about amalgam fillings can take this remedy: three on day one and one a day for the rest of the week. Whenever an amalgam filling is removed by

your dental surgeon, follow the same regime.

### **Trauma injury**

For a blow to a tooth take Arnica and if the tooth feels loose take Ruta hourly.

### **Cavities**

To treat caries (decay) temporarily, apply Plantago tincture liberally on a cotton wool bud to the cavity.

### **Conclusion**

Homeopathy definitely has a place in modern dental treatment. It is not a replacement for the skills of the dentist but is a vital adjunct in many cases, particularly to help those of you who are apprehensive or suffer from gum problems that are not responding to conventional treatment.

A homeopathic remedy may be readily added to the dentist's treatment procedures, resulting in less discomfort, shorter period of recovery and will make the patient feel better without side effects. Homeopathic remedies increase your ability to heal and enable you to handle the dental experience with confidence.



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## *Further information*

A growing number of dentists have trained in homeopathy – look for the letters DFHom (Dent) or LFHom (Dent) after their other qualifications. DFHom (Dent) is the highest level of homeopathic training currently available; LFHom (Dent) means that the dentist has passed the Faculty's Primary Healthcare exam and can use homeopathy in a limited way.

DFHom and LFHom dentists are included in the Faculty's directory of practitioners which is available from the BHA on 0870 444 3950 or via our website [www.trusthomeopathy.org](http://www.trusthomeopathy.org)

The British Homeopathic Dental Association also provides information and a listing of dentists interested in homeopathy: [www.bhda.co.uk](http://www.bhda.co.uk)