

Nipping cystitis in the bud

Dr Marysia Kratimenos and Keren Sall
outline how homeopathy can alleviate
this infection



Photo: courtesy of Ocean Spray

Imagine having the need to go to the bathroom 20 or 30 times a day.

This is what a sufferer of cystitis goes through along often with a burning sensation accompanying urination. Very few women will escape the discomfort of this urinary tract infection. Around one in six women get cystitis each year. Women tend to suffer from it as they have a short urethra (the tube that passes from the bladder out of the body) and its opening is located to very close to the anus making it easy for bacteria from the anus to reach the bladder and cause an infection.

Symptoms can include one or more of the following:

- Stinging or burning sensation when you pass urine
- The need to urinate more frequently and urgently, even if you pass little or no urine
- General feeling of being unwell
- Occasional blood in urine
- Pain or tenderness in lower back or abdomen
- Urine that is cloudy or dark coloured, and may have a strong smell.

Why homeopathy?

Homeopathy can be used successfully in tandem with conventional treatment with antibiotics. Homeopathy is helpful in building up the constitution and so reducing the risk of recurrent attacks of cystitis. A homeopath will take a detailed history to ensure that a suitable homeopathic medicine is prescribed. A urine sample will be sent off for analysis in a laboratory and a preliminary inspection of urine carried out. A strong smell, cloudiness or the presence of small amounts of blood suggests a bacterial infection. As GPs using conventional treatment will usually wait for the results of the urine culture before prescribing antibiotics in cases of cystitis where there is no fever or obvious general illness, it is well worth trying a homeopathic remedy in the meantime to alleviate discomfort.

If your temperature is very high and you find your pain extends to the loins, beware as this may indicate the infection has ascended to the kidneys and medical intervention must be sought urgently. Prompt medical attention is also warranted if there is blood in urine. Kidney infection can lead to the scarring of kidneys so immediate treatment with antibiotics is imperative.

A homeopathic consultation

Treatment with homeopathy comprises of a two-pronged attack. Firstly to treat the infection, and secondly to improve general health, so averting further

infections. The (deeper treatment) is best left to a professional homeopath. For an acute attack a relatively high potency, 30c should be taken. It can be repeated every hour, decreasing the frequency of the remedy as the symptoms improve. If there is no improvement after two or four doses, sufferers should seek professional homeopathic treatment.

Aconite



Photo: Peter Fisher

The right homeopathic medicine

• Aconite

This is prescribed if the symptoms come on very suddenly and without any warning, often after a fright or exposure to cold. Diving into icy water may bring on cystitis. There is a lot of fear and this may lead to retention of urine. There is a sensation of pressure in the bladder and burning before urination.

• Arnica montana

Arnica is useful for treating cystitis that follows bruising injuries of the perineum. It is therefore suitable for urinary problems following childbirth. There may be trouble emptying the bladder and some involuntary dribbling.

• Cantharis

This will help if you suffer from agonising pain before, during and after urination. Each drop of urine will feel like scalding acid and there may be blood in it. Beside yourself with pain you will avoid drinking so you won't have to pass urine. Cantharis was well known to the Marquis de Sade and his followers.

• Nux vomica

This medicine is given when there is intense chilliness and the person feels very irritable with the cystitis. There is a constant urge to urinate and a sense

that the bladder is full although tiny amounts of urine are passed. Nux vomica is ideal when frequency is the predominant symptom. A constitutional Nux vomica is the typical Type A personality – driven, ambitious and very competitive, with a short fuse.

• Pulsatilla

This is often prescribed for highly emotional and changeable shy young females. As their fluid intake is small they are more prone to urinary tract infections. This remedy is also prescribed for older women who are soft and yielding in character. They have a tendency to cry while telling their tale and evoke sympathy in the listener. For them the pain is worse when urination is delayed, and after urination. The symptoms are changeable and the urine tends to spurt out.

• Sarsaparilla

This medicine is used for infection when the pain comes on after urination. There may be some blood in the urine and severe symptoms of cystitis. Sufferers usually find it is easier to pass urine while standing up and there is tendency to urinary retention.

• Sepia

Sepia is suitable for recurrent urinary tract infections, especially when there is a history of lots of antibiotic use and thrush. The woman often loses her libido, because sex is painful and she fears cystitis may result. The patient is often worn out by the recurrent infections, so exhausted by the struggle to keep going that she cries when expressing herself. Genital herpes may also be present.

• Staphysagria

Honeymoon cystitis responds well to this remedy, as do urinary tract infections that come on after pelvic examination, operation or labour. It is prescribed where there is suppressed anger and grief. The anger is hidden, the person appears mild tempered and gentle, yet there is often a history of abuse or deep sorrow. Cystitis occurs after sex and the pain is felt during and after urination.



Photo: istockphoto.com/Rafal Zdeb

Managing cystitis

- Drink large amounts of water to flush out the infection.
- Avoid tea and coffee as they can aggravate the symptoms.
- Drink large amounts of cranberry juice or take tables of cranberry concentrate as they make the urine too acidic for the bacteria to thrive.
- Likewise sachets of powder available at pharmacies work on the same principle. Some make the urine less acidic as they contain large amounts of bicarbonate.
- Keep the bladder empty as holding on to urine will only make matters worse and encourage a more serious infection.
- It is advisable to empty the bladder after sex to avoid infection.
- Bathing and hygiene products such as talcum powder and perfumed soap should all be avoided as they irritate your urethra.
- Don't wear things or tight trousers; pure cotton underwear is best, as are stockings rather than tights.

Pulsatilla



Photo: istockphoto.com/Gabriela Schaufelberger

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