

THE **Beginner's Guide** to **homeopathy**

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COMMON PROBLEMS DURING ADOLESCENCE

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Homeopathic adolescent temperamental types

Mature and charming

Sensitive and often precocious, both physically and mentally, these teenagers seem older than their years. Inviting adult problems on youthful shoulders leads to their often worried expressions and general concern and anxiety about the future. Generally they are very attractive, gifted, and charming. Although artistic, they tend to be somewhat over-intellectual, preoccupied with problems of world events, finance in the home or the family generally. However, under this facade of maturity and social aplomb, they are highly nervous and lack confidence, covering this by their considerable ability and skill with words, and a plausible pseudo-adult manner. It is this type of temperament that responds so well to Lycopodium.

Moody

Artistic but more passive and obviously shy and moody, without the apparent maturity of the Lycopodium make-up, they look and feel like a young child, are easily influenced, changeable and lack the depth and ability of the former. There is a tendency to be solitary or in the company of an adult. Often, they are too ready to please. This over-compliant attitude undermines their confidence and the whole of their personal development. At other times they can be stubborn and difficult, as part of their general changeable tendency. Much reassurance and sympathy is needed. Girls often have difficult, delayed, or painful periods which are a nuisance and a problem from the onset. This form of temperament responds well to Pulsatilla.

The Rebel

The typical awkward teenager, defiant and difficult to handle, fiery, over-sensitive and rebellious, any trivial remark may be taken as an insult or intended hurt, they are frequently at variance with their parents or teachers, often associate with a minority group, and may become violent or destructive within this group, although not usually directly within the family. Impatient, tending to get too quickly involved in issues, at the same time they feel easily misunderstood or rejected. They are passionately determined to take a stand, often on political or social issues, and may defiantly oppose authority in whatever area of injustice they are currently preoccupied. These social concerns and attitudes towards authority are an extension of similar attitudes to the boundaries and limits within the family, where they are often equally in a position of protestation and conflict. This type of temperament often shows qualities of strength and leadership, can be very loyal and a tower of strength to friends especially anyone regarded as being in any way "hard done by" or the "underdog". A great weakness is their tendency to have a "short fuse" and to over-react in any situation, rising up with spasms of righteous indignation and rage, even with friends, which makes them difficult,

unpredictable and often unreliable. Colicky digestive troubles and constipation are common physical problems. This behavioural pattern is indicated for Nux vomica.

Messy and untidy

Always in a mess and untidy, both in their physical appearance and in their thinking, they are full of plans and projects, many of them ambitious, but often unfortunately unrealistic, changing and unlikely to be ever realised. Ideas may be thought about, planned and discussed for many months without ever coming to fruition. Often they are drop-outs, and unlikely to act with any organised or thoughtful initiative, tending to follow the herd. Others are preoccupied with unreal pursuits and fantasies in a solitary way. Their physical weakness is skin which tends to be chronically infected and unhealthy, with frequent crops of boils and spots, adding to their unhealthy and unattractive appearance. Sulphur is the remedy choice for this type of adolescent.

Surly and irritable

Often tall and thin with a long back and a sallow pale skin, they are never really well, always exhausted and even wake up feeling tired. Frequently they are late for work or school and in trouble because of it and their attitudes of criticism and irritability. There is always an improvement with exercise, and the more energetic they are, the better they feel. Often they blossom in company and once encouraged to mix socially quickly forget their many ills. Girls are frequently incapacitated by heavy and painful menstrual periods with dragging down colicky pains and a general sense of misery. Constipation is a common problem as is backache. Sepia is the remedy of choice for this type of adolescent.

The Loner

Solitary, varying in mood from angry and childish behaviour to tears and hysteria, being especially prone to emotional outbursts, they quickly become ill or upset at a change of routine, such as before an interview, an examination or perhaps a change of job or school. Difficult to help or relate to, they shun sympathy or consolation in any form, preferring to be alone. In general, they lack confidence and are never really natural or able to be themselves in any social situation, always seeming to be acting, distant and remote or uninvolved. There is frequently a great craving for salt and they are commonly either better or worse for being at the seaside. The remedy of choice for this temperament is Natrum mur.

Handle with care

Because an adolescent's self-image is weak and lags behind external and physical maturity, the development of a secure identity is often not established until early adulthood, and for some even later. This makes the adolescent extremely vulnerable and suggestible, often needing to identify with whatever is being currently put out by the media as the current teenage ideal of health, success and potency. The

adolescent deals with these problems by creating a temporary identity for himself, which ensures his acceptance by others in his peer-group.

At the same time as the physical changes of the adolescent, there is a recurrence of early childhood demands, with attention-seeking behaviour, including demands for sweet foods. Rich, starchy snack foods and drinks are all taken to excess. Meals are also rushed, irregular, often of poor quality, particularly those outside the home. This poor diet, together with the associated problems of hormonal changes, accounts for many of the typical adolescent problems with general health.

All these adolescent difficulties can seem very bewildering to parents, unless they are in touch with the same struggles which they themselves went through at this stage with their own families. When a balanced overall position is taken, the often apparently outrageous, anti-social, non-caring attitudes can be put into proper focus allowing the parents to remain calm and not unduly over-anxious, whatever the pressures. By the early adult years, most of these problems will have been resolved.

Homeopathic Treatment Guide

Acne

- Causes:** Diet over-rich in carbohydrates, constitutional, lack of hygiene.
- Symptoms:** Discomfort, irritation, infection, discharge.
- Treatment:** **Kali brom:** very useful remedy in chronic acne.
- Sulphur:** one of the best remedies for raised hard circular areas which are red and often sore and infected. Usually they are worse for water.
- Calc sulph:** useful with pallor, sweaty forehead and flabbiness.
- Pulsatilla:** helpful in all cases which are aggravated by heat.
- Arsenicum:** useful in chronic cases where there is severe weakness associated.

Blushing

- Causes:** Embarrassment; shyness; constitutional; immaturity; inexperience; over-protected child; familial.
- Symptoms:** Heat; redness; discomfort; embarrassment; shyness; may be sweating.
- Treatment:** **Phosphorus:** the adolescent is delicate, fine-boned and out-going, but nervous, over-sensitive, and in constant need of reassurance. They flush up easily and often have a characteristic bead of sweat just above the upper lip.
- Pulsatilla:** one of the best remedies for blushing of emotional origin in a shy adolescent. They need reassurance, to be approved of, and attention. They easily burst into tears.
- Natrum mur:** useful for nervous tense

adolescents, unsure of themselves, ill at ease, and never quite able to relax and be natural in any social situation.

Ferrum phos: useful for pallor and quick flushing in new or tense situations. They are somewhat less sensitive to external impressions than Phosphorus.

Body Odour

- Causes:** Constitutional, inadequate hygiene.
- Symptoms:** Odorous, often offensive, excessive sweating.
- Treatment:** **Nux vomica:** sweats profusely with exercise and emotion, and the sweat may be offensive.
- Silica:** has profuse sweating, particularly of the soles of the feet which may be offensive.
- Mercurius:** has a profuse offensive fetid sweat.

Boils

- Causes:** Infection, usually circulatory, high blood sugar level, diabetes.
- Symptoms:** Pain, throbbing, redness, fever, glandular enlargement, may become a carbuncle.
- Treatment:** **Hepar sulph:** to mature the boil.
- Hypericum tincture:** indicated when the area is particularly sensitive to touch, and the boil is in an area of the body where it affects the fine and peripheral nerves running over the swelling, and causing intolerable pain.
- Silica:** if slow to mature or chronic.
- Belladonna:** painful, hot, shining, inflamed base, about to suppurate, before pus forms.
- Merc sol:** threatens to become putrid and suppurate.
- Sulphur:** to prevent recurrence.
- Tarantula:** very acute, severe pain, stinging and throbbing.

Dandruff

- Causes:** Constitutional, usually associated with a dry skin generally. It is sometimes allergic.
- Symptoms:** Dryness and itching; there may be redness and a sense of local heat.
- Treatment:** **Sulphur:** helpful particularly when there is associated acne, flaking and itching.
- Calc carb:** often helpful if they tend to sweat across the forehead at night.
- Sepia:** useful and often associated with dark brown patches and discolourations of the skin.
- Lycopodium:** very helpful, particularly when there is a lot of flaking and scaling and a very dry skin.
- Arsenicum:** useful as a hair tonic and when there is a dry flaking skin condition.

Delayed Puberty

Causes: May be small in height; may be familial.

Symptoms: As above.

Treatment: It is always initially helpful in these cases to give the constitutional remedy in high potency as a stimulus to normal development.

Silica: can be helpful in small, slender, fair haired adolescents with poor peripheral circulation, chilly, and profuse sweating of the extremities.

Depression

Causes: Psychological in a sensitive child, may be familial or constitutional.

Symptoms: Anxiety, lack of confidence, insomnia, no appetite, lethargic, no interests, apathetic, withdrawn, solitary, weeping.

Treatment: **Lycopodium:** indicated in a forgetful rather hypochondriacal child, that rarely sweats, is timid and tends to crave sweet foods.

Natrum mur: helpful in the more remote solitary nervous child, that shuns company and is usually a salt lover.

Pulsatilla: indicated for the more changeable, emotionally unstable child with a tearful depression and disposition.

Argent nit: may be required when there is a phobic component and intolerance of heat.

Exam Fears

Causes: Shyness; immaturity; lack of confidence; psychological and may be familial.

Symptoms: Panic, anxiety, tension, pains anywhere in the body, weeping, regressed behaviour with childish demands.

Treatment: **Argent nit:** most useful and basic remedy, particularly when there is an associated intolerance of heat and digestive disorders such as flatulence.

Gelsemium: usually they are weak, and collapsing at the knees from panic.

Greasy Hair

Causes: Dietary, excessive carbohydrate intake; constitutional; lack of personal hygiene.

Symptoms: Often associated with a waxy unhealthy skin and acne.

Treatment: **Thuja:** useful general remedy for the condition.

Pulsatilla: helpful when the condition is worse before the period.

Lycopodium: often used as a remedy in dull, greasy, lifeless hair.

Menstruation (Delayed Onset)

Causes: Constitutional, anaemia, stress and nervousness, imperforate hymen.

Symptoms: Failure to establish a regular cycle, or totally without appearance at all.

Treatment: **Bryonia:** if vicarious nose-bleeding occurs.

Pulsatilla: pain in the abdomen and back, headache and nausea, anaemia, palpitation.

Veratum alb: the onset is suppressed and often associated with shivering, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Sepia: if leucorrhoea is present.

Aconite: suppressed from chill or fright.

Natrum mur: constipation, chilliness, anaemia, thin woman.

Sulphur: pain in abdomen and loins, vertigo, throbbing head, constipation.

Cimicifuga: headache, insomnia, pain in left breast.

Shyness

Causes: Temperamental. Often familial in origin.

Symptoms: Embarrassment, discomfort, awkwardness, blushing, timidity, worse in any new or unexpected or unfamiliar situation.

Treatment: The person's constitutional remedy.

Lycopodium: helpful when the person likes their own company, but needs people to be in the house and not too far away.

Generally they are rather shy and unsure of themselves - but respond well to encouragement and reassurance.

Argent nit: useful when there is a phobic element and always worse in heat.

Natrum mur: much more solitary and independent than Lycopodium. They are always nervous and unsure of themselves in any social situation and never really able to completely relate to or join in what is going on.

Pulsatilla: shy, fair, timid agreeable, placid person, anxious to please, weeps easily and in need of company and reassurance that she is liked and popular. Can change from shyness to stubbornness very quickly.

Worse in a hot room and needs an open window or cool spot.

Books by Dr Trevor Smith, currently available:

Homeopathy for Teenager Problems

Homeopathy for Pregnancy and Nursing Mothers

Homeopathy for Babies and Children

Homeopathy for Everyday Stress Problems

Homeopathy for Psychological Illness

An Encyclopedia of Homeopathy

Understanding Homeopathy

Talking about Homeopathy

Emotional Health

Personal Growth & Creativity

The Side-effects Book

Dr Smith can be contacted through the Trust.