



THRIVING CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

As parents, we worry a lot when our children get sick. In the holistic approach, childhood illness is viewed as an opportunity in disguise. Recognizing that our children have an inner healer, a powerful defence mechanism which needs to flex its muscle from time to time is reassuring. Give your children a natural head start by tailoring a treatment plan that honors what is unique about them. By stimulating their natural defenses we help them develop resistance to their predispositions. Improved resistance means a healthier immune system, resulting in a hardier and happier child.

The following five cases from my practice illustrate the beauty of the holistic approach, showcasing the power of our children's inner healer in helping them thrive.

HE WON'T SLEEP

James is a 20-month-old boy. His single mom is concerned about his frequent waking, every 2-3 hours. Once awake, he is wide awake and ready to play. Mother is at her wit's end about what to do. It can take up to an hour for him to fall back to sleep. This is hard for the mother, given that it's the middle of the night, and she has to go to work the next day. "I've tried 1001 ways to get him to fall back to sleep."

He has a history of frequent colds, and recurring ear infections, and has been on antibiotics several times. When he catches a cold, it can last a month or more. Nasal congestion has improved since milk products were eliminated from his diet, but he still tends to ear infections.

He is a healthy size, strong for his age, but not aggressive. Although quite agile physically, he is late in learning how to talk. Children four months younger than him have been able to say his name, yet he has not yet spoken. He makes plenty of sounds, but no words.

A peculiar behaviour I note is that during the interview he strikes his head against the wall from time to time. This does not seem to be accompanied by any particular emotion. No anger is evident. He just suddenly begins to bang his head. His mother says it occurs from time to time.

Although independent and seemingly fearless, he does exhibit a fear of cats, screaming, running to his mother, not leaving her side until the cat has left.

His appetite is good. His favourite foods are fruits, especially oranges, which he could eat non-stop.

The parents never married. At the time the parents came together, the father was already in a marriage, but had convinced the mother that his marriage was at an end. Then, on finding out that the mother had become pregnant, he refused to have anything further to do with her, sighting his aversion to being tied down.



Analysis

The main observations that help distinguish James from other children with sleep problems are:

- Striking his head
- Slowness in learning to walk
- Fear of cats
- Craving oranges
- Playfulness at night

In the homeopathic approach, *like cures like*; we choose a substance known to produce in healthy people side effects that resemble symptoms similar to what the sick person is experiencing (for more on this, please read my article *The Healer Within*).

Medorrhinum is a homeopathic medicine made from a human discharge which, through many years of observation, has been recognized as being indicated for people who manifest symptoms similar to the ones James has. Interestingly, people who need this medicine are often non-committal, finding the idea of marriage difficult. For them, a commitment to one person represents the end of freedom. This aversion to responsibility is exactly what James' father felt when he found out his new partner was pregnant, and *Medorrhinum* is most likely the remedy he needed as well!

Results

The first night after his homeopathic medicine was taken, James had a bowel movement in the middle of the night, something he did not normally do. He slept right through the night for 3 nights in a row! After that, he woke some nights, but less often, and fell asleep again much quicker.

Equally delightful to his mother, James started using words within days of the homeopathic medicine, five of them within two days of the prescription! Also, he is far more interested in books, associating names with pictures.

James has had a few colds since the Rx, yet is able to throw them off without a problem. He has not required any further antibiotics!

TEMPER TANTRUMS & ALLERGIES

Joanne is a 3-year-old girl who suffers from allergies to mould and grasses. Last Spring and again in the Fall, Joanne suffered with a runny nose and sneezing, rubbing her nose constantly, sticking her finger inside her nose over and over, and scratching at her eyes.

Normally, she is a quiet, happy, playful child. When her allergies are at their worst, however, Joanne turns belligerent. She hits her mother and brother, she kicks, and she becomes uncooperative and angry whenever asked to do something. She may also throw things, if her play is interrupted, or if she feels her wishes are not met. She is unresponsive to discipline, defying all warnings and threats from her parents. The more she is reprimanded, the angrier she gets, screaming, hitting, and throwing things.



During allergy season, Joanne suffers from night terrors. Often, she will wake screaming, a blood-curdling scream in the middle of the night. When her parents come, she clings to them terrified. When asked what scared her, she describes a Sesame Street character trying to eat her.

Analysis

What is unique about Joanne's experience of allergies?

- Irritability during the allergies
- Striking in anger
- Throwing things in anger
- Defiance
- Night terrors
- Nose picking

Wormwood, or *Cinat* is known to be associated with nasal itch, night terrors, and temper tantrums. However, on receiving *Cina*, although her sniffles, nasal itch, and night terrors improved considerably, Joanne continued to be extremely tired and irritable. Recognizing that she was still suffering despite the improvement in her allergic symptoms, I looked further into the case and found that *Psorinum* is also associated with many of the symptoms which originally led me to *Cina*, namely;

- Irritability, with sleeplessness
- Fear on waking, with shrieking.
- Obstinance in children, with tendency to a quarrelsome, unfriendly, repulsive mood.
- Hay fever and many nasal symptoms, including a tendency to bore in the nose with one's finger.

Although her nasal and eye symptoms initially became worse, they then cleared up. Joanne has not suffered from allergies since, and has needed neither homeopathic nor conventional medicine in over a year! Her moods improved too, and her parents are most grateful to have their sweet and healthy daughter back.

THE FEARFUL CHILD

John is an 8 year old boy who used to suffer from night terrors. Until he was 3 years old, he would wake screaming every night. To this day he has difficulty falling asleep, and wants the light on all night.

He was adopted at infancy. Talking about the birth parents and the circumstances around the birth, his adoptive mother told me the pregnancy was secretive, that the birth parents were young and had had an affair. It turned out that the birth father was schizophrenic. The mother didn't know about this. She didn't want to give John up for adoption, but couldn't cope as a single mom, with a potential schizophrenic child.

When asked about his sleeping problem, John tells me he's up half the night from fear of the dark and of monsters. He doesn't want to talk about them, but does admit scary TV shows affect him a lot. He has many other fears, and says he was scared this morning when they had to cross a bridge on the way to see me. He's also afraid of dogs, no matter what size.



I found him to be restless, having difficulty sitting in his chair, wanting to touch everything in the office. As well, he was bossy toward his mother, who didn't feel free to tell me everything, as she didn't want to upset him. A peculiar behaviour throughout the interview was that he kept making a spitting noise with his mouth whenever he was not pleased about what his mother said about him.

His past medical history reveals frequent colds and ear infections. His ears used to produce a lot of pus when infected, and he has had a long history of antibiotics. Also, John wets his bed to this day. One peculiar food craving is for vinegar. He's not fond of salads, but will drink the vinegar salad dressing out of the bowl.

Analysis

To be homeopathic to his constitution, John's medicine must be able to produce the following symptoms when given to healthy volunteers:

- Fear of the dark
- Fear of heights
- Fear of dogs
- Shrieking on waking.
- Spitting noises, making
- Cravings for vinegar.

Stramonium, commonly known as Thorn apple, is a plant well known in our homeopathic literature as a medicine for fearfulness, including fear of the dark, of heights, and of dogs.

Within 3 weeks of receiving it, John's sleep had improved dramatically. Not only did he start to sleep through the night, but his anxious and restless nature took a major change for the better, and he has been far more cooperative with his mother. His bed wetting also ended.



TRICK OR TREAT

I received an emergency phone call one Halloween evening several years ago, when a friend and colleague called me in a panic. Earlier that evening, his 10 year old daughter had gone trick or treating, overindulged her sweet tooth, and then complained of being nauseous. Soon after, her 7 year old sister found her lying motionless on the bed, “not breathing”, her eyes wide open and staring at the ceiling!

After calling 911, while waiting for the ambulance to arrive, my friend calls me. He says his daughter is breathing, but barely. She's particularly having trouble with exhalation. He intends taking his homeopathic first aid kit to the hospital, and warns me that he'll need to hang up when the ambulance arrives, asking that I study his daughter's case for him, and that he'll call me back once he's at the hospital.

Moments later, the ambulance arrives, and I'm left wondering whether I can help. I open the repertory (a book that describes symptoms in alphabetical order, and homeopathic remedies associated with those symptoms), and go to the Respiration chapter. Under “Respiration difficult, expiration”, 11 remedies are listed. “Staring”, in the eye chapter, has too many remedies to be of much use. However, in the Stomach chapter, under “nausea from sweets”, only 19 remedies were listed. I was relieved to see a pattern emerging.

Ipecac is one of only 8 remedies listed in the homeopathic literature under ‘gourmand’. As well, it is listed under “collapse”, and under overeating. *Ipecac* is a member of the *Rubiacea* family (which also includes coffee), a family of plants known to be associated with a quality we call “stimulus-hunger”, seeking over-stimulation and then suffering the consequences (Sweets, of course, are in that stimulant category.).

After what seemed like an interminable time, my friend finally called back. His daughter's been hooked up to a respirator, with imperceptible breathing, and the problem with expiration persisting. Within 30 seconds of administering *Ipecac* in homeopathic form, his daughter was up and talking. By the time the doctor came a few minutes later, she was totally normal, and the doctor reproached my friend for wasting his busy time, when so many people were in need of urgent help!



ASTHMA AND THE EMPATHETIC CHILD

George, a 12 year old boy, is brought by his mother in May of 04 for a homeopathic consultation to help him with his asthma. He is a lean and lanky boy of average height, who strikes me as serious, or perhaps shy, but who nonetheless participates throughout the interview, attentively engaged in answering any questions when asked. He is a middle child, with a sister a few years younger, and a brother who is considerably older and who has already moved out of the house.

George has been on steroid inhalers for 2 years, his asthma starting shortly after the family moved from Montreal to Ottawa. Medication helps him with his breathing, but his mother would like to see him be asthma and drug-free, and has heard that homeopathic medicine can help.

In common with other asthma sufferers is that George's asthma is worse with exercise, like running or cycling. He's on a cycling team, and is often lagging behind. He doesn't mind the asthma so much, except that it slows him down, and he doesn't like to slow the rest of the group down, fearing they'll be upset with him.

Elaborating on this sensitivity to others, he describes feeling like he's done the worst thing possible when he makes his older sister cry. George has tears in his eyes as he tells me this. "I don't like to hurt others. I know what it feels like to be hurt. It hurts me when I get hurt, and I don't want others to feel hurt." My sister can be really mean to me, and at times it feels as if she doesn't care for me at all (Silent tears roll down his face as he's telling me this). She sometimes says to me that she hates me. It's upsetting, and I go to my room and cry." His mother describes him as very empathetic. When his aunt (his mother's sister) died of cancer last year, George felt very sad for his mother. When he would see her crying, he'd sit down next to her, comforting her, being nice in any way he could think. "He's the kindest, when anyone's hurting".

When asked to talk more about what was happening in his life when asthma first started, his mom says that the move to Ottawa was particularly hard on him, that he missed his friends a lot and felt very lonely in Ottawa. As he made new friends his loneliness subsided, but not so his asthma.

Analysis

Not every child who has asthma will have the sensitivity and gentleness that characterizes George's nature. A therapy that can honor this sensitivity is essential if we are to tailor a treatment to the whole person, and not just the condition.

The proving of *Pulsatilla* (the homeopathic preparation of the Wind Flower, a common perennial in many Canadian gardens) is associated with the following symptoms:

- Empathy
- Weepiness
- Loneliness
- Sadness aggravates asthma



I didn't see George through the whole summer after he received his homeopathic Rx. 5 months later, when he finally did come in for a follow up, he reported being asthma-free ever since the start of his treatment, this despite having been more active than ever with playing football and mountain biking. He has had no wheezing whatsoever and has not needed puffers. George's confidence has also changed dramatically. He became involved in leadership activities at school, volunteering to be a peer helper, and has become a spokesman against bullying, accompanying teachers to student conferences. His relationship with his sister can still have rough moments, but there are fewer quarrels. "She doesn't bug me as much, though she hasn't changed at all. I'm still annoyed by her, but I react differently. I'm not as sensitive to feeling hurt, not as upset when feeling not liked."

