

# Oh fluey!

by Miranda Castro, FSHom, RSHom(NA), CCH

I WENT DOWN WITH THE FLU LAST MONTH—way down. At first I thought I just had a little cold and was pleased in the kind of righteous way that only a homeopath can be—welcoming my body's annual acute illness wholeheartedly as an opportunity to go to bed and give my vital force a little R & R. Yes ma'am. Practicing what I preach and everything! Oh well—best laid plans and all that.

This time my little cold zoomed straight down into my chest, and within a day I was coughing and coughing and coughing. By the end of the same day my temperature had zoomed up—and with it the telltale aching in every joint and muscle in my body which told me that my little cold had evolved into a full-blown flu.

With a cold you can enjoy your sojourn in bed, watching an afternoon movie and following it with a little nap. The flu, by sharp contrast, is a bed of nails. You feel sick, you look terrible, and people who visit keep their distance. I was in bed but was unable to read or watch TV because of the aching in my head, and I wasn't excited any longer. Not even a teeny, little bit. I was completely miserable: groaning and moaning—even when no one was there to listen. I couldn't sleep because my body hurt so much and because of the constant, dry, hacking cough that tormented me day and night.

When you have a cold, dinner nearly always sounds good however snotty you are or even if your nose is so blocked you can't smell the food. With a flu, your appetite flies out the window and you try and console yourself with the thought that you might lose a few pounds—if that is any consolation.

## The bad flu

A good—or rather bad—flu can last for a week and leave people limp for another week or three afterwards. Each year 10,000–20,000 people die in the U.S. from complications of the flu, mainly pneumonia in those who are vulnerable (the elderly and those with certain chronic diseases such as emphysema). There have been three serious flu epidemics this century: in 1918–19, 20 million died of the Spanish Flu; in 1957, 100,000 died of the Asian flu, and in 1968, 50,000 died of the Hong Kong flu.

## Flu prevention

Give yourself an increased chance of staying healthy during flu season by eating all the right things (including plenty of vitamin-C rich fruits and vegetables) and getting enough exercise, rest, and sleep. Washing your hands when around those who are sick will help to reduce your chances of contracting the disease.

Boiron's *Oscillocochinum*® (the only truly unpronounceable remedy in our Materia Medica!) or Dolisos' *Dolivaxil*™ are useful when you know you have been

exposed to the flu but have no symptoms.

The homeopathic remedy *Influenzinum* can be used as a preventative—taken once a month during flu season with additional doses if in contact with someone who has the flu. Many homeopathic pharmacies make it fresh each year from that year's flu vaccine. Some homeopaths swear by it—finding it more effective than the conventional flu shot, without the side effects. Studies in England and India conducted between 1968 and 1970 using *Influenzinum* as a preventative showed the homeopathic remedy to be highly effective at preventing the flu.

## At the first sign of a flu

*Oscillocochinum*® can also be taken right at the very beginning of feeling ill but before any symptoms have developed, before you even know that it's a flu. Take two or three doses 4–8 hours apart and hope for the best.

*Aconite* will help if taken in the first few hours of a fast developing flu that comes on after getting chilled in a cold wind. You can take *Aconite* when you know you are getting sick, have started to sneeze and develop a fever, but before you have a clearly identifiable symptom picture. Take three doses, one every hour or so ... and cross a couple fingers or toes!

*Ferrum phosphoricum* is the remedy to take after *Aconite* hasn't helped and a fever has developed, but you have no other symptoms yet. Again, take three doses, one every hour or so.

## Homeopathic remedies for the flu

*Arsenicum album* is for flus with great prostration in chilly, irritable, anxious, and fussy types. The eyes and nose stream with watery, acrid discharges. Fevers are accompanied by extreme chilliness and a thirst for (frequent) sips of warm drinks. Everything is better for warmth except for the headache, which is worse for heat and better for fresh air.

*Baptisia* is for terrible flus that come on suddenly. People feel sore and bruised all over, and the body and the limbs feel as if they are “scattered and all in bits.” They really do. There's profuse sweating with a high fever and an intense thirst. The face is a dull red color and people who need this remedy look “stuporous”—dazed and sluggish to the point of falling asleep while they are talking to someone. This remedy is for gastric flus with vomiting and diarrhea.

*Bryonia* is for flus that come on slowly. These people ache all over, especially in the joints, and the aching pains are much worse for motion, even the smallest movement; so these people lie completely still in their beds. They are extremely irritable and want to be left alone. They have a peculiar thirst—for large quantities of cold drinks, but at infrequent intervals (because of all the movements involved in the drinking!) They have a



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dry, painful cough which makes their heads hurt.

*Eupatorium perfoliatum* is for the most dreaded of all the flus. The pains are so severe that it feels as if the bones are broken. The muscles ache and feel sore and bruised as well. These people moan and groan with the pains. Everything hurts; there is a bursting headache and sore, aching eyeballs. The nose runs with much sneezing, the chest feels sore and raw, and coughing makes the head hurt. They want (ice) cold water in spite of the fact that it brings on violent chills that begin in the small of the back. They don't sweat much but when they do, they feel better all over (except for the head).

*Gelsemium* is for flus that come on when the weather changes from cold to warm. It is for the commonest of flus that come on slowly and are accompanied by weak, aching muscles. There is a dull headache and a great feeling of heaviness ... everywhere, especially the eyelids, head, and limbs. These people are thirstless even with the fever, which alternates with chills and shivers that run up and down the spine. They are apathetic, dull, and drowsy.

*Mercurius solubilis* is for those who experience fever with copious, extremely offensive perspiration, which makes them feel worse or at the very least doesn't provide any relief (unlike most feverish sweats). Their breath smells bad, they have more salivation than normal, and they are extremely thirsty.

*Nux vomica* is for gastric flus with vomiting and diarrhea. Their limbs and back ache a great deal. The nose runs during the day and is stopped up at night. Their fevers are accompanied by chills and shivering, especially after drinking. They are very chilly, finding it hard to get warm, and are sensitive to the slightest draft of air or uncovering of any part of their body. They are extremely impatient and irritable.

*Pyrogenium* is another remedy for serious flus with severe pains in the back and the limbs and a terrible, bursting headache. These people feel beaten and bruised all over (and the bed feels hard). They are very restless but unlike *Rhus toxicodendron*, feel better on beginning to move. Chills are felt in the back and the limbs, and are accompanied by a thumping heart. A high fever is accompanied by a slow pulse and urine that is clear, like water.

*Rhus toxicodendron* is for flus that come in cold damp weather. There is much aching and stiffness in the joints which is worse when these people first start to move after having sat or lain down for a while. The pains then ease up after a bit of movement (like a rusty gate!) but these people become quickly weak and sore and so they have to rest again. After they have rested for a while they stiffen up and have to move again—creating a cycle of restlessness. Their pains are better for warmth. They can be anxious and weepy (not knowing

why they are crying).

Take the indicated remedy in a 30X or 30C potency according to the severity of the symptoms: more often (every 1–2 hours) if the symptoms are severe and less often (every 3–4 hours) if they are not too bad. Stop and start the remedy as needed: back off if you feel better—and repeat it only if the symptoms start to return again. If you have taken about six doses and had no response then it's likely that you selected the wrong remedy. Check your symptoms again and find another remedy. Just like I did (below)! If you only have a higher (200) or lower (6) potency, don't worry—the right remedy will work in any potency.

### Convalescing

My favorite homeopathic remedies for weakness after influenza are *Kali phosphoricum*, *China*, and *Gelsemium*. These aren't the only remedies for post-viral weakness but they will help many of those whose vital forces are struggling to recover their former strength and health.

*Kali phosphoricum* is for those who suffer general exhaustion and are unaccountably depressed after the flu.

*China* is for those who are debilitated after the flu especially if they have lost a lot of fluids through sweating and/or vomiting. They are chilly, pale, and wan with dark circles under the eyes and are touchy and irritable. Their limbs feel weary and they want to constantly stretch or change position.

If one of these remedies fits the symptoms, it should be taken in a low potency—that is, 6X, 6C, or 12X—two to four times daily, for up to a week.

*Gelsemium* is for those who continue to feel dull, apathetic, heavy, and trembly, even after the acute flu symptoms have passed. Their temperature stays up around 99°F and while they don't feel very ill they don't feel well either. This is a more serious state as it can develop into chronic exhaustion; therefore, this remedy should be taken in a higher potency—12C or 30C—twice daily for up to three days. It can be taken if the feelings of heaviness and exhaustion look like they are settling into a chronic fatigue pattern also.

The homeopathic remedy *Influenzinum* can also be taken in any situation where a person simply feels they have never been well since the flu. A single dose of a 30C can be all that is needed in this situation.

### What about me?

Enough of all this I can hear you saying. What did *you* do? I repertorized my own symptoms (it's been said before but cannot be stated too often—the homeopath who self-prescribes has a fool for a patient and an idiot for a practitioner) and came up with *Nux vomica*. I had a hard, dry, painful cough. I was irritable and wanted to

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## Influenzinum

by Julian Winston

One of my earliest experiences with homeopathy involved the use of the nosode *Influenzinum*. It was 1972 in Philadelphia, and I had just begun seeing Dr. Ray Seidel, a homeopathic medical doctor and 1935 graduate of Hahnemann Medical College. I had been to him a few times and he had helped me on each occasion.

In 1972, the news was full of the reports of a new possible flu epidemic and everyone was being urged to get their flu shot. I went to see Dr. Seidel and asked him about it. He grunted. "Only thing that shot will do to you is make you sick. Here, open your mouth." I did, and he poured some fine granules on my tongue. They tasted sweet just like all the other granules he ever gave me. "That will hold you," he said. "Come back in a month or so for another dose."

Well, *that* was the year of the "swine flu" and many people had very serious reactions to the flu shots. One woman I know was paralyzed and in the hospital for about a month after getting the flu vaccine. For me, I just cruised through the winter. No colds, no flu.

For the next few years, I got a dose from Dr. Seidel at the beginning of each flu season. I finally asked him what it was. He told me it was a preparation of "flu virus" that was made by Nelson's in the U.K. He had obtained it from Boericke and Tafel in a 200th potency, and gave it to all his patients. According to him, none ever reported having the flu.

Flu ... be alone. I wanted hot drinks—lots of them—and everything ached. *Nux vomica* didn't help so I moved on to *Bryonia* which didn't do anything either. So then I took *Hepar sulph* followed by *Eupatorium* after which I gave up, thinking homeopathy was an infuriating bunch of baloney.

On day three I was desperately sick. I had given myself one silly remedy after another (they were silly because they hadn't worked, of course). Luck sent me a homeopathic friend to visit who got the picture after only 30 seconds of keen observations. My eyelids were one give-away—I simply could not open them. I was

slurring my words with the effort of talking, and one quick question ascertained that the full glass of water on the bedside table had been full since the morning. Case closed! She threw a *Gelsemium* 200C under my indifferent, heavy, thirstless tongue and within a few hours I was up and hunting for some soup.

When another friend in my neighborhood went down with a similar flu, I listened carefully for symptoms of *Gelsemium* and saw them more easily (now that they weren't in my body) and gave the remedy at the onset of her illness. Her flu was milder and shorter. 🍃

## Before the flu—or for the very first symptoms

### **Oscillococcinum®**

For prevention of flu or at first sign of getting sick.

### **Influenzinum**

For prevention of flu.

### **Aconite**

At the first sign of a flu with *sudden* onset with no clear symptoms, i.e., within the first few hours.

### **Ferrum phos**

At the first or second sign of a flu (i.e., after the first few hours) with no clear symptoms yet.

## FLU REMEDIES

Remedy	Onset	Fever	Pain	Cough/Coryza Head/eyes	Thirst	< Worse for	> Better for	Miscellaneous
<b>Arsenicum</b>		<i>Chilly</i>		Profuse, acrid discharge from eyes and nose	<i>Thirsty for sips</i> frequently	<i>Cold</i>	<i>Warmth</i> except the headache	Irritable and anxious <i>Great</i> prostration
<b>Baptisia</b>	<i>Sudden</i>	<i>High fever</i> with prostration with profuse sweat	<i>Sore/bruised</i> feeling or all in bits, <i>scattered</i>	Face is <i>dull/red</i>	<i>Intense thirst</i>			With <i>gastric</i> symptoms i.e. vomiting/diarrhea <i>Stuporous</i>
<b>Bryonia</b>	<i>Slow</i>	<i>Very hot &amp; dry</i>	<i>Aches</i> all over	<i>Painful cough</i> (causes headache)	<i>Large</i> quantities infrequent (for cold)	<i>Least</i> movement	Pressure	With chest symptoms Wants to be still & left alone
<b>Eupatorium perfoliatum</b>		Shivering/chills of back	Severe pains in limbs and back. Bones feel <i>broken</i>	<i>Bursting</i> Headache Eyeballs are sore	<i>Thirst</i> for cold drinks	<i>Least</i> movement		
<b>Gelsemium</b> (No. 1 flu remedy)	<i>Slow</i>	Heat alternating with chills. Shivers/chills run up & down spine No sweat	<i>Aches</i> all over Muscles <i>ache</i> <i>Heavy</i> and <i>weak</i>	Sneezing <i>Dull</i> headache Eyes/head <i>heavy</i> Double vision	<i>Thirstless</i>		Urinating (headache) Open air Sweating	Apathetic, drowsy, "benumbed" Limbs tremble Stiffness of cervical region
<b>Mercurius solubilis</b>		Creeping chilliness		Thick, acrid, smelly, yellow/green discharges Nose is swollen, shiny and sore Cold ascends to eyes	<i>Intense thirst</i> <i>Constant</i> hunger	Heat and cold, i.e., extremes of temperature	Moderate temperatures Rest	With sore throat Salivation, bad taste in mouth & bad breath <i>Restless</i>
<b>Nux vomica</b>		Chilly with shivering (esp. after drinking)	Limbs and back <i>ache</i>	Nose stopped up at night	<i>Thirst</i> for hot drinks	<i>Least</i> movement <i>Cold</i>	Warmth	With gastric symptoms Extremely irritable
<b>Pyrogen</b>		Creeping chills & thumping heart Rapid pulse & low temp or vice versa. Chills in back/limbs	Severe pains in back and limbs. Feels <i>beaten</i> and <i>bruised</i> all over (bed feels hard)	<i>Bursting</i> headache	<i>Thirstless</i>			Intensely <i>restless</i> with the pains & the <i>chills</i>
<b>Rhus toxicodendron</b>		Chilly	Aches and pains in joints/bones	Tip of tongue is red (triangle)	<i>Thirsty</i>	Keeping still Motion	Gentle motion Warmth	<i>Restless</i> & confused Fear of being poisoned

## After the flu

### **China**

More of a physical weakness after a flu with a lot of sweating (and possible dehydration).

### **Kali phosphoricum**

Mildly depressed after a flu.

### **Gelsemium**

Weakness after a flu with heaviness that won't go away.

### **Influenzinum**

Feels that he or she has never recovered from the flu—has never been well since.