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16TH JANUARY 2009 – HOMEOPATHY FOR SHORT-TERM STRESS AND ANXIETY

As we all know, there's a lot of stress, anxiety and uncertainty around at the moment! It's winter and we haven't got the long daylight hours of summer to lift our spirits. We're all still getting used to being back at work or study after the Christmas holidays, and a lot of us are probably still worrying about paying off everything we spent over Christmas! And of course there's a lot of bad news coming at us every day because of the credit crunch and the current financial crisis.

As if all that isn't enough, we all lead very busy lives these days too, and there are also the unexpected things we have to deal with that we'd really rather not! So the chances for most of us of being susceptible to some short-term stress and anxiety are probably quite high. That's why I thought it might be nice today to look at some homeopathic remedies and essences that can help.

A lot of people don't realise that homeopathy can be used in this way, rather than just for more physical complaints. Because it's a holistic therapy, it looks at mental and emotional aspects as well as the physical, and there are a number of remedies that you can have in at home, in your handbag or your pocket to help you get through when stressful things crop up.

Rescue Remedy – The 'emergency essence'

Probably the first one to mention is Rescue Remedy, which I think most listeners will already have heard of. It's the most widely known of the Bach Flower Remedies, and is a great first port of call for any shock or stressful situation. This one is great for any unexpected occurrence that leaves you feeling off balance. This could be bad news, an argument, or even something like witnessing or being involved in a car accident. Of course, it shouldn't be used instead of medical treatment in a serious emergency, but it can be given to help reduce the shock and tension and put you in a better place for recovery. It's also good for nerves before a major event like a big meeting or a job interview. You can also use Rescue Remedy for those days where you're rushed off your feet and can feel your stress levels rising by the second – it can help you to slow down, take stock and breathe before carrying on.

Aconite – Shock, fear and nightmares

This is a great remedy for when someone feels very frightened. This might be for no particular reason, or it might be because they've just experienced a very frightening event. They'll definitely look very anxious, and you'll notice this by their shocked, staring, glassy eyes. Anyone needing Aconite will be distressed, anxious and fearful. They may also be inconsolable. A good example of when this remedy would be indicated is when a child or adult wakes up terrified after a nightmare. Aconite works quickly to reduce the anxiety and restore calm.





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Calc Carb – Money and security worries

Calc Carb is a great remedy for the current climate. It's helpful for people who find themselves worrying all the time. If you need this remedy, you probably spend a lot of time worrying about money and your longer-term security. It's what we call a grounding remedy, so if you need it, you're likely to be feeling quite apprehensive about how you're going to survive financially and materially. Things will go round and round in your mind, and you may also find change very difficult, as it threatens your routine and status quo. Other common fears that Calc Carb can help with are fears of the dark, spiders, animals and monsters – so again, another good remedy for children too.

Arsen Alb – Fears about security and health

This is another remedy for perpetual worriers! Like Calc Carb, people who need Arsenicum will probably have a lot of worries about money and financial security, but their main preoccupation is with their safety and their health. If you feel stressed and find yourself needing to be meticulously organised to the point of being fastidious, worrying a lot about danger and personal security, needing company around you and feeling fearful about your health, then Arsen Alb would be a good remedy for you to try.

Lycopodium – Performance anxiety

This one is specifically for when you've got something big coming up and you're worried about how you're going to meet the challenge. This could be a big presentation or pitch at work, an exam or test, public speaking, appearing on the radio(!)...in fact, any situation that you feel nervous on the run up to. Lycopodium can help calm the nerves, stop your stomach from churning and generally help you rise to the occasion.

Gelsemium – Apprehension and shaking before flying etc.

The last remedy I'd like to mention today is Gelsemium. This is a good one for people who really get the collywobbles before something they really don't like. Good examples of this are getting a really nasty attack of the shakes before flying or going to the dentist. This kind of anxiety can be quite paralysing, and you may feel like you just want to go and curl up in a corner rather than go through with it. Gelsemium can be really helpful in getting you through, particularly in situations where you want to be able to do something and there's a very real chance you'll back out because of your fear.

Where to buy these remedies and how to take them

All the remedies mentioned here are available from good local pharmacies and health food shops who carry a homeopathic range. Home use remedy kits for common ailments and first-aid are also available from New Path Homeopathy – visit www.newpathhomeopathy.com for more information.





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For acute/sudden shock, stress or anxiety, dissolve one pill under your tongue (or with Rescue Remedy, place a few drops onto your tongue) every 10-20 minutes until you start to feel some relief. Stop on improvement.

For stress or anxiety over a period of a few days, take one pill or a few drops three times daily.

For specific situations coming up, such as a job interview or an exam, take one pill or a few drops the night before at bedtime, again on waking on the day, then just before and just after the situation.

Finally, it's important to mention that what we're talking about here are short-term stressful situations or bouts of anxiety. If you're experiencing prolonged and serious symptoms of apprehension, anxiety and even depression, it's important to seek help and advice from a qualified professional such as a registered homeopath, a counsellor or your GP.

