

# homeopathy

## TODAY

YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTH THROUGH HOMEOPATHY

SPECIAL DIGITAL EDITION  
SKIN

**SAVE YOUR SKIN FROM  
SUNBURN THIS SPRING  
AND SUMMER**

**COMFORTABLE IN  
THEIR OWN SKIN**

Safe skin solutions for people  
with eczema or psoriasis

**SAVE YOUR SKIN,  
SOOTHE YOUR PSORIASIS**

HANDS-ON BUILDER GETS BACK TO  
WORK-HOMEOPATHY GETS A THUMBS UP!

**CLEAR SKIN AHEAD!**

Reclaim your life from acne with  
a mind-body medicine approach

**PIERRE THE BALDING  
POMERANIAN**

A Case of Chronic  
Allergic Skin Disease

**IN THE CLEAR...  
FOR GOOD!  
Homeopathy Heals  
severe cystic acne**

**WARTS AND ALL**  
The homeopathic way of  
wart removal

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SKIN

## SKIN Article Collection



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# Save Your Skin,

## Hands-on Builder Gets Back to Work—Homeopathy Gets a Thumbs Up!

by STEVEN COWARD, ND

HOMEOPATHS OFTEN FIND themselves in the position of “physician of last resort.” People come to see us only when all else has failed. Such was the case with Ron, age 46, who came seeking help for his severe and longstanding psoriasis.





# Soothe Your Psoriasis

Ron was an imposing figure—tall, broad, and physically fit—but his condition had brought him to his knees. A builder by trade, Ron was fortunate to now run his own business, but he was utterly unable to work with his hands in a physical capacity because of severe psoriasis. Conventional medicine, including oral steroids and steroid creams, had provided some symptomatic relief in the past but had never solved his problem. Having given up on that approach, Ron had recently run a gamut of non-conventional treatments such as herbal therapies, fasting, and acupuncture—all to no avail. He came to me in desperation, referred by another patient of mine.

## **A tenacious skin problem**

Psoriasis is a chronic condition in which skin cells grow more rapidly than normal, building up and creating raised, red, scaly patches. It is usually found on the scalp, elbows, and knees, but it can appear anywhere. Severity varies widely; for most people it's more of a nuisance, but for some it's debilitating. Serious cases may include severe pain, cracks and bleeding, itching, blisters oozing with pus, and even arthritic pain.

**“By the end of the workday, all I can do is take ibuprofen, soak my hands in hot water, and go to bed.”**

A person with psoriasis usually goes through periods of improvement and flare-up, and the affected locations may change, but psoriasis doesn't typically go away. Some “triggers” that can make a person's psoriasis worse may include stress, smoking, alcohol, strep infections, skin irritations, cold and dry air, and certain drugs. Conventional medicine is aimed at managing the symptoms, using topical medicines (e.g., corticosteroids, retinols, salicylic acid), ultraviolet light therapy, or systemic drugs that slow skin cell growth or reduce inflammation (e.g., immunosuppressants, immunomodulators).

Psoriasis seems to run in families, and it's believed to be an autoimmune overreaction in which the body's T-cells mistakenly attack normal skin cells as if to fight infection or heal a wound. It can start at any age, but it most commonly develops





## Skin Saving Self-Care for Psoriasis

Here are some self-help tips for soothing your psoriasis:

- ◆ Visit a trained homeopathic professional and stick with the treatment for at least a year before evaluating results. Although you may get lucky and find relief with homeopathic self-care, chronic skin conditions are often very difficult to treat, so professional homeopathic treatment is your best bet.
- ◆ Eat fatty fish and/or supplement with fish oil for natural anti-inflammatory effects.
- ◆ Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, especially orange and yellow vegetables rich in Vitamin A/carotenoids (research has found that people with a diet high in carrots, tomatoes, and fresh fruit have less psoriasis).
- ◆ Expose psoriasis outbreaks to the sun for short periods (e.g., 15 minutes) 3 or more days a week, but avoid sunburn!
- ◆ Consider supplementing with borage oil or evening primrose oil; their gamma-linolenic acid content works to keep skin healthy.
- ◆ Consider taking herbal milk thistle extract (*Silybum marianum*) which supports the liver and may help slow skin cell proliferation.
- ◆ De-stress daily! Stress has been found to trigger psoriasis, so develop a regular relaxation practice (e.g., exercise, deep-breathing, yoga, self-hypnosis, qigong.)

in a person's teens or twenties. An estimated five to six million Americans suffer with psoriasis.

### Homeopathy and skin problems

In my experience, homeopathic treatment can be very effective for people with stubborn skin conditions like psoriasis or eczema and, even better, it's safe and non-toxic—something we can't say about most conventional treatments. Even so, patients should not expect a quick cure with homeopathy. Although I have seen some miraculously fast resolutions (especially in children with eczema), for most chronic skin conditions homeopathic healing will occur over a long period of time, with careful prescribing by a trained, observant homeopathic professional. I try hard to let patients know this at the outset.

### Ron's torment

For as long as he could remember, Ron had suffered with psoriasis—usually pink,

red, and/or scaly white outbreaks on his arms, elbows, tailbone, and ankles. The psoriasis was always troubling, but sometimes it flared up more severely, greatly affecting his quality of life and limiting his everyday activities. At the time of our visit, Ron's palms and fingers were affected and extremely sore. "By the end of the workday, all I can do is take ibuprofen, soak my hands in hot water, and go to bed," Ron

said. "They've been miserably cracked and painful like this for the past year or so." When he showed me his hands I could see that the palms were deeply cracked all the way to the fingertips; the skin was slightly red, except around the cracks where it was thick and pale.

### Ah-ha! Cracked fingertips...

Redness, white scales, and thickened skin are common manifestations of psoriasis, but severe cracks are a bit more unusual. As soon as I heard that Ron's fingertips were cracked, I guessed that he needed the homeopathic remedy *Petroleum* because this is a keynote symptom for that remedy, and because *Petroleum* is a remedy that is often indicated for people with skin conditions. My hunch was strengthened by his assertion that "the one thing that ever really helped was coal tar that a pharmacist once gave me." Ron said it worked well, but he had never attempted to get it and use it again. *Petroleum* is, of course, homeopathically prepared coal tar. I almost called an end to the visit right then, but I contained my excitement and took his entire health history.

First, of course, I examined the specifics of the symptoms of his hands. The pain was of a burning character. It was better in the morning and got worse as the day went on. It was better from running his hands under hot water.

### A striking symptom

Ron also complained of occasional moderate chest pain, which had been thoroughly checked out by a cardiologist, with no significant findings. His sleep was disturbed by the discomfort in his hands. On

## Research: Homeopathy Helps Psoriasis

A 2009 multicenter study published in the *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology* gathered data on 82 patients with psoriasis who were treated with classical homeopathy for two years.

The study found a marked reduction in psoriasis symptoms and significant improvement in quality of life. Many of the patients had suffered psoriasis for as long as 15 years and had unsuccessfully tried conventional treatments.

—"Homeopathic treatment of patients with psoriasis—a prospective observational study with 2 years follow-up," *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology*, 2009;23(5):538–543."

## I hesitated to give Silica because Ron was a big, assertive kind of guy...

further questioning, I also elicited a striking general characteristic symptom: Ron would sweat profusely about the head while eating or sleeping, especially on his face and scalp. This had been going on for about a year—just about as long as he'd had the severe psoriasis on his palms.

Ron's medical history included bad headaches as a child and moderate asthma as a younger adult. The actual symptoms of each were unremarkable, but they did share a common and characteristic modality: both were markedly improved in hot, humid weather. He breathed much better and suffered much less from headaches when the weather was hot and humid. Over the years, Ron grew out of the headaches and asthma, but that characteristic modality still applied to his psoriasis:

it tended to be better when the weather was hot and humid.

### Rethinking Ron's remedy

While *Petroleum* fit the cracked fingertip symptom, it did not cover well the other characteristic symptoms in Ron's case. I needed to find the remedy that covered cracks in the skin of the palms and fingertips, profuse perspiration about the head while eating and sleeping, and general improvement from hot, humid weather because these were the most characteristic symptoms of the case.\*

Close study of materia medica (Hering, Boericke, Allen, etc.) determined that *Silica* covered the entire case better than any other remedy, as the following quotes affirm:

- "A small crack in the index finger begins to burn and pain."
- "*Silicea* patient is cold...worse in winter."
- "Better, warmth...summer; in wet or humid weather."
- "Profuse perspiration on head in evening, on going to sleep."
- "Sweat...when eating."

### Give the remedy that fits

Even so, I hesitated to give *Silica* because Ron was a big, assertive kind of guy whose personality might lead a homeopath to think of remedies like *Sulphur* or *Lachesis* or *Nux vomica*; we tend to think of *Silica* more often for people who are timid, mild, yielding, and physically delicate. But *Silica* clearly best fit the characteristic symptoms of Ron's case, so I prescribed one dose of *Silica* 200c. While I fully expected to help Ron with homeopathic treatment, I told him that, in my experience, longstanding skin disease like his could take at least a year to go away. I expected him to improve in small steps over a long period of time.

I asked Ron to check in with me in one week. In cases as acute as Ron's, I typically follow up with the patient more frequently than in less acute cases. While I don't expect a cure in such a short time, I do hope to see at least some small shift in the patient's condition that tells me if I am on the right track in my remedy selection.



### Rapid, remarkable results

At this follow-up appointment, Ron reported that the pain in his hands had decreased substantially in one week's time—from a "7" on a scale of 1 to 10 to about a "2." His other, older psoriasis lesions were also improving to a lesser extent. His chest pain and sleep were better too. His sweating was unchanged. Overall, I was ecstatic, and so was he! The day before our follow-up visit, he had taken a second dose of *Silica* 200c on his own, thinking that the symptoms were worsening. I asked him to wait two weeks and follow up with me again.

Two weeks later at our next visit, Ron's hand pain and cracks were 80% better, the psoriasis on his tailbone was 90% better, and the outbreaks on his ankles were 50% better. Ron was finally sleeping well, now that his hand pain had dwindled. And the chest pains—along with his sweating about the head when eating or sleeping—were completely gone! He had taken only two doses of *Silica* 200c in the three weeks since our first visit.

Ron's quick resolution of a rather serious condition exceeded both of our expectations. When someone responds so strongly and universally to a homeopathic remedy, their prognosis is generally excellent. I told Ron that since he seemed to be healing so well, he could follow up with me as needed.

### Is it Psoriasis or Eczema?

Both psoriasis and eczema are chronic skin conditions that can cause red, scaly skin rashes. Sometimes it's hard to tell one from the other, although there are clear differences. Eczema is more common than psoriasis (an estimated 30 million vs. 6 million people in the U.S.) and often occurs in the first month or years of life (vs. psoriasis which typically appears in the teens or twenties). Eczema usually manifests on the face, skin folds, and inside of joints, whereas psoriasis is commonly seen on the outside of joints—knees, elbows. Eczema is typically very itchy and accompanied by weeping blisters; neither is common with psoriasis. A person with eczema often has allergic tendencies and may suffer with seasonal allergies or asthma. With eczema, the body's immune system over-reacts to outside influences (allergens) setting up an inflammatory response; with psoriasis, the immune system over-reacts to its own skin cells, setting up an inflammatory response.





## Dangerous Psoriasis Drug Withdrawn

### Linked to Deaths

In June 2009, Genentech, Inc. withdrew the psoriasis drug Raptiva from the market after it was linked to deaths of at least three patients from a rare but often fatal brain disease, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML). Although 80% of people are said to harbor the virus that causes PML, the disease occurs almost exclusively in people with severely weakened immune systems.

Raptiva is an immunosuppressant, as are many conventional drugs aimed at treating psoriasis.

One more reason to try homeopathy first!

### "A real miracle"

A couple months later, I had yet to hear from Ron so I checked in with him by e-mail. He replied with a single paragraph:

"Hi doc. Sorry I am just responding now. I think it's important to note that when I first came to you I could barely feed myself—my hands were in such a deplorable condition. I am happy to report to you that although I still have some symptoms in my knuckles and one ankle, the palms of my hands are absolutely clear—a real miracle and absolutely life changing for me. And believe me, prior to seeking your help I tried everything (sorry you were the last resort) from a series of colonics to every herbal/vitamin remedy under the sun... from strict diets eliminating certain foods to absolute fasting... *NOTHING WORKED!*"

Ron has remained very well and about 90% free of psoriasis symptoms for more than two years since our initial visit. Why don't people try homeopathy *first*?

\*In homeopathic parlance, a *characteristic symptom* is a symptom of a disease that is unique to the individual case being treated, as opposed to a symptom that is common to the disease being treated. For example, many people who have psoriasis have eruptions on their elbows, so that's common; very few people with psoriasis have outbreaks on their palms, as Ron did, so that's characteristic. Although we pay attention to all the symptoms of a case, it's the characteristic symptoms that play the greatest role in our choice of a remedy.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# In the Clear... for Good!



**Homeopathy heals severe cystic acne—  
lets Lara face a brighter future**

By AMY ROTHENBERG, ND, DHANP

I SOMETIMES THINK ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN OUR CULTURE... WE SO OFTEN judge a person by how they look. I like to think I am not so shallow and that I care more about the quality of a person's internal attributes than about how they appear on the outside. That said, externally visible or "disfiguring" symptoms can cause a person terrific pain, both psychological and otherwise. Cystic acne is one such example. Thankfully, it is also one condition that, in my experience, homeopathy and natural medicine can really help.

## An inflammatory process

Our skin has tiny sebaceous glands that naturally secrete sebum (an oily substance) into the hair follicles. Sebum normally flows up the hair shaft and onto the skin, where it lubricates the skin and hair. When hair follicles become blocked with sebum and dead skin cells, however, we have the start of acne. Inflammation in the area then occurs alongside excessive keratin and normal skin bacteria that gets trapped, which can further plug the hair follicle. When this inflammatory process is up and running, it can be difficult to stop.

Acne can have many contributing factors. Heredity is one difficult-to-control aspect, as we do see acne running in families. Shifts in hormones, such as reaching adolescence (when androgen hormones kick in and trigger the growth of sebaceous glands) or starting or stopping oral contraceptives, can also cause acne. Certain medications can lead to acne, too, as can exposing the skin to heavy oils, certain cosmetics, and even unfavorable climates.

## Scar wars

Just about everyone has dealt with unwelcome acne breakouts at some time in their lives and to varying degrees—pimples, whiteheads, blackheads, and raised red bumps (papules). Perhaps a big pimple appeared on your nose the morning of an important job interview. Or angry red bumps sprang up on your back the day of the all-school beach party or the prom. Although these experiences may be common, they are no less distressing for the person involved. And coping with acne can be especially traumatic for people with severe or longstanding acne.

People with the most severe form—cystic or nodular acne—suffer with very painful bumps (cysts or nodules of trapped pus, sebum, and debris) deep beneath the skin's surface, somewhat like boils. Their skin may be extremely inflamed over large areas of the face, neck, and/or back and be very painful to touch

or pressure. Scarring of the skin is common, and unfortunately, embarrassment and low self-esteem are frequent accompaniments to this condition.

## A multifactorial approach

Conventional acne therapy typically starts with topical gels or creams such as benzoyl peroxide to dry out the lesions, Retin-A® to promote cell turnover to keep pores unclogged, or antibiotic ointments to target bacteria in the skin. If that does not work, the next treatment level might be to add oral antibiotics, taken for three or four months at a time. For women, long-term oral contraceptives might be recommended, as this can improve acne in certain women. Laser and light therapies are additional options that occasionally help, but they are costly and not typically covered by insurance. For people with severe cystic acne, the powerful drug Accutane® (isotretinoin) is often prescribed.

The advent of antibiotics, and later Accutane®, has certainly improved the complexion of many an acne sufferer over the past few decades. Yet patients still come to me for help with their severe cystic acne. Perhaps the conventional medicines they tried did not work or did not work well enough. (Antibiotic resistance is a growing problem, for example.) Or maybe the person was unable to tolerate the conventional drugs. Accutane®, for instance, has many serious side effects, from poor night vision to elevated liver enzymes to increased suicide risk. Furthermore, this drug must not be prescribed for women who might become pregnant, because it is likely to produce birth defects.

## Facing up to adult acne

I first met Lara when she brought her children to see me for help with their garden-variety childhood issues. I could not help but notice the severe cystic acne all along Lara's nose, chin, and jaw line: angry, deep, large, red cysts that looked painful and made it difficult for her to smile.



## Lara rarely wanted to be seen in public.

After successfully working together with Lara on her children's health for a number of months, I decided to broach the topic of her skin. Trying not to be too forward, I asked Lara if she had ever considered using natural medicine and homeopathy to address her acne. "No," she replied. She was 40 years old and had suffered with severe acne since early adolescence—more than 25 years. "I've basically just learned to live with it," Lara said. After seeing the improvements in her children's health since they started treatment, however, she was willing to see if I could help her. So she scheduled a time when she could come in for an appointment without her kids.

## Lara's story

Lara told me that nothing she had ever tried—from pharmaceuticals to facials to herbal medicines to dietary changes—had seemed to have much of an effect on her skin. Not her menstrual cycle, not her pregnancies, and not even stress seemed to make any difference in the degree or intensity of her cystic acne.

"What is the worst thing about the acne?" I asked. "Two things," she replied. "It hurts like the dickens, and it makes me even shyer than I naturally am." Lara rarely wanted to be seen in public and had spent most of her married life as a homemaker and then as a homemaker/homeschooler of her two children. She liked the little family and all the domestic activity and was satisfied with her life. But she knew that her children needed more out-

**Scarring of the skin is common... embarrassment and low self-esteem are frequent accompaniments to this condition.**

## Clear Skin, Naturally

### Follow these steps to banish blemishes

**I**n my practice, each patient is treated individually—there is no “formula” prescription for people with acne. I choose the best constitutional homeopathic remedy for the individual before me, along with making some natural medicine recommendations.

Below are diet and supplement protocols tailored especially for Lara. That said, a similar plan should prove effective for most people suffering with acne, especially if they know their skin gets somewhat better with antibiotics. (If a patient has acne that is more hormonally driven and antibiotics don't help whatsoever, a different approach would be needed, using diet and supplements to balance the hormones and support liver function, since that is where hormones are metabolized.)

#### ◆ Eat cultured, fermented foods & take probiotics

To boost Laura's immune system, I suggested she eat more foods that are cultured or fermented: things like yogurt, kefir, miso, and anything pickled the old fashioned way. There are many reasons why eating traditionally fermented foods is good for us. They can be easier to digest because they are partially broken down before ingestion. Such foods also help us to create a proper balance of healthy bacteria in the gut. So many ailments, from cystic acne to irritable bowel syndrome to constipation, may well begin with problems in the gut. Many researchers now believe that even emotional and cognitive challenges can be somewhat helped by addressing gut health. To that end, I also prescribed a multi-strain probiotic.

#### ◆ Take an “antibiotic” multivitamin/herbal supplement

Because we knew that antibiotics had temporarily improved Lara's skin to some degree, I recommended a multivitamin/herbal combination supplement that has antibiotic characteristics that would work to kill infection and create healthier skin. Optibiotic made by Eclectic Institute is one such product. Two pills contain:

- Vitamin A—10,000 IU
- Vitamin C—500 mg
- Vitamin B-6—15 mg
- Magnesium—15 mg
- Zinc—15 mg
- Bioflavonoids—500 mg
- Echinacea angustifolia and purpurea—455 mg
- Garlic bulb—195 mg
- Myrrh—190mg
- Ginger root—97mg
- Cayenne fruit—65 mg

These vitamins and minerals help to create more balanced immunity and healthy skin cells; the botanicals also work to balance immunity and enhance circulation. I asked Lara to take two pills three times a day *with* meals.

#### ◆ Take flaxseed and borage seed oil

I also recommended that Lara take a combination of flaxseed oil (1500 mg) and borage seed oil (300 mg) once a day for the proven anti-inflammatory effects of these oils.



side stimulation, more people in their lives, and exposure to more activities outside the home. She was also looking ahead to the time when her children would be grown, and she knew she needed to figure out a plan for her own future, which might well include more time in public.

Lara reported that she never had much energy, even going back to childhood. “I’m just one of those people who is low, low energy, always,” she said. Lara was extremely tired throughout the day and often napped in the afternoon, regardless of her eight hours of sleep each night. She also tended to be chilly all the time and often had a hard time warming up, needing extra sweaters and blankets.

She tended to get anxious about her children, worrying about their (generally good) health, their future, and how they would cope with the ever-complicated world. “I verge on being obsessive-compulsive with the house and yard ... I like everything orderly and in its place,” she told me. In general, she did not feel confident and could be easily overwhelmed by her long daily to-do list and the emotional challenges that arose in her extended family. For the most part, Lara just dropped away from conflict or anything that took too much of her energy, as “I just do not have any to spare,” she said. By conserving energy in the places she could, she was better able to devote herself entirely to her children.

Besides cystic acne, Lara struggled with chronic sinusitis. She did not have allergies, but any cold that she caught immediately moved to her sinuses, as if she was unable to fight off the infection. When her sinuses got infected, she felt like she was under water, had lots of congestion in the face, felt pain in the cheek areas, and experienced even deeper fatigue and chilliness than usual. It was not uncommon for Lara to get one or two sinus infections a year and to take antibiotics for each episode. While she was on the antibiotics, she noticed that her skin would get somewhat better, but as soon as she went off the drugs, her skin would get worse again.

Over the years, Lara had tried many different antibiotics for her skin. While she had sometimes noticed a slight improvement in her complexion during these long-term antibiotic regimens, her

## She said she was now spending more time out and about, and she was feeling more and more confident.

stomach and whole digestive system had not responded well at all. Lara had an underlying tendency for constipation for as long as she could remember, and taking antibiotics would severely exacerbate this tendency, even when she took a probiotic supplement alongside the antibiotic. “It’s just not worth the trouble!” she said.

Because the antibiotics were not very effective and her cystic acne was severe, doctors had encouraged her to try Accutane® at various times in her life. But Lara was just too scared of the potentially serious side effects; also while taking this drug, patients have to get periodic blood draws to be sure their liver enzymes stay in the normal range, and Lara hated to give blood.

### A remedy for Lara

What would be the best way to help Lara and her seemingly intractable condition? This 40-year-old woman had been suffering with acne her entire adult life—and

then some! I decided to start by finding an individualized constitutional homeopathic remedy to address this *kind* of acne, in this *kind* of person.

When I considered the kind of acne Lara had and the kind of person she was, the remedy *Silica* immediately came to mind. Lara’s acne was cystic, hard, and longstanding—almost like small boils—and *Silica* is one of our best-known remedies for addressing boils, abscesses, deep inflammation with pus formation that has been going on a long time, and generally unhealthy skin, including acne.

Just as important, Lara’s temperament, personality, and overall physical symptoms fit *Silica* as well. Our homeopathic materia medica texts use the term “want of grit” to describe people needing this remedy because they are often shy with low self-confidence and severely limited energy resources, as Lara was. Homeopath J.T. Kent described this as “lacking stamina... a state of weakness, embarrassment, dread,



yielding... a state where he dreads to appear in public.” And, in fact, Lara’s acne had led her to almost hide in her home. Her chronic constipation, her low resistance to infections such as sinusitis, and her sensitivity to cold were also strong indications for *Silica*. (Boericke’s description of *Silica* says: “cold, chilly, hugs the fire, wants plenty of warm clothing.”) Lara’s being a bit rigid with her lifestyle and paying strong attention to many of the details in her life (“conscientious about trifles”) were additional hallmarks of someone needing *Silica* as a constitutional remedy.

In a person like Lara, I often begin by prescribing a homeopathic remedy in a low potency with repeated doses (versus a single dose of a higher potency), so I asked her to take *Silica* 12c once a day for the next six weeks. I chose this dosing method because I wanted to lessen the possibility of any aggravation (i.e., temporary worsening of symptoms). Also, given the nature of Lara’s health issues and the length of time she’d had them, I felt she might need to be taking this remedy for a long time to come; by starting low, we would have room to methodically increase the potency over time, if necessary. Finally, I chose repeated low doses instead of a single high dose because Lara is someone who thrives on routine and likes feeling that she is actively *doing something* for herself.

### Natural immunity & the gut

To complement homeopathic treatment, I recommended some natural medicine approaches to help create a better immune system, starting right in the gut, from where so much of our immune system

## Antibiotics for Acne?

They used to clear the skin, but now... not so much.

**W**hen a teenager’s sebaceous glands kick in and clog up, normal skin bacteria can get trapped and multiply, leading to acne. That’s why dermatologists frequently prescribe antibiotics to clear the skin. But the antibiotics have to be taken long-term, and, increasingly, the practice is coming under scrutiny. Acne-causing bacteria are mutating and becoming antibiotic-resistant—studies show a tripling of resistant bacteria over the last few decades—which means that antibiotics alone often don’t work well anymore.

Even worse, some evidence shows that long-term antibiotic use puts people at increased risk of illness. For example, one study found that people who used antibiotics for acne were twice as likely to get upper respiratory infections than acne-sufferers who did not use antibiotics. Some researchers theorize that long-term antibiotic use alters the immune system. They are now racing to investigate other methods of treating acne—such as acne-fighting viruses called bacteriophages, according to the September-October 2012 edition of *mBio*, the journal of the American Society for Microbiology.

Thankfully, homeopathy has a long history of safely and effectively helping people with acne. Turn to it as your first resort!

—Sources: “Doctors Strike Mutating Bacteria in Teen Acne Battle,” *NPR Blog*, October 15, 2012. “Good Viruses Will Fight Acne as 1915 Discovery is Revived,” *Bloomberg Business Week*, October 10, 2012.



arises. I also recommended a few naturopathic approaches that work to kill infection and create healthier skin. (For details, see the sidebar, “Clear Skin, Naturally,” on page 18.)

Some people may ask, “If you give so many things at once, how will you know what’s working?” When I give a homeopathic remedy, I have a very clear idea of what I expect the remedy to do. In Lara’s case, yes, I expected the acne to improve, but I also expected a noticeable change in her overall well-being—that is, an

improvement in her energy level and her confidence, along with a decrease in her tendency to get sick. Would the botanical medicine and supplements also help? Yes. But I expected that after awhile on the regimen, and once improvement began, she could start tapering off the supplements.

### Energized & excited

Indeed, when Lara returned to see me at the six-week follow-up visit, her skin looked remarkably better. There were no big cysts and no angry-looking areas. Her

entire chin and jaw were reddish, but there were no blemishes within the inflammation. More to the point, Lara felt energized and excited about life. She said she was now spending more time with her kids out and about, and she was feeling more and more confident. Given these great results—that is, she was moving in a positive direction with regard to her skin and her overall well-being—I decided not to change a thing in her treatment plan. So I asked her to continue taking the *Silica* 12c daily alongside the supplements.

## Blemish-Busting Remedies

End the anguish of acne—  
get homeopathic treatment!

**H**omeopathy for acne is different from conventional treatment in that a homeopathic remedy is individualized to the person. Because every person is different, no single homeopathic remedy will work for everyone. A remedy is selected based on a person’s unique set of symptoms, including (but not limited to) their acne symptoms.

For this reason, the curative remedy might be any one of hundreds of different possibilities—and that’s why it’s a good idea to seek the help of a homeopathic professional to heal your acne.

Below are just a few of the *many* possible remedies that homeopaths consider when treating a person with acne, along with very brief indications. (Many homeopaths advise low potency remedies in acne treatment, for example, 6c or 12c.)

**Hepar sulph.** Pimples that are very painful; they may feel like a splinter in the skin. Lesions are very sensitive to touch and possibly to cold. They may cluster in crops on the forehead and tend to form pustules and whiteheads easily. Discharge may smell like old cheese. In general, the person may be very chilly and oversensitive to pain, touch, cold, and slight causes.

**Calcarea sulph.** Severe cystic acne. Lesions persist in one place for weeks and do not heal quickly. Yellow, creamy pus drains for a long time. Unhealthy-looking skin with yellowish scabs. Pimples on face and near ears and hairline. Tendency to infections of the sinuses, ears, and tonsils that persist a long time. The person may be warm-blooded and feel worse in warm rooms. According to Lippe, this remedy “acts deeper than *Hepar sulph.*”

**Kali bromatum.** Acne begins in the teen years and continues relentlessly into adulthood. Bluish, red pustules on the face, chest, and shoulders that leave scars, purple spots, or a depression in the skin. Pimples may have a depressed center or be painful, large red cysts with a white or yellow center. In females, the acne may be worse near the menstrual period.



The person may have fidgety hands and feet, unpleasant dreams, restless sleep, and teeth grinding. They may be worse from warmth.

**Pulsatilla.** Acne in young girls that is associated with the onset of puberty. Acne that is associated with the menstrual period (especially when the period is irregular or absent) or with pregnancy. The person tends to have little thirst; to be weepy and like comfort and consolation; and to be chilly but like open, cool air and gentle motion.

**Silica.** Deep, hard cystic acne, like boils on the face, especially the cheeks; pimples often do not come to a head or show pus. Pimples are very slow to heal and leave pitting scars. The person tends to get infections easily and frequently. They may be chilly with sweaty hands and feet. They may be fatigued and lacking in strength and confidence, while also being obstinate with fixed ideas.

**Sulphur.** Acne with very oily skin. Blackheads are plentiful. Pimples and whiteheads are very large but not that deep. The face, especially the nose, is generally affected and tends to become reddened. Pimples may be painless but itchy. The skin may be rough and worse from washing. The acne may also be worse from heat, before the menstrual period, and from eating fatty foods. (This remedy is especially indicated for rosacea, a reddening of the face that causes acne-like eruptions.)

—Compiled by *Homeopathy Today* staff.

## Complexion cleared!

At the three-month mark when Lara next came to see me, her skin was perfect. No bumps, no acne, no redness. "I cannot believe it... I absolutely cannot believe it could be this easy!" she said, "After all those years of getting nowhere and all the things I tried and all the nasty antibiotic side effects I put up with, I'd really thought it wasn't even possible to get help. I just can't believe my skin looks so good practically overnight!" At this point, I decided to give Lara one dose of *Silica* 30c and have her stop taking *Silica* 12c daily. Now that she was stronger and much improved, I felt she could handle that higher potency, and she was also ready to do one less thing per day. I recommended that she stay on her supplement regimen, though at reduced dosages and frequency.

Over the course of the ensuing year, I give Lara one dose of *Silica* 30c and eventually one dose of *Silica* 200c, at points when her improvement appeared to be plateauing. She weaned herself from the vitamin/mineral supplement and the flax/borage seed oil by the end of that first year. Her skin stayed clear and healthy



**She liked the little family and all the domestic activity and was satisfied with her life.**



**At the three-month mark, her skin was perfect.  
No bumps, no acne, no redness.  
"I absolutely cannot believe it could be this easy!"**

looking, and her bowels were in good working order with little to no constipation—quite a welcome change for her. Lara had not had any bouts of sinusitis since we started working together either—a great sign that her immune system was stronger than before. I suggested that Lara stay on the probiotic for another year or so, as I wanted to help ensure that her immune system stayed strong (and we know that so much of our immune system arises from the gut).

## Best face forward

It is now 8 years since I first saw Lara, and she simply no longer has acne. She could not be more thrilled. In sum, giving a constitutional homeopathic remedy shifted her tendency for acne, sinusitis, and constipation, which in turn allowed her more emotional freedom. It also helped to lift the fatigue she had labored under most of her life. Additionally, natural medicine approaches helped to correct a low-grade infection that had plagued her skin for so many years.

Lara has gone on to need different homeopathic remedies for a few acute ailments, and she occasionally receives a dose of *Silica*, when her fatigue creeps back, she feels out of sorts, or she develops a seemingly acute illness that's really just a manifestation of her underlying constitutional state. I was so happy to help this earnest woman to be able to put her best face forward and to feel that she can come

out into the world with more energy and confidence.

Homeopathy is an excellent therapy for treating people with cystic acne. In my experience, it works well to shift the tendency for having such dermatological conditions. Other natural medicine protocols can support this shift by giving the body the raw materials it needs to heal. I have treated numerous patients with severe cystic acne whose results were very similar to Lara's—complete healing in a relatively short time—and without the unpleasant and sometimes dangerous side effects of many of the conventional acne drugs. Some patients do take longer to heal, and for some the healing is not so complete; I've also had a handful of acne sufferers that, unfortunately, I have not helped. That said, I am always happy to work with acne patients toward the goal of healthy and blemish-free skin.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Rothenberg, ND, practices in Enfield, CT ([www.nhcmcd.com](http://www.nhcmcd.com)). She blogs for the *Huffington Post* ([www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-rothenberg-nd/](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-rothenberg-nd/)). Her book, *The A Cappella Singer Who Lost Her Voice & Other Stories from*

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# Warts and All

## The homeopathic way of wart removal

by KARL ROBINSON, MD

*The following is a chapter in the author's new book, Small Doses Big Results: How Homeopathic Medicine Offers Hope in Chronic Disease. Says Karl: "The long and short of it is I feel lucky to have been born and even luckier to have discovered homeopathy."*

Everyone hates warts. They are unsightly, even disfiguring. They are caused by viruses that invade the outer layer of the skin causing keratin, a hard protein in the epidermis, to grow too fast. These hard, tough cells push up and out, forming a wart. These viruses belong to the human papillomavirus family (HPV) and more than one hundred different ones have been identified.

The cure of warts is a mix of folklore, old wives' tales, and urban legend. Medical science has a number of treatments which include external applications such as salicylic acid and cantharidin. Some dermatologists apply liquid nitrogen to freeze the warts. They can also be burned out, lasered out, or cut out.

A small girl, almost four years of age, had three fairly good-sized warts on her fingers. Her mother had taken her to two pediatric dermatologists and one regular dermatologist. Freezing had failed, as well as injecting a blistering agent. When her mother brought her to me she had been told she would need to have them surgically cut out.

I was not surprised that the dermatologists' treatments had failed. They were treating internal disease, in this case a

virus, with external treatments. Homeopaths are universally opposed to such treatments. The wart is the end result of the virus. The only way to treat a wart is to treat the person with the wart, as well as anything unusual about the wart.

The fact that her warts were all on her fingers was striking, as relatively few homeopathic medicines are known to treat warts appearing only on the fingers. Also, she liked salty chips and was a kindly child. She shared with other children and liked to take care of her older brother and her baby sister. "She is very sweet to her baby sister who is three months old," said her mother.

I took the following rubrics:

- Warts on fingers.
- Desire for salt.
- Sympathetic.

The medicine was *Causticum*. She received a single dose and in the next thirty days the warts got smaller and smaller and disappeared. They were cured from within.

How elegant! Rather than assailing the warts with crude chemicals from without, the body cured itself with a gentle nudge from *Causticum* taken by mouth.

*Causticum* is one of three homeopathic remedies that are famous for removing warts. The others are *Thuja occidentalis* and *Nitric acid*.

All the homeopathic books mention these medicines and many homeopaths give them in a routine sort of way. However, that is NOT homeopathy. There are no specifics in homeopathy. As a result, those three medicines only sometimes remove warts.

Why is this? It is because we treat the disease **through the individual**. It is the individual who is producing the warts. Each individual is unique with unique characteristics and these characteristics have little to do with the wart. In the above case, the little girl's extremely sympathetic nature plus her desire for salt and the location of the warts (fingers) pointed to *Causticum* which cured.

Let's look at another person with warts who did not receive one of the three famous wart medicines.

A fourteen-year-old boy came to me in March, 2005, with warts on his fingers near his nails. Several years earlier, he had warts on the soles of his feet. They had been burned off by a dermatologist.

This is **not** the way to treat warts. They are **not** a local, external disease. Yes, they do appear on the exterior. Yes, they do localize on the skin. But, they can only be there because of the cooperation of the whole organism. Nothing occurs without the permission of the larger whole. The virus cannot take root and grow the wart unless conditions permit.

It's a bit like growing orchids. They need the right soil, the right temperature, and the right mixture of sun and shade. All factors together permit orchids to grow. Without these right conditions the orchids cannot thrive.

So it is with warts. If you burn them off, they will grow back either in that spot or elsewhere. Best to make the internal milieu so strong and healthy that the virus that makes the wart cannot survive. I discovered this teenager was hot-natured, i.e., he had good body heat and preferred cooler weather. He uncovered in bed at night. He regularly had a bowel movement immediately on rising in the morning.

He also described, "An empty sensation in the stomach." It occurred daily around 11 a.m.

**The virus cannot take root and grow the wart unless conditions permit.**

## If you burn them off, they will grow back either in that spot or elsewhere.

Now, that is striking! When I searched for that symptom in the Repertory, the leading medicine under the heading, "Stomach, Emptiness, morning, 11 a.m." is *Sulphur*. It happens that people who need *Sulphur* are warm-natured and prefer the cool and tend to have their bowel movement immediately or soon after rising.

Notice! I paid scant attention to the wart. Rather, I paid attention to the **totality of the symptoms**. Here, the totality was:

- Hot-natured. He uncovered at night.
- Bowel movement immediately on rising.
- Empty sensation in the stomach at 11 a.m.

All these qualities or characteristics of the boy are also characteristics of *Sulphur*. After a single dose, the warts

slowly receded and ceased growing in the next two to three months. Four and a half years later, I saw him for another problem and learned the warts had never come back.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Karl Robinson, MD, practices in Houston and Albuquerque, and regularly teaches in El Salvador and Guatemala. In between, he goes to Mumbai to study with Dr. Prafull Vijayakar. A graduate of Yale University and Hahnemann College (Philadelphia), he is the author of *Small Doses, Big Results—How Homeopathic Medicine*

*Offers Hope In Chronic Disease*, a book designed to 1) attract the general public to homeopathy and 2) teach homeopathic patients about homeopathy. Practitioners will also find useful information.



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# Clear Skin Ahead

by AARTI PATEL, ND

**Acne.** These four little letters had plagued my day-to-day life for 10 years, and they were making it difficult for me to feel like an adult. It was 2004, and I was in my early 20s, about to enter a degree program in naturopathic medicine. I had just come off prescription acne medications that I'd been taking since my teens—an oral antibiotic (tetracycline), a topical antibiotic and antiseptic gel (benzamycin), and a salicylic acid skincare regimen. These treatments had improved my symptoms, but over time, they were becoming more expensive and less effective.

Even so, I couldn't believe what I saw in the mirror after stopping the treatments. My acne was worse than ever! The characteristic red, irritated bumps had spread to new places on my face, and the skin it trespassed on was taking longer to heal. I wondered to myself, "How is anyone supposed to take me seriously as a doctor one day?"

Unfortunately, this mindset was common for me. I didn't believe I could reach my potential as long as acne was my constant companion. I had put my life on hold waiting for the day the symptoms would magically disappear or I would find a miracle cure. Neither of my hopes had come to pass, and I felt that my skin was against me, just like I imagined the world would be. Friends and acquaintances would comment on

my skin and recommend treatments or doctors to try. I didn't want to discuss my problem with anyone, and this reluctance made me feel isolated from the world and disconnected from myself.

## An eye-opening assignment

My soon-to-be medical school, Bastyr University, gave me one assignment before entering its program: "Schedule an appointment at the student clinic." So, in I went with an open mind, and out I came with a homeopathic remedy. I had no idea what homeopathy was at the time, but I enjoyed the visit with the intern who prescribed the medicine to me. I told her that my primary health concern was acne. She then asked me many open-ended questions about my symptoms and experience with acne, all the way back to the beginning when I'd noticed my first pimple. I couldn't believe I was openly talking to someone about my whole story, and it didn't seem to be a huge deal.

I took the homeopathic remedy that night, and over the next few weeks and months, I saw my facial pores changing in the mirror. They were tightening, and my skin was becoming less sensitive and less prone to stress-triggered breakouts. I saw fewer and fewer pimples erupting. Homeopathy was my first glimpse into the mind-skin connection, and I was determined to use this medicine in my practice one day.



Reclaim your life from  
acne with a mind-body  
medicine approach

Up to that moment, I had been buying into the idea (literally, with my own money) that skincare products, pharmaceutical treatments, and strict, specialized diets were the only methods that could alleviate acne. Although I wasn't seeing results from running circles around these options, everywhere I turned, these were the main selling points for clear skin. After taking a homeopathic remedy, however, I knew there was another, often ignored, side to the story. Acne is not just physical—it's mental, too. In fact, in 10 years of practicing naturopathic medicine, I've found this to be true of every chronic illness I've seen in my office: There is always a mental component. Fortunately, homeopathy is a medicine that effectively treats the whole person, both body and mind. Also, the homeopathic interview itself is therapeutic to the patient. As an added bonus, homeopathic remedies are affordable—something I especially appreciated because I'd already spent so much money on acne products and treatments in the past.

### Stranded on the same boat

Though I felt alone when I was experiencing it, acne is among the five most common skin disorders. Once thought to pass after middle school or high school, acne is increasingly breaking through people's teenage years to follow them into their 30s, 40s, and even 50s. It affects close to 10% of people worldwide and is the eighth most prevalent health condition globally.

Acne comes about when the hair follicles (passages) connecting the skin's oil glands to its external pores become blocked with excess sebum, or oil. The sebum, skin cells, and hair can clump together and form a plug, which attracts bacteria. The body's immune system then goes after the bacteria, resulting in the swelling, redness, irritation, and pus of a typical pimple. In the mirror, we may see red bumps, whiteheads, blackheads, cysts, or a combination of these.

Research is inconclusive as to why some people get acne and others do not. Hormone fluctuations—such as those associated with puberty, menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and certain drugs (e.g., oral contraceptives, corticosteroids)—can trigger acne or make it worse. But not

everyone with changing hormones or high androgen levels of puberty will break out.

Stress can disrupt the body's cortisol levels, leading to an increase in breakouts. However, it is impossible to pinpoint just one specific stressor that leads to breakouts.

In mainstream culture, diet is also considered a major cause of acne. In my naturopathic practice, however, I haven't found a significant connection between diet and acne. Patients often clean up their diet, only to find that their symptoms are the same or worse. Dietary changes cause anxiety for some people, which can make acne worse. The bottom line is: Despite medical research, the exact cause of acne is largely a mystery.

The skin is closely connected to the body's digestive, detoxification, and immune systems, making acne more than a surface-level symptom. Individuals may have related symptoms that cluster with acne, such as anxiety, low energy, indigestion, mood swings, PMS, insomnia, and a weakened immune system, among others. Everyone is different, so it is helpful for each person to explore the body-mind picture of what is happening alongside acne.

### Current acne treatments

Conventional dermatologists typically treat acne with oral and topical antibiotics, retinoids, and anti-inflammatory drugs. They may also use tools to extract material from whiteheads and blackheads in the office, along with applying LED light therapy. These treatments can be effective in creating an improved complexion, as I saw with my own skin, but they can also be almost too good at what they do. The body's natural immune and healing response is suppressed by these treatments. Potential side effects of treatment—irritated skin, high blood pressure, or depression, to name a few—can become a concern for many. The body can also develop resistance to antibiotic medication over time, both topical and oral. Another trend in treating females with acne is prescription birth control pills. Some people report clearer skin while on oral contraceptives, but many find that their acne gets worse; others say that it is exacerbated after they stop the pill. Ongoing acne treatments for years can also be a

financial burden for many people.

In the mind-body realm, the field of psychodermatology is slowly gaining momentum in Europe and has small seeds sprouting in the United States. Psychodermatology research and practice aim to combine psychotherapy with dermatology, enabling patients to address the thoughts and emotions that surround skin conditions, including acne. The field acknowledges that emotions such as anxiety and depression can result from skin symptoms as well as trigger them in the first place. This emerging field also looks at how stress can create a cycle of breakouts.

### Kris: My first acne patient

Anyone with acne faces two questions simultaneously. Why is this happening to *me*? And where do I turn for help?

I remember the day I finally sat across from someone who had come to see me for help with her skin. Kris was 25 years old and frustrated. She had tried everything to clear her acne, including food allergy testing, topical creams, oral medications, exfoliation, a gluten-free diet, a sugar-free diet, facials, nutritional supplements, botanical supplements, and deep-belly breathing. From just this first patient, I learned all the current methods people were using to try to escape from what they saw in the mirror. I also learned that no one had talked to Kris about how she felt when a new pimple surfaced or when this saga started for her a long time ago.

Remembering my own homeopathy visit with the student clinician years earlier, I started a homeopathic intake with her. As we talked, Kris and I both learned more about her symptoms and their triggers, how she felt about her appearance and presence in the world, and her day-to-day obstacles as a young woman with acne. We discovered that her social anxiety was high, to the point that she wanted help with that, as well. Because Kris did performance dance on stage, addressing her anxiety was just as important as addressing her acne. Although Kris really enjoyed dancing, her acne tended to get worse around the time of a dance performance.

### A snapshot and a remedy

I like to call my process of homeopathic

prescribing the “snapshot” method. When I’m sitting at my desk with the patient’s chart in hand, I use my notes to take a mental picture of the person I met that day. I want to see their facial expression, style of dress, posture, mood, and overall manner from when they shared their story of how acne started. I’m looking for what makes my patient feel excited, nervous, scared, or intrigued. During our conversation, my patient may have made a connection about their health regarding acne that they hadn’t made before. I’m looking for those “aha” moments, too, because people really show themselves then and sometimes even forget you’re there. Based on what I see in my mental snapshot, I then choose a constitutional homeopathic remedy that best fits the picture.

In the case of Kris, she was very excited about performance dance based on the words she was using. However, her affect seemed timid, tired, and very reserved, as if her passion was held back somewhat from being expressed. She also seemed sad about her interests and reluctant to own her talent overtly. The more we talked, the more Kris revealed that anxiety toward her fellow dancers and the audience was on her mind a lot. My patient was obviously not cowardly, being able to get up in front of hundreds and even thousands of people to dance on stage. However, she seemed to see herself as timid because of the extreme anxiety she experienced within the dance world. Her performance and social anxiety along with timidity became the snapshot in my mind that led me to choose *Gelsemium sempervirens*. Her tired and somewhat apathetic affect also fit the *Gelsemium* picture.

I prescribed *Gelsemium* 30c twice a day, morning and night, for one month. Thereafter, Kris was to take *Gelsemium* 6c once daily or whenever she felt anxiety arise before a stage performance. I hoped that this remedy would alleviate some of her performance anxiety and let her enjoy being seen on stage.

### Natural medicine support

Because Kris often had trouble sleeping, I recommended a supplement containing *Ashwagandha*, L-theanine, Phosphatidylserine, Magnolia, and *Epimedium*,

# Here’s What Works FOR ACNE

## Six super steps to healthy skin from Dr. Patel’s naturopathic practice

IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE EXPERIENCES ONGOING ACNE, HERE ARE MY TOP TIPS FOR YOU:

**1. VISIT A QUALIFIED HOMEOPATH FOR TREATMENT.** Stick it out for at least six months because it could take that long ... but in my personal journey and clinical experience with my patients, it works!

**2. EAT A HEALTHY AND BALANCED DIET THAT WORKS FOR YOU AND YOUR BODY.** However, try to stay away from overfixation on having eaten the “wrong” thing that might have caused a recent pimple. Being overly vigilant about what you eat can increase anxiety and stress, which can increase episodes of acne.

**3. PAY AS LITTLE ATTENTION AS POSSIBLE TO YOUR ACNE WHEN LOOKING IN THE MIRROR.** Also, avoid thinking about it all day. Separating your identity from acne and not wearing it as a label is a big part of the healing process.

**4. EXPERIMENT A BIT WITH YOUR SKINCARE REGIMEN,** and don’t allow superstition to take over what you do with your skin. Keep in mind:

**Less is more.** You may be using too many products in an attempt to fight acne. Your skincare routine may be drying out your skin or clogging the pores. Drop a product or two, and see what happens.

**Light oils** such as coconut or grapeseed oil can be great moisturizers when patted one or two drops at a time onto slightly damp skin after cleansing. They are hydrating, nutritive, and balancing, and they don’t contain unnecessary ingredients.

**Facial washes can strip moisture from your skin.** In the morning, try splashing your face with lukewarm water as an alternative to cleansing with a product. Your skin rejuvenates overnight when you sleep and has a protective layer of oil already when you wake up in the morning. Put on some safe, noncomedogenic mineral block sunscreen (e.g., with zinc oxide), and you’re on your way.

**5. TRY VISUALIZING YOUR SKIN’S CLARITY USING YOUR IMAGINATION.** This can be done as an exercise as you’re lying in bed before sleep, after taking a few deep breaths. I tell most of my patients to do these “picturing exercises” as a way to home in on what you want your health to be like. It’s not about perfect skin or health. It’s about picturing your skin and health.

**6. FOCUS ON YOUR LIFE AND WHAT YOU WANT TO MAKE OF IT, NOT ON ACNE.** Don’t let acne stop you from doing what you want.

*Of course, some of these suggestions are “easier said than done.” Enlist support from your homeopath, counselor, friends, family, and whomever else you trust to help you get your mind off acne and on to your life. This is what has worked for me and my patients, and I believe it can help you, too.*



which had the dual function of gently supporting sleep and adrenal balance.\* I also suggested that Kris do a “picturing exercise” before bedtime. Anxiety crept up on her at night, so I showed her how to do muscle relaxation and let herself visualize the skin she wanted. I stressed the power of her own mind in inviting clear skin into her life, even though acne seemed to be yelling in the mirror that she wasn’t allowed to have it.

Finally, I made a minor change to Kris’s skincare regimen, encouraging her to use a light grapeseed and coconut oil blend as a moisturizer after she washed her face. Certain oils such as these can penetrate acne-prone skin for deep moisturizing without clogging pores. They can also be very nutritive, hydrating, and anti-inflammatory for the skin. The oil was a better alternative to the potentially drying facial washes and moisturizers containing substances such as salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, and glycolic acid that she was accustomed to using. Trying new things for her skin typically made Kris anxious, so this last suggestion was also meant to help her break some of the superstition that had built up around trying to make acne “happy” and appeased all the time. Maybe as she got bolder on stage, she could also get bolder in disobeying the strict rules acne seemed to be setting for her life.

### Breathing easier

When Kris left my office that day, she

was already carrying herself differently. She seemed confident and ready to face her skin and life challenges. The homeopathic intake had allowed her to share her underlying thoughts and feelings about acne, which she might have felt like she needed to suppress up until then. She no longer needed to try extra hard to do deep breathing, as just the act of getting reconnected with herself and her experience was beginning to allow her to breathe more freely.

### Dancing freely

Kris returned once a month for the next few months, and she made great strides. Her skin wasn’t perfect, but the clustered symptoms of acne, anxiety, and sleep troubles improved to the point that none of them was a huge focus of her life anymore. Kris decided to put more energy and time into dance, and her efforts were creating new opportunities for her.

Once Kris’s skin, anxiety, and sleep were noticeably better, she began seeing me once every six months. *Gelsemium* continued to be a good fit because her anxiety was clearly linked to her acne. So, managing anxiety was a key for Kris to keep her acne at bay. With homeopathic treatment, her dreaded bumps now only popped up occasionally and one at a time rather than in groups. They also cleared up more quickly and didn’t leave noticeable scars. Kris continued to take *Gelsemium* 6c, as needed.

For the next six years, Kris did so well that she no longer needed to see me. Recently, however, she let me know that after being acne free for years, she’s had a small recurrence. Kris told me that this time around, she is aware of the mind-body roots at the core of her symptoms, so she is starting there for relief. Her experience with homeopathy helped her explore beneath the surface of acne and find tools that she can return to whenever skin issues arise. She also knows she can pick up a vial of *Gelsemium* at any natural health store; if that doesn’t help enough, she can resume treatment with me. I was happy to help Kris return to the roots of her acne symptoms using homeopathy.

### Dan: Acne and blurred boundaries

Dan, aged 38, came to see me last year for chronic acne that had troubled him for 15 years. Unlike most of my patients with acne, he had not suffered with it as a teen. His breakouts emerged later, when he was 23 and ready to head out on his own for new adventures and work opportunities. Around this time, he found that his family was not ready to let him go. They openly discouraged him from pursuing his dreams and became overly critical and watchful. Dan noticed that contact with them seemed to make his skin worse.

Dan was charismatic, but he didn’t seem fully aware of the magnetic draw he had on others. His unassuming nature only made people want to be around him

more. He was somewhat surprised that his family couldn't let him go, because their attitude toward him had grown aloof over the years, especially as he started college. Dan said his friends tended to react to him in a similar way, wanting to be around him but disappearing from his life when he had new opportunities that didn't directly involve them.

Dan said he often felt tired. Being around his family and people from his past especially seemed to drain him, but sometimes he felt drained around others, as well. He also complained of chronic allergies, with sneezing, itchy eyes, foggy head, and a weak immune system.

### A snapshot view

Thinking over Dan's homeopathic intake interview, I wanted a good mental "snapshot" of him to arrive at a constitutional remedy. Dan was flighty in his attention span, multitasking often but feeling distracted and pulled in different directions. He had a tendency toward free-floating anxiety, but he could also be easily reassured when talking to someone he trusted. He had fears about health and deep water that would bubble up for no apparent reason. Dan was very likeable and easy to get along with. He was smart, creative, and interested in writing, playing music, drawing, and math. He had a huge appetite. He preferred cold food and drinks in general, and ice cream was his favorite. Dan said it was a challenge to assert his boundaries, with so many people wanting attention from him at once.

Having weak boundaries is a classic trait of people who need the homeopathic remedy *Phosphorus*. In fact, all the symptoms in Dan's snapshot pointed to *Phosphorus*—more so than anyone I'd seen in practice. It was not a huge leap to tie his weak social boundaries with his weakened skin boundary—and each affected the other. Dan not only wanted to strengthen his skin's boundary against acne, he also wanted to reinforce his social boundaries. His natural attractiveness was a strength, but people around him didn't always respect his space while trying to compete for his attention. In the mirror, it seemed that pimples were pointing out his flaws and stopping him from moving forward, just as members of

his family were doing. Dan took a dose of *Phosphorus 200c* after his visit with me.

### Additional support

I recommended that Dan look away from the mirror and not allow acne to steal his attention or thoughts. Maybe if he redirected his eyes toward things he wanted in life, acne couldn't control him and stop him from moving forward. Taking a break from fixating on his skin's flaws might also allow him to do the same when his family was being critical of him. Finally, I suggested that Dan take an immune-modulating supplement containing medicinal mushrooms (Reishi, Maitake, Coriolus, Agaricus) to help with his body's autoimmune and allergic response.\*\*

### Clear sailing

Dan responded remarkably well to treatment. After just four months and a few additional doses of *Phosphorus 200c*, Dan's skin was clear and glowing—for the first time in 15 years! Dan's other health challenges that clustered with acne, such as allergies and weak social boundaries, improved along with his skin in a parallel fashion, and this alerted me that *Phosphorus* was the right remedy for him overall.

It's been a year since Dan's first visit, and his skin has stayed healthy. Occasionally, he still breaks out, especially if he hears from his family or experiences a lot of stress, but the eruptions are less noticeable and heal faster. Dan spends a lot less time focusing on skin flaws in the mirror: His eyes are on his life and what he wants out of it.

In social situations, Dan can say "no" now and not become drained by other people's wants. Whenever he feels he needs a boost in his health, he takes a dose of *Phosphorus 30c* on my recommendation, and this helps him reconnect with himself and his boundaries.

### Gentle, safe, effective

Homeopathy is not a quick fix. However, with acne and other skin conditions, quick fixes may not make the best choices. The harsher we go at acne with products, the harder we blast it with antibiotics, or the more we make ourselves live in a bubble devoid of all our favorite foods—acne still seems to lurk right beneath the surface.

What we seem to be hurting the most is our own skin, not the acne. Meanwhile, our lives get put on hold as we wait for our real skin to return.

When treating people with acne, I start with the least invasive medicine: homeopathy. It helps spark the body's innate potential for healing, and all systems related to acne can get a boost: the immune system, hormones, digestion, mood, circulation, skin, and nervous system. The remedy naturally acts on a mind-body level, especially when prescribed constitutionally. That's great for those with skin conditions, because these symptoms are more than skin-deep—they involve underlying mental-emotional roots, as well.

Finally, I can never minimize the therapeutic nature of the homeopathic intake interview. Both Kris and Dan could finally talk about the role their symptoms were playing in their lives. This helped them separate themselves and their identities from the label of "acne." With that distance, this little four-letter word could not control their lives as much as before.

I've seen this over and over in my practice: the subtle yet noticeable bump in confidence someone with acne feels after a homeopathic visit—the confidence to take their health into their hands and not be at the mercy of a "miracle acne cure" that someone is peddling. This boost in self-esteem helps my acne patients start feeling comfortable living in their own skin again. They also start to believe that they, and their skin, can shine. Homeopathy may not be a miracle cure, but it is a powerful medicine for acne on a mind-body level. It takes the uniqueness of the individual into account, and that is exactly what many people with acne are wanting to return to—themselves.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Aarti Patel, ND, is a naturopathic doctor and homeopathic practitioner who lives in the Pacific Northwest with her family. She specializes in women's health and skin conditions, often using homeopathy in her treatment plans. Dr. Patel is the author of *Acne: Just Another Four-Letter*

*Word*, a book about reclaiming your life from acne. She is also the author and illustrator of *Picture It: Homeopathy*, a cartoon-based guide to constitutional homeopathic remedies and their personalities.

\* The supplement is *Cortisol Manager* by Integrative Therapeutics.

\*\* The supplement is *Purple Mushroom Defense* by Enzymatic Therapy Cell Forte.



# Pierre the Balding Pomeranian

## A Case of Chronic Allergic Skin Disease

by TODD COONEY, DVM, CVH

**P**ierre was a pathetic sight when we first met in March 2014. Born in September 2005, he'd suffered the past 6 years with chronic allergic skin disease (the most common complaint of dogs in the United States today). His owners came to me as the "doctor of last resort" after years of potent drugs and poor results with conventional treatments. At that time, Pierre was receiving prednisone, Atopica™ (an immunosuppressant), and a prescription hypoallergenic diet (which he barely ate).

Pierre acted sluggish most of the time; sometimes, he had to be picked up and carried outside for potty breaks. His body was half bald, with thickened, rough, hyperpigmented skin ("elephant hide"). A finicky eater now, he vomited occasionally at random. He looked unkempt and did not like baths at all. But ... he was "up to date" on all his shots, a statement that makes me cringe when dealing with animals and chronic disease.

Here's Pierre when I first saw him:



This is a classic vaccinosis case, commonly seen in veterinary work today. The history often includes itching and skin symptoms beginning shortly after first vaccines as a young animal (some breeders begin vaccinating as early as 4 weeks of age, repeating doses every 2 weeks). Skin symptoms are then suppressed with steroids, antihistamines, and antibiotics, while vaccines are repeated annually to this unhealthy animal (against the instructions on the vaccine insert label, which says to vaccinate only healthy animals).

My first analysis led to *Sulphur* as the remedy.

	Sulph.	Sil.	Ars.	Sep.	Ant-c.	Merc.	Carb-v.	Nat-m.	Zinc.	Dulc.	Nat-c.	Gaust.
<b>Analysis</b>	100	62	62	57	75	75	51	43	46	46	44	42
GENERALITIES; Vaccination prophylactic; after (15)	3	3	2			1		2				
SKIN; Itch; suppressed (20)	3	1	2	3	1		2	2	2	1	1	3
SKIN; Itch (42)	4	2	3	4	3	2	4		3	3	2	4
Nausea and vomiting; Inclination to vomit (114)	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
STOMACH; Appetite; Want of (118)	4	3	3	3	4	4	1	3	1	2	1	1
GENERALITIES; Bathing, dread of (44)	4	1		3	3	1	2		2	1	1	

*Sulphur* was very high grade in every symptom except vomiting—a good choice for bad effects of vaccination, itching, and aversion to baths. *Silicea* didn't fit aversion to bathing as well as *Sulphur* and also is a lower grade for "suppressed itch," a big part of this case. *Arsenicum* has restlessness as a key feature, which Pierre was not. I gave a single dose of *Sulphur* 200c on March 31, 2014. Pierre began eating a fresh raw-meat diet (Darwin's), and we tapered off the prednisone over several weeks while stopping Atopica at once. He also began eating a whole-food supplement (Standard Process Canine Whole Body Support) and chewable garlic tabs (Bug Off) with his meals as a springtime flea and tick repellent.

By May 1, 2014, Pierre had gained weight, had more energy and stamina, and had grown about 25% more hair. He itched less, but a new symptom was large patches of dark, pigmented skin on his belly. I gave a single dose of *Thuja* 10M; skin turning dark or black is a key feature of this remedy, and it follows *Sulphur* well. Of course, *Thuja* is a major vaccinosis remedy.

Improvement continued that summer and fall, and by his next visit on December 2, 2014, he had nearly a full hair coat! New symptoms—regurgitation, belching, and flatulence (stinky!)—had recently developed, and they appeared worse in the late afternoon/early evening. A new analysis with these symptoms pointed to *Lycopodium*, and I gave one dose of 200c.

	Lyc.	Sulph.	Ars.	Nat-m.	Sil.	Ph-ac.	Phos.	Agar.	Bov.	Carb-an	Coloc.	Graph.
<b>Analysis</b>	100	54	48	48	42	42	36	36	36	36	36	36
RECTUM; Flatus, in; offensive (92)	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
ABDOMEN; Flatulence; noise; gurgling (75)	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
GENERALITIES; TIME; Afternoon; 4 to 8 p.m (2)	4											

Pierre rapidly improved after this dose, and I didn't see him again until March 9, 2015. His teeth now needed to be cleaned, and the clients also shared that Pierre used to be the alpha dog, but they forgot to mention it before because of his lethargy. Now, the alpha behavior was resurfacing, which also fit *Lycopodium*.

On March 13, 2015, we cleaned his teeth under light anesthesia and extracted one small tooth; we gave him a single dose of *Arnica* 10M after anesthesia. On March 17, 2015, Pierre presented with mild coughing, attributed to the intubation during the dental procedure, and no other symptoms. I sent *Spongia* 10M to give as needed for the cough. By May 8, 2015, Pierre still had a mild, persistent cough, and his trachea was now sensitive to pressure, eliciting a cough—a *Lachesis* keynote (this is also a major rabies vaccinosis remedy for dogs). I gave *Lachesis* 200c in one dose. The cough resolved quickly.

Pierre's old allergic skin symptoms flared up again on September 5, 2015, also with decreased appetite and sensitive, inflamed perineum/anus. I gave *Rhus tox* 10M, an acute partner of *Lycopodium*. By September 24, 2015, his itching had resolved, but the cough was worse now, with increased respiratory rate. He now had increased thirst, drinking large amounts of water at once, but still seemed better overall. Chest radiographs showed increased interstitial pattern in the lungs (inflammation) and extensive bone spurs (spondylosis) of most vertebrae, forming bridges from one vertebra to the next.

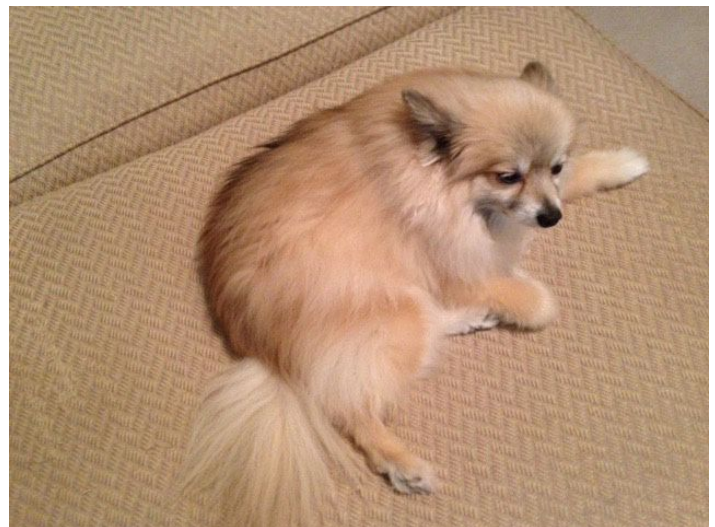
A new analysis with these symptoms led to *Phosphorus* in a single 10M dose.

Analysis	Phos.	Sulph.	Nat-m.	Calc.	Ars.	Bell.	Carb-v.	Sep.	Cupr.	Hep.	Merc.
STOMACH; Thirst; Thirsty (114)	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	2	4
STOMACH; Thirst; Thirsty; large, amount, for (25)	3	3	3		3						
SPINAL CORD AND VERTEBRAE; Spondylitis (13)	2			1							
RESPIRATION; Quickened, rapid (150)	4	4	2	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	2
CHEST; INNER; Inflammation, of; lungs (92)	3	3	2	2		2	3	3	2	3	3

He improved rapidly after this dose, returning quickly to normal.

This case shows how the remedy state can shift as the patient progresses in a curative direction. This also fits the "ladder analogy" mentioned by J. Compton Burnett in his lovely book, *50 Reasons for Being a Homeopath*. Each remedy is seen as a rung on the ladder as we climb to better health, and each rung is a critical step. Sometimes, the ladder is short; other times, it's long. It is difficult to know whether Pierre will be completely cured, but homeopathy is doing a nice job of restoring his health to the best he can be. Pierre continues to do well in 2019.

It is difficult to know whether Pierre will be completely cured, but homeopathy is doing a nice job of restoring his health to the best he can be.



Founded in 1995, the Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy comprises veterinarians who share the common desire to restore true health to their patients through the use of homeopathic treatment. Members of the Academy are dedicated to understanding and preserving the principles of Classical Homeopathy.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Todd Cooney trained at Purdue University for undergraduate studies and veterinary school. After almost 20 years of conventional practice, he took Dr. Richard Pitcairn's Professional Course in Veterinary Homeopathy which changed the way he views health and disease. Dr. Cooney now uses homeopathy exclusively on all of his cases.



# Save Your Skin From Sunburn This Spring and Summer

## Can this sunny homeopathic remedy prevent sunburn?

by ROBERT J. SIGNORE, DO

**A**s a clinical dermatologist who has practiced in the Chicago area for 27 years, I have found classical homeopathic medicine useful in helping my patients heal from skin diseases. I like to explain that homeopathy can often help patients reduce their use of steroids and antibiotics (which are frequently employed in the conventional treatment of skin conditions).

The five skin conditions with which I have the greatest success using homeopathic medicine are acne (pimples), warts (common warts and plantar warts), *moluscum contagiosum*, atopic eczema, and hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating). I use the classical homeopathic method, which involves taking a lengthy history and repertorizing the case to find the most similar homeopathic remedy, also known as the *simillimum*. This is the approach used by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy. Because these five skin diseases are chronic, I usually try to find the patient's constitutional (or "chronic") remedy.

### Isopathy and the sun

Today, however, I want to share with you a different but related approach that I've used to address one skin condition: the isopathic use of a homeopathically prepared remedy, *Sol*, to help prevent sunburns. *Isopathy* is defined by *Yasgur's Homeopathic Dictionary* as "the employment of homeopathically prepared substances responsible for the disease itself. It is not based on the principle of *similarity* but on *sameness*, on the substance being identical to the etiological agent, e.g. the use of pollens in allergic asthma." The word *sol*

means "sun" in Latin, and this remedy is manufactured by exposing powdered lactose (milk sugar) to concentrated, natural sunlight, and then processing the result as a homeopathic remedy, using the classic homeopathic pharmacy methods of serial dilution and succussion.

I have found *Sol* to be a good remedy for keeping me from becoming sunburned in high-risk situations, such as being at the beach or bicycling on a clear, sunny day. In fact, my family and I take *Sol* 30c—one pellet dissolved in the mouth daily—beginning one day before the start of our summer vacation and throughout our trip. Of course, we still use natural zinc oxide sunscreens, hats, and protective clothing while outdoors.

**I have found *Sol* to be a good remedy for keeping me from becoming sunburned in high-risk situations, such as being at the beach or bicycling on a clear, sunny day.**

Using the remedy *Sol* to prevent sunburns is similar in principle to using the homeopathic remedy *Rhus toxicodendron* (made from highly diluted tincture of poison ivy leaves) to help prevent poison ivy dermatitis. You may recall the article I wrote on that subject in the Spring 2017 issue of *Homeopathy Today*: "Poison Ivy Prevention, Here's How to Ditch the Itch."

### Chance meeting, fascinating insight

Here's how I found out about the sunny *Sol* remedy, which saves skin from summer's scorching sunburns. In 2013, I attended the 8th Annual Joint American Homeopathic

Conference of the National Center for Homeopathy in Reston, Virginia. At the lunch lecture, I had the good fortune to sit next to two experienced homeopathic pharmacists: father and son Steven and Lee Kayne, of Freeman's Homeopathic Pharmacy in Scotland. Upon learning that I was a dermatologist, they suggested I might want to know about the homeopathic remedy *Sol* because it could be useful in my practice. I had never heard of it but was immediately intrigued. They informed me that the remedy was available through their pharmacy.<sup>1</sup>

Later, I investigated *Sol* online. In an article on the British Homeopathic Association website, "First Aid for Your Holidays," Steven Kayne explains how *Sol* can be

used preventatively because it is "particularly useful for people who suffer from exposure to the sun."<sup>2</sup> I also found that in New Zealand, the homeopathic remedy *Sol* is being used to prevent sunburns in fair-skinned people.<sup>3</sup> It turns out that New Zealanders even use *Sol* in their pets' drinking water to prevent sunburns in dogs and horses.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the late British homeopath Andrew Lockie, MD, suggested that homeopathic *Sol* could even be used as a preventative for solar keratoses (precancerous skin lesions). He wrote, "If you are fair-skinned and about to take a holiday in the sun, take *Sol* 30c as a preventative; correct

dosage is three times daily for three weeks out of four while exposed to the sun.”<sup>5</sup>

### Personal experience with Sol

Several years ago, my wife, daughter, and I went on vacation to sunny Arizona. For one day prior to our trip and every day while in Arizona, we each dissolved one pellet of Sol 30c under our tongues in addition to applying sunscreen. Happily, none of us got sunburned, despite hiking in the blazing, noontday Arizona sun for one hour at 105°F.

This was one of our first times using Sol 30c, and I mentioned to my family that we couldn't really tell whether it was the Sol or the sunscreen that had prevented us from scorching in the sun. Then, my fair-skinned daughter confessed that she had only applied sunscreen on her face—not on her arms and legs. She was wearing short sleeves and short pants, so it must have been the Sol that kept her from getting painfully sunburned, we reasoned. I thanked her for her honesty. Her experience gave more credence to the theory that homeopathic Sol could be a useful tool for keeping people from getting the ubiquitous pain, redness, and blisters from too much sun exposure that often ruins one's summer fun. After all, dermatologists have always wanted to find a safe, simple pill to prevent sunburns. You could say that finding an "anti-sunburn pill" has been the Holy Grail of dermatology.

### A pilot study

Since then, my family and I have continued to use Sol 30c for sunburn prevention every summer vacation with anecdotal



## Too Much Sun?

### 5 FABULOUS WAYS TO SOOTHE YOUR SUNBURN

When you plan to be out in the spring or summer sun for more than a little while, it's best to protect your skin from sunburn by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, protective clothing, and sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium oxide as active ingredients. But what about those times when you or a loved one is caught off guard by the strength of the sun? Or, you're enjoying yourself so much that you stay outside longer than anticipated?

.....  
**Sunburn happens! And when it does, consider these top 5 homeopathic remedies to soothe your burnt skin:**

- 1. Sol.** The top remedy for sunburn, to soothe it or prevent it.
- 2. Belladonna.** The sunburned skin is red and hot to the touch.
- 3. Cantharis.** Blisters form with the sunburn.
- 4. Apis mellifica.** Stinging is prominent, and sunburned skin may be puffy.
- 5. Sulphur.** The sunburned skin is itchy.

.....  
Many thanks to Vikas Sharma, MD, and his excellent website, [drhomeo.com](http://drhomeo.com), where he recommends the above five remedies for acute sunburn. Visit [www.drhomeo.com/homeopathic-treatment/homeopathic-treatment-sunburn](http://www.drhomeo.com/homeopathic-treatment/homeopathic-treatment-sunburn) for more information.



## Because homeopathic *Sol* appeared to help prevent or lessen sunburns in two of our three volunteers, we proposed a larger study to further investigate homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention.

success. But, I wanted to scientifically evaluate our hypothesis that homeopathic *Sol* could prevent or reduce the incidence of sunburns. So, two dermatology colleagues and I decided to evaluate whether taking homeopathic *Sol* by mouth prior to ultraviolet (UV) B exposure would help prevent us from getting sunburned. We used the following method:

1. Determine the baseline UVB amount it would take for each one of us to experience slight sunburn on a tiny area on our backs (prior to taking *Sol*). We used a standard amount of UV exposure, based on established parameters in dermatology for a person's skin tanning type. So, those with darker skin would be given more millijoules of UV light than those with lighter skin.
2. Take homeopathic *Sol* 30c, one pill dissolved in the mouth daily for seven days.
3. Repeat step 1 to see whether taking *Sol* would be associated with a higher amount of UVB required to experience the same slight sunburn. (If so, then it would be suggestive of a protective effect of the homeopathic remedy.)

### Here's what we found:

Colleague 1 was able to withstand a higher dose of UVB after she took the remedy *Sol* (interpretation: *protective* effect from homeopathic *Sol*).

Colleague 2 sunburned at the same dose of UVB before and after taking *Sol*. However, after taking *Sol*, he experienced less redness than before (interpretation: *inconclusive* result; it seemed to help a little, but we couldn't be sure).

When my own skin was exposed

to UVB at the established standard for someone with my moderately olive, tanning type III skin, I did not experience a sunburn, so no baseline could be determined. One week later, I repeated the UVB challenge at a higher dose than before. Still, I did not experience any sunburn. So, after two attempts to burn me, we couldn't do it, even at 550 millijoules of narrowband UVB, which is sufficient to burn the average tanning type III person. Then, I realized that seven weeks earlier I had briefly taken homeopathic *Sol* 30c each day during my one-week summer vacation. Could homeopathic *Sol*, taken almost two months before my current UVB experiments, somehow have protected me from burning? We thought it was possible. We decided against any more UVB testing on me at that point.

**Note:** No one experienced any adverse effects from taking homeopathic *Sol*.

Because homeopathic *Sol* appeared to help prevent or lessen sunburns in two of our three volunteers, we proposed a larger study to further investigate homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention. We applied for institutional review board approval, but our clinical study was denied. We made the suggested revisions, but our larger study was again denied.

### The verdict

I cannot say with scientific certainty that homeopathic *Sol* prevents sunburns, but I can say that, based on our small pilot study and six years of personal experience with it, this remedy certainly seems to help prevent sunburns. I've not seen any adverse effects from it, either. Other advantages of *Sol* include its low cost

(about \$12.00 for a 7-gram bottle), convenience (easy to take by mouth), pleasant taste, and ease of packing when traveling. *Note: I believe it is also important to use natural sunscreens containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide and to use sun-protective clothing while outdoors, regardless of whether you are taking homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention.*

It is my hope that this article will encourage other researchers to conduct clinical studies on homeopathic *Sol* for the prevention of sunburn and cutaneous sun damage.

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# Comfortable in their own

# SKIN

BY MIRIAM WHEELER, ND

**W**illow was just four years old when she started developing “spots” on her legs, face, and ears. Her pediatrician prescribed two courses of oral steroids and a topical steroid cream, but the red, flaky, itchy skin lesions persisted. Willow would cry, telling her mom, “I hate my spots! They itch so bad. Why do I have to have them?” Willow would scratch her skin until it bled at night. Bathing made the spots bright red. Willow’s mom was distressed. Knowing her daughter was about to start school, she worried about the emotional impact it would have on Willow if kids teased or bullied her because of the “spots.”

After five months of diligently following the pediatrician’s instructions, Willow was still suffering, so her mom took her to a dermatologist for further evaluation. The dermatologist suspected psoriasis and confirmed it with a biopsy. He prescribed two new ointments for Willow—a synthetic Vitamin D derivative and a corticosteroid—to be applied twice daily.

The ointments helped clear the skin when used diligently. But if Willow’s mom stopped applying them for even a few days, new spots always appeared and the original ones would reappear, often larger and redder than before.


## Running out of options

With each visit to the dermatologist over the next couple of years, more creams, foams, and shampoos were prescribed. These treatments were only mildly effective. Sun exposure seemed to worsen Willow’s skin, even though phototherapy is commonly recommended for psoriasis. And the “spots” had started to spread to Willow’s scalp, buttocks, and trunk, too.

The dermatologist informed Willow’s mom about the autoimmune and inflammatory nature of psoriasis. When the topical treatments weren’t giving Willow enough relief, the dermatologist recommended oral immunosuppressant drugs (which might relieve the psoriasis but increase the risk of infections and cancer) and even methotrexate (a chemotherapy agent that suppresses inflammation but also carries a risk of infertility).

## Desperate for safe solutions

Willow’s parents were at a loss for what to do. They wanted to ease the suffering of their now six-year-old daughter, who still cried frequently over the appearance and agonizing itching of her “spots.” But they were afraid of the risks associated with the medications now being recommended. “How could I, as the mother of a



Safe skin solutions  
for people with  
eczema or psoriasis.

six-year-old little girl, make a decision that might impact her future ability to have a family or not?” Willow’s mother wondered. “How could I choose her fate like that?” That’s what motivated them to seek an alternative approach and how they came to see me.

Desperation to find a safe and effective treatment is so common, especially among patients with dermatological conditions. They often feel ashamed or embarrassed by the appearance of their skin and try to cover up or hide it—but that’s only part of the picture. There’s also the physical discomfort: itching, stinging, burning, bleeding, discharging. The physical and emotional toll that rashes can take on a person and their quality of life can be devastating, socially and professionally. I am so grateful to be able to offer safe, effective homeopathic treatment to people suffering with troubling rashes and skin conditions.

### Willow finds homeopathy

Willow was seven years old when she first came to see me in the spring of 2017. Her psoriasis plaques were predominately on her shins, on her scalp, and on and around her ears; she occasionally had them on her buttocks, face, and trunk as well. Examining her skin, I noticed that her lesions seemed worse on the right side, and this tendency was confirmed when reviewing records from her former dermatologist. The plaques appeared red with mild to moderate flaking. The dermatologist’s notes revealed that, prior to treatment with various topical ointments and foams, Willow’s scales had been yellow in appearance, which I found interesting, since psoriatic scales are typically silvery in color.

Willow said that her skin symptoms were worse from becoming warm, including bathing in warm water, having too many layers on when entering a warm room during the winter, and being exposed to the sun for prolonged periods on hot days. She had learned to avoid scratching the spots, even though they were extremely itchy, because it always seemed to make them worse.

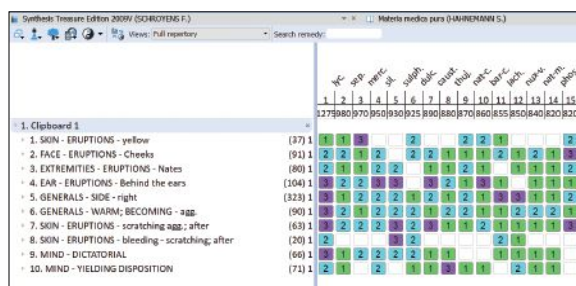
Willow’s mother said that, aside from psoriasis, her daughter was very healthy. Willow was very polite and quiet in my office. Her mom confirmed that Willow was usually mild mannered and obedient with adults, but noted that she had a tendency to be bossy towards younger children.

### Zeroing in on a remedy

In deciding on a remedy for Willow, I paid close attention to the symptoms that were most “characteristic” of her illness—which means those that were “more striking, singular, uncommon, and peculiar,” as Hahnemann advises in *The Organon*, aphorism 153. I determined the most characteristic symptoms to be: the lesions on her cheeks, ears, and buttocks, since psoriasis plaques are less common in those locations; the tendency for her lesions to be worse on the right side of her body; the yellowish appearance of the scales prior to the dermatologist’s treatments; the aggravation from scratching and becoming warm; and Willow’s yielding versus dictatorial nature when interacting with adults or younger children, respectively.

I repertorized these symptoms, first using the *Synthesis Repertory*, and then again, for comparison purposes, using the *Böninghausen Repertory, Therapeutic Pocketbook Method*. (See Charts 1 and 2.) In both repertorizations, the remedy *Lycopodium clavatum* ranked highest. This led me to research *Lycopodium* in Allen’s *Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica* and Hering’s *Guiding Symptoms of Our Materia Medica*, to see if Willow’s symptoms matched the proving symptoms of *Lycopodium*. They did, so I prescribed *Lycopodium* LM1 daily.

“Every time the psoriasis starts to come back, I dose her again and it helps!”



Repertorization Charts 1 and 2, for Willow, prepared with RadarOpus software.



I chose *Lycopodium* in an LM potency rather than a centesimal (c) potency because LMs have a reputation for working more gently, with fewer therapeutic aggravations (where symptoms get worse before they get better), and I suspected Willow might be particularly sensitive in her response to the remedy, based on my experience treating her family members. To avoid changing too many variables when initiating homeopathic treatment, I asked Willow and her mom to continue applying all prescribed topical medications for the time being.

### At first, it's worse

After a week of daily doses of *Lycopodium* LM1, Willow's mom informed me that several lesions had worsened in severity, becoming redder, larger, and itchier, especially on the face. I suspected that Willow was responding to the remedy but was having a therapeutic aggravation. In my experience, treating rashes can be particularly challenging because any worsening of symptoms like this can be very troubling for the patient; a great deal of patience and reassurance from the homeopathic practitioner is necessary to help patients stick with treatment initially. I instructed Willow's mom to stop dosing for at least one week and then check back with me. When Willow's mom reported the lesions had calmed down, we attempted to resume daily dosing. However, Willow seemed to be quite sensitive to this prescription and had another aggravation of her symptoms, so we stopped the dosing again.

This pattern continued over the next six weeks, with Willow's mom stopping and starting daily doses several times because Willow experienced aggravations with each subsequent dose. I next asked her mom to stop dosing for several weeks and then check in. I did not want to change the prescription because I suspected that Willow was experiencing a prolonged therapeutic aggravation to *Lycopodium* LM1. That turned out to be the right course of action.

### Patience rewarded

A month later, Willow's mom reported that since we last spoke, the lesions had all begun to fade and heal. She and Willow had also stopped applying the prescribed topical medications

## What is psoriasis?



Psoriasis is a chronic skin condition that can affect children and adults. It is thought to be autoimmune in nature, though the underlying cause is not fully understood. It is characterized by raised, inflamed, scaly patches of skin, known as plaques, which are often itchy or painful. On paler skin, plaques typically appear as red patches covered with silvery, white, dry, flakey scales. On darker skin, plaques usually appear as darker brown or violet patches, with grayish, flakey scales. Psoriasis plaques most commonly appear on the knees, elbows, trunk, and scalp. Diagnosis can be made clinically but is often confirmed via biopsy. (While psoriasis most commonly affects the skin, it can also affect the nails or joints. When joints are involved, it is known as psoriatic arthritis.)

Topical ointments, both steroidal and nonsteroidal, are first-line conventional treatments. Phototherapy and laser treatment may also be used. Next, oral or injected medications are typically recommended, such as steroids, methotrexate, and biologics, each with their own risks and side effects. Conventional medicine views psoriasis as an incurable condition and focuses treatment on symptom relief.

because Willow was no longer complaining about her skin itching. This was amazing progress since the start of Willow's homeopathic treatment 10 weeks earlier, and it showed a very positive reaction to *Lycopodium*. Willow's mom noted that a couple small patches had just recently reappeared on her daughter's right cheek, so I instructed her to give a single dose of *Lycopodium* LM1.

At the next month's visit, Willow's mom was both relieved and excited, telling me: "Every time the psoriasis starts to come back, I dose her again and it helps! She has no spots on her legs now and only a few areas of flaking on her scalp. She just got a small patch on her ear lobe again—where it first started years ago. She doesn't complain about any of it itching, and it's been over a month since I've had to apply any creams or foams to her skin!" We were all thrilled with Willow's progress! I told Willow's mom that the return of psoriasis to her earlobe, where it had first appeared years earlier, was a good indication that healing was taking place because, during the healing process, symptoms often disappear in the reverse order of their appearance. I instructed them to continue dosing only if new lesions appeared and if it was obvious that Willow was experiencing either a plateau or relapse in her progress.



# What is eczema?

Eczema is a common acute or chronic skin condition that affects children as well as adults. While there are many types of eczema, the most typical is “atopic dermatitis,” where “atopic” means an inherited tendency towards developing allergic reactions—such as asthma, hay fever, skin rashes—to environmental triggers. For people with light skin tones, the rash is typically red, itchy, and irritated, with patches of red bumps, sometimes with dry flaking. For people of color, the eczema rash may appear more ashen, brown, or grey than red. The outbreaks can be painful, especially when scratched or rubbed, and may discharge fluid. Secondary infections can develop over the affected areas, too.

Infants with eczema typically have outbreaks on their cheeks, forehead, or scalp, sometimes spreading to their trunk, knees, or elbows. Older kids and adults usually get eczema rashes in the creases of the elbows, behind the knees, on the neck, on the inner wrists and ankles, and in the eye area.

While the cause of eczema is not fully understood, contributing factors may include: stress; genetics; exposure to allergic or chemical irritants; damage to the skin barrier from environmental triggers; or poor circulation due to weakened blood vessels. Removal of the trigger, if identified, can be helpful.

Diagnosis is often made based on the appearance of the skin and description of the symptoms. Conventional medicine offers no cure but focuses on symptom management, with treatments such as topical moisturizers, steroid creams, and anti-inflammatory creams; oral antihistamines, corticosteroids, and immunosuppressant drugs for more troublesome cases; and antibiotics for infected rashes.

## Goodbye spots!

The following month, Willow’s mom reported that Willow’s skin had been a bit worse over the past week, and that a repeated dose of *Lycopodium* LM1 did not seem to help. I suspected Willow was no longer responding to this potency, so I increased the potency to *Lycopodium* LM4.\* While I have had success prescribing LM remedies in sequential potencies (e.g., LM1, LM2, LM3, LM4, etc.), I have also found that some patients respond better when skipping two or three potencies. Since Willow had been so sensitive at the beginning of homeopathic treatment, I instructed her mom to continue dosing only at times of obvious plateau or relapse. A couple weeks later, her mom sent me a quick update: “All of Willow’s spots are nearly gone again. They’re drying up!”

Two months later, only the flaking on Willow’s scalp was present. Her mom had given her a couple of doses of *Lycopodium* LM4, but the scales on her head were stubbornly staying put. We decided to increase the potency to *Lycopodium* LM7. That change did the trick! Within a few weeks, Willow’s psoriasis was in complete remission.

Over the next three years, Willow’s mother observed that her daughter would get some mild flaking on her scalp only when she had a cold. She would then take another dose of *Lycopodium* LM7, and the skin would clear again, and her cold would also resolve quickly.

## A triple win

When I followed up with Willow in early 2020 after she had a mild concussion, which *Arnica montana* 200c treated very effectively, Willow’s skin was completely clear, and she had not taken *Lycopodium* LM7 in over a year. Her mom told me that anytime Willow sees a drug commercial for psoriasis on TV, she talks back to the announcer, saying: “Or you could go see Dr. Wheeler!”

Willow had suffered with unremitting psoriasis for more than three years before her parents searched for and found safe, effective relief, thanks to homeopathic treatment. I am beyond thrilled that this 11-year-old girl is no longer afflicted by her psoriasis “spots.” She never had to endure teasing by her peers because of her rashes, and she doesn’t suffer the side effects and serious health risks related to conventional medications for psoriasis.

Being able to help young people like Willow—physically, mentally, and emotionally—is one of my favorite parts of using homeopathy in practice. What follows is the story of another girl with a skin condition who benefited on all levels from homeopathic treatment.



## Dani's story

Dani came to see me when she was 16. She had been suffering from eczema since early childhood, which she had been able to partially control with steroid creams prescribed by her dermatologist. But she had recently stopped the creams, as she no longer wanted to use them. Over the next few months, her eczema had flared up and was the worst she remembered it.

## Scratching the itch

Dani's eczema eruptions were mostly localized to her abdomen, backs of her hands, and tops of her feet. She had recently developed eruptions behind her ears, too. "It feels really good to scratch or rub the itch," she told me. But this often resulted in bleeding, discharge of clear fluid from the bumps, or intense burning pain. The eczema patches were particularly itchy at night, which is common for people with eczema. Dani also reported fatigue, saying she needed to nap when she came home from school most days.

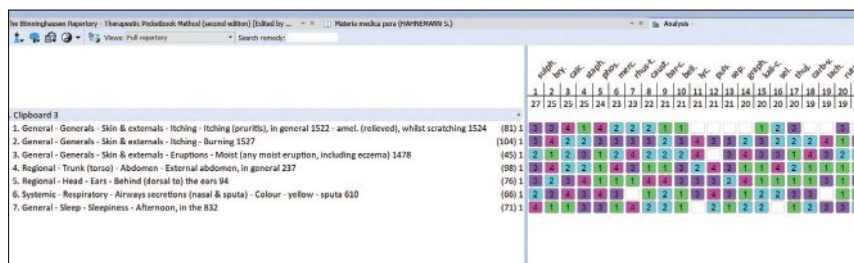
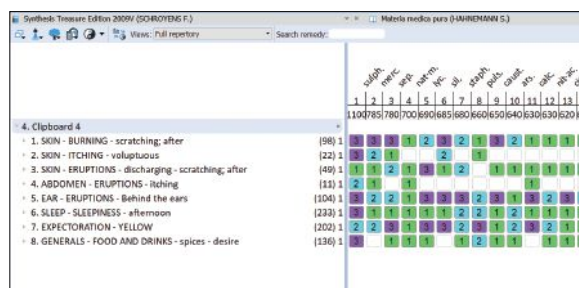
Dani had seasonal allergies, and her symptoms included sneezing, coughing, runny nose, and a hoarse voice. When her allergies were at their worst, she would cough up clear-to-yellow phlegm.

Dani joked that she was addicted to spicy foods saying, "I add seasoning or hot sauce to nearly everything I eat."

## Significant symptoms

In choosing a homeopathic remedy for Dani, I paid special attention to the symptoms that were most characteristic of

"Once I started taking the little pills again, the itching stopped again."



Repertorization Charts 3 and 4, for Dani, prepared with RadarOpus software.

her illness (i.e., striking, singular, uncommon, peculiar) in order to repertorize them. Those symptoms were: the discharging eczema eruptions on her abdomen and behind her ears (since those are less common locations for eczema in teens and adults); the good feeling that came from itching her eruptions (known as "voluptuous itching"); the burning sensation or bleeding she experienced after scratching the eruptions; her afternoon sleepiness; her yellow expectoration with her seasonal allergies; and her strong desire for spicy foods. I repertorized these symptoms, first using the *Synthesis Repertory*, and then again, for comparison purposes, using the *Bönninghausen Repertory, Therapeutic Pocketbook Method*. (See Charts 3 and 4.) In both repertorizations, *Sulphur* ranked highest, so I checked Allen's *Encyclopedia* and Hering's *Guiding Symptoms* to see if Willow's symptoms matched the materia medica of *Sulphur*. They did, so I prescribed a daily dose of *Sulphur 30c* for Dani.

## Immediate results

At Dani's one-month follow-up visit, she happily told me: "My itching stopped almost right away, once I started taking the remedy you gave me. ... I forgot to take it for a few days though, and the itching came back. But once I started taking the little pills again, the itching stopped again. That's how I know the stuff is helping!" Since her skin was itching less, she tended to scratch it less; but when she did scratch her eruptions, they still burned and/or bled. Dani said she felt more confident overall, now that her skin was improving and bothering her less. Since Dani was making good progress with her daily dose of *Sulphur 30c*, I asked her to continue it.

When we followed up the next month, Dani seemed to be relapsing slightly, as she told me of new eczema eruptions on her hands and feet. She also reported increased menstrual pain with her most recent cycle. In my assessment, she'd had an excellent response to daily doses of *Sulphur 30c* for about six weeks, but these small relapses in the past few weeks indicated that she was no longer responding as well and that we needed to increase the potency of the remedy. So I changed Dani's prescription to *Sulphur 200c*, dosed daily.

## A new outlook on life

At our next visit, four months into homeopathic treatment, Dani reported increased energy. She also said, "My personality is better." When asked to clarify, she said she felt more



confident and interested in opening up to new people. She was enjoying school more and learning new subjects. Regarding her eczema, she said her skin felt better and smoother. The eruptions were healing—their texture was less rough and puffy, and they no longer bled or discharged. The itching had diminished, especially at night. She had fewer eruptions overall, and those behind her ears had completely cleared. Her last two periods had not been painful or otherwise troublesome. Since she was still improving, I asked her to continue with the daily doses of *Sulphur 200c*.

Five months into treatment, Dani reported steady improvements, so I asked her to continue the treatment plan.

By the six-month follow-up visit, Dani told me, “I stopped dosing a few weeks ago because I felt like the remedy wasn’t helping anymore. When I started taking it again a week later, I didn’t see any change either.” A few new eruptions on her hands had appeared, too, and they were quite itchy. I determined that her response to *Sulphur 200c* had plateaued, and we needed to increase the remedy’s potency. So I asked her to begin taking a daily dose of *Sulphur 1M*.

At the seven-month follow-up visit, Dani’s eczema was nearly resolved. She was only experiencing mild itching about once a week, and the reddened, irritated areas were fading away. Her energy and mood remained improved, and she had no recent allergy symptoms. Since she was responding well to treatment, I asked her to continue taking *Sulphur 1M* daily.

## Real relief, real improvement

At the nine-month mark, Dani stated that her skin was continuing to heal—it was almost completely clear—and she had no new lesions. She said she felt even more confident now and was very pleased with her progress. Dani stopped checking in with me at this point, as she didn’t feel the need to continue.

About eight months later, I received an update that Dani was still “doing well,” with no complaints of eczema.

This teenage girl had suffered with eczema outbreaks, inflamed skin, and incessant itching ever since she was a small child. She had endured conventional treatments that sometimes gave relief but never sustained improvement, and they came with risks and unwelcome side effects. Now, with homeopathic treatment, Dani finally experienced real improvement in her skin, as well as in her seasonal allergies, menstrual cycle, and emotional outlook. Dani not only became more comfortable physically, but she gained a new perspective on life and all its opportunities.

## Safe skin alternative

I am so grateful to be able to offer patients a safe, effective, affordable alternative to the various topical steroids and oral or injectable immunosuppressive drugs that are prescribed conventionally for eczema and psoriasis. Homeopathy helps patients feel comfortable in their own skin again, literally. It not only provides relief physically from the discomfort and incessant itching or pain, but it also alleviates any mental or emotional strain that results from the rashes. A person’s entire quality of life improves with the use of homeopathic medicine. 💧

\* The idea of skipping 2-3 potencies when prescribing LM potencies was introduced to me in the following paper by Heiner Frei. Frei H: Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder and Polarity Analysis: Features, Cases, Results, *Simillimum* 2014. <http://www.heinerfrei.ch/publications>

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**A Note on Dosing and Follow up:** In chronic cases, such as the ones in this article, I typically prescribe a low potency, such as 30c, to start. I generally recommend following up every four to six weeks for the first several months of treatment. Once it is clear that the patient is on track and steadily improving, I will often begin to space follow-up visits out a bit further. I expect to see slow, gradual improvement over time with the possibility of slight plateaus or relapses. When progress plateaus or relapses, I will increase the potency, as long as the original medicine still covers their symptoms. This method of posology is rooted in the work of Samuel Hahnemann (*Organon of Medicine*, 6th edition, especially aphorism 246, footnote a), Francisco Eizayaga (*Treatise on Homeopathic Medicine*), and Douglas M. Borland (*Pneumonias*), and was introduced to me by Stephen Messer, ND, DHANP, at Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine.

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**Miriam Wheeler, ND**, maintains a private practice at Nourish Natural Medical Center in Tempe, AZ. She graduated from Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine (SCNM). After completing a general medicine residency at SCNM, she was awarded the specialty residency in homeopathic medicine, sponsored by Standard Homeopathic and supervised by Stephen Messer, ND, DHANP. She serves on the board of Homeopathic Academy of

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