Homeopathy for Acute Skin Problems

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I don’t advocate home prescribing for chronic skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis or longstanding cases of molluscum as homeopathy is a potent form of medicine and it is relatively easy to cause an aggravation with a remedy that appears to fit but is only superficial.

Any skin complaint – be it chronic or acute – is always part of a deeper picture, regardless of how it presents, and identifies the underlying family medical history and constitutional picture.

Incorrect treatment of a skin condition can cause it to disappear – which may seem to be a good thing – and then reappear as something deeper and more serious, for example, eczema disappearing and reappearing as asthma, or eczema alternating with asthma.

I do get quite a number of calls about acute skin problems and have outlined below some of the remedies indicated. These cases can be treated in the very early stages and the right remedy should bring improvement in a few days or a week. If things are not improving after this, it is not advisable to continue with a remedy in the hope that giving it for longer will make the problem go away.

When an acute skin complaint resolves with a homeopathic remedy it is generally because the remedy is well chosen and fits more than just the skin condition. It is also likely that the patient is relatively healthy and the immune system has been stimulated enough by the remedy to overcome the problem and return to balance.

My usual suggestion when treating a skin condition at home is to give the remedy for one week only. If there is no change in that time it is unlikely the remedy is going to work and either another remedy should be tried or professional help should be sought.

You will notice that similar remedies are indicated for many of the skin conditions, particularly those which have fever and rash. If you can’t find the exact condition you are looking for look at the remedy pictures and pick something that matches.

Boils
These are often caused by the Staphylococcus bacteria. If antibiotics have failed to resolve the problem, consider a consultation to look at an individualised remedy (there is usually an underlying susceptibility). The Staphylococcus Nosode is sometimes required but can only be dispensed via consultation. Otherwise remedies to try in the acute phase are:

**Belladonna** – In the early stage where the skin is very red, hot and tender.

**Hepar Sulph** – Boils weep easily and are very sensitive to the slightest touch, or to bring the boil to a head. Useful if infection appears with every wound. Constitutional treatment is recommended.

**Silica** – To help heal a boil which has been slow to develop and slow to disperse, or to resolve a boil which has burst.
**Anthracinum** (by consultation only) – Skin looks bluish, blistered and is very angry, with a black centre.

**Gunpowder** (on request only) – Boil weeps but is generally painless.

**Burns, Scalds, Sunburn**
The remedies for these conditions are very similar so I have included them all together. *Seek medical attention for serious or deep burns while supporting the system with homeopathic remedies.*

**Aconite** – Shock and acute pain with restlessness and often fear of death after an accident like a burn or in sunburn/sunstroke. Skin is red and dry after too much sun, pupils are dilated and there may be bursting pressure in the head and dizziness.

**Apis** – Burning, stinging sensation with swelling and possibly hives.

**Belladonna** – Skin is red, hot, shiny and throbbing, painful to touch. The face may be flushed and the head throbbing.

**Cantharis** – Rawness and smarting of simple burns, scalds or sunburn, better by cold applications. Tendency to large painful blisters containing clear fluid. Blisters burn when touched. *My first remedy for burns from the iron!*

**Gelsemium** – Useful for headache which may come on after too much sun. Head pain like a tight band with droopy, heavy, drowsy appearance. May be better for urination. Usually no thirst. Wants to lie still and rest.

**Glonoine** – Throbbing, bursting headache of sunstroke. Head pain is worse for walking and can be so painful that the head cannot be laid on the pillow. Redness of face comes and goes with contracted pupils.

**Urtica Urens** – Burns and scalds. Sunburn with intense itching and burning. Itching raised red blotches. Burning of skin is worse after sleep.

**Cold Sores**
Usually part of an underlying constitutional problem and requires individualized treatment to resolve in the long term but remedies can be helpful to reduce the severity of an outbreak.

**Cantharis** - Large blisters that sting and burn and may bleed.

**Hepar Sulph** - Pus forms in the sores. They are very sensitive and worse for touch.

**Nat Mur** - Pearl-like blisters on lips. The lips may be dry and typically may crack in the middle of bottom lip. May appear with a cold, during stress or after an emotional upset.

**Rhus Tox** – Most often the corners of the mouth ulcerate. The blisters are very itchy and tingly.

**Impetigo (School Sores)**
A highly contagious skin condition presenting as small blisters which burst and then form brownish crusts. Generally it is around the nose and mouth, but in recent years I have seen it in a range of areas!

**Ant Crud** - Blisters around nose and mouth, especially in children.

**Ars Alb** - Blisters accompanied by physical exhaustion, chilliness, anxiety and mental restlessness.

**Mezereum** - Scalp most affected, blisters thickly crust and ooze pus which irritates surrounding skin. Bathe affected area with HyperCal tincture or Teatree.
Hand Foot & Mouth
This has become more and more of an issue as time has gone by. I barely ever saw a case 10 years ago, but it is reasonably common now and sometimes even affects adults. This is a viral illness caused by the Coxsackie Virus. Generally there is fever before the blisters/ulcers appear. Treat with the usual fever remedies at the onset.

*Ant Tart* - Tongue coated thick white as if painted, with pimples around the mouth, or tongue may be mapped, dry, parched with whitish coating in the centre only. Profuse, sometimes offensive saliva. Clingy, wants to be carried but does not want to be touched or looked at. No thirst. May be accompanied by a rattly chest. Worse from cold.

*Ant Crud* – Yellowish or brown, crusty, scabby, eruptions like dried honey around mouth. Ulcers on tongue. Mapped tongue or a thick, milky white or yellow coating on the rear third of the tongue with clean sides. Fever with profuse offensive perspiration; thirsty with fever. Useful if Pulsatilla is indicated but fails to act. Worse warm room, better in the open air.

*Borax* - Mouth hot and tender with white ulcers on the tongue which may bleed easily when eating or touched and/or white patches on the gums and tongue. The ulcers appear rapidly, with profuse salivation. Wants cold drinks and cold food during fever. Sore mouth prevents infants from nursing. Fear of downward motion and easily startled, worse when sick. Very sensitive to sudden noises.

*Calc Carb* – Prone to mouth ulcers or sores in the mouth. Child puts fingers in the mouth, froths at the mouth. Sore mouth makes it difficult for infants to nurse, worse for cold water. Mapped and indented tongue with white coating. Swollen gums which bleed easily. Grinding teeth during sleep. Perspiration of head at night, with sour odour. Swollen glands, enlarged tonsils. Fever will often respond to Belladonna, but requires a deeper acting remedy for symptoms that follow.

*Cantharis* - Tongue is covered with small blisters and is described as “deeply furred” with red edges. Tongue is swollen with red edges and may tremble. Mouth, pharynx and throat burn and may appear ulcerated, with great difficulty swallowing liquids. Saliva is sweet. May be very cold during fever, with cold perspiration. Better for warmth and rest. Worse for touch.

*Merc Sol* - Sores can be very severe and there may be copious dribbling with offensive breath. There may be pus on the tonsils or on the gums/inside cheeks or on the tongue. The patient is very sensitive to hot and cold and may be thirsty. If there is fever, the sweat may be profuse, offensive and oily in texture. Pain may be worse at night. If you think Merc fits but does not help *Merc Cor* may be required, but contact your homeopath for advice in this situation.

*Natrum Mur* – Classic remedy for cold sores and may be indicated if blisters are on the lips rather than in the mouth. Dry mouth with increased thirst. Sore mouths of infants causing difficulty and pain on nursing. Tongue mapped or coated white with red patches. Fever with unquenchable thirst. Increased salivation. Fever with dry cough, wants to be uncovered. Salty profuse perspiration.

*Nitric Acid* – Ulcers on the soft palate with sharp pain. Gums swollen and sore and may bleed. Margin of mouth covered with sores and blisters. Offensive breath. Patient may vomit or suffer nausea. Tongue is usually clean and red with a furrow down the centre or the tongue may be mapped. Even soft food is painful to eat. Tonsils may be red, swollen, uneven with small ulcers. Worse for touch, being jarred, motion, cold air. Better in the car.
Nail problems
Deformed nails have a variety of causes including iron deficiency, respiratory or heart problems, psoriasis and malabsorption of vitamins and minerals, however, I am assuming that you will be aware of these issues if the problem has been evident for some time. For simple cases try the following in a low potency for up to one month or try our Feet & Nails combination, available on the website.

Ant Crud – Brittle, thickened, horny.
Silica – Deformed with white spotting
Graphites – Thickened, deformed, brittle or crumbly, inflamed and painful with blackening.
Thuja – Brittle with red swollen skin at the base.

Nappy Rash
Severe nappy rash with blistering and even bleeding is part of an underlying susceptibility and needs to be treated by a registered homeopath.

HyperCal Cream can be really helpful for less severe cases of nappy rash.
Calc Carb – Can be helpful if child fits remedy picture and nappy rash or similar appears during teething. Generally chubby babies who have sweaty heads at night and difficulty cutting teeth.
Merc Sol – Nappy area is moist and sweaty. Baby is very dribbly and breath may be offensive.
Rhus Tox – Itchy skin with little blisters.
Sulphur – Dry, red, scaly itchy skin which is worse from heat, hot showers and warmth of the bed.

Prickly Heat
Generally appears from being overheated during exercise or in summer.

Rhus Tox – Very itchy fine red rash with restlessness.
Sulphur – Dry, red, itchy skin which is worse from heat, hot showers and warmth of the bed.

Shingles (Herpes Zoster)
Not strictly a skin condition, but a condition of the nerves caused by the same virus as Chicken Pox. You will note that the remedies are the same as for Impetigo and often cold sores as the presentation is similar.

Apis – Large blisters with prickling, burning and stinging. Area is red and puffy, better from cold applications. The patient is usually very restless.
Ars Alb – Intense itching, with burning pains worse midnight to 2am. Patient may be restless, anxious, exhausted. Usually chilly people, better for heat.
Mezereum - Severe pain, skin burns, itches and produces brown scabs over a pus filled blister. Pain is worse for movement and for heat of the bed, but better for warmth generally. Pain remains after the rash has gone. Often middle-aged or elderly.
Rhus Tox – Tiny blisters filled with clear fluid which are red, blistered, itchy and burning. Eruptions are better for warmth. Patient is restless and feels better for moving about.
Slapped Cheek

"Slapped Cheek" or just "Slap Cheek" is a viral infection caused by a virus called parvovirus B19. It is also called 'fifth disease' or erytherma infectious. Slapped cheek usually affects children between the ages of four and 10 but can happen at any age, even in adulthood.

Apis — Rash feels hot and dry and is sensitive to touch, possibly with sore throat. Rash itself may be puffy and hard like a bee sting. Pain of rash is stinging. Better for cold drinks (but not much thirst) and baths, and worse for heat.

Belladonna — Sudden onset of symptoms with very red, hot cheeks which radiate heat. Can be accompanied by fever/high temp, throbbing headache and dilated pupils. May ask for lemonade or lemons.

Chamomilla — Fever with flushes of heat and fiery red rash on face. Cold limbs with burning face. Usually behaviour will help you select this as the child is whining and restless, wants many things but then refuses them, is averse to being touched but still wants to be carried.

Rhus tox — Rashes, blisters and eruptions with intense itching that are worse at night and better for heat. Joints may be affected as well as ligaments and tendons. Usually restless and can’t get comfortable at night. May ask for milk.

Sulphur — Fever, intense itching, thirst and irritability. May have sensation of being hot/burning internally and will feel better outside and in cold air, and worse for warmth.

Urtica Urens — Rash is small and looks like hives or nettle rash. Pain is stinging and rash is itchy. Worse for washing or for warmth.

Tinea, ringworm, jock itch & similar

This is fungal infection of the feet in which the skin around the toes becomes red and itchy, then white and moist and then flakes or peels off. Severe cases may affect the toenails which become yellow and distorted. Jock itch (tinea of the groin) and ringworm are similar problems and there are many other varieties of tinea. This is a constitutional problem and usually requires an individualised remedy for persistent cases.

Urticaria (hives, rash)

This term covers a wide range of rashes which can be very itchy and may result from a food allergy, drug reaction, insect bites or stress, for example. If reaction is severe and there is swelling of the face and/or throat seek medical help immediately.

Ant Crud — Weals accompanied by upset tummy and white coated tongue.

Apis — Burning, stinging and swelling of the lips and eyelids, made worse by any form of heat.

Ars Alb — Any type of rash with strong symptoms of restlessness and anxiety. Thirst for small sips.

Rhus Tox — Rash burns and itches, blisters develop and the patient is very restless.

Sulphur — Skin is red, itchy and puffy and is worse from heat and bathing with water.

Urtica Urens — Rash caused by nettles or grevillea which is very itchy and worse for touching, scratching or bathing with water. This could also be any kind of allergic rash from food, etc.
Warts & Molluscum

While warts are caused by a virus, there is always an underlying susceptibility to the problem. I commonly associate the sudden appearance of warts, and particularly molluscum, with immunisation. Both of these conditions generally respond best to constitutional treatment if persistent, but some cases of warts resolve amazingly quickly. I’m only listing two remedies here as there are so many indicated remedies and so many different presentations of warts.

_Thuja_ – The most well-known of the wart remedies probably works in about 50% of cases. I recommend to give 30c once a day for one week then wait one week. If nothing happens, the remedy is not right. Often I will follow this up with Nit Ac for the same period. If no improvement, then a constitutional remedy is required.

_Nitric Acid_ – Cauliflower-like warts which itch and sting and sometimes ooze and bleed, or become large and jagged around the edge.

Feet & Nails Combination - Drops and Cream

This is a product we developed for a podiatrist in Melbourne to address acute cases of tinea, plantar warts and corns. Feedback has been impressive and some cases have resolved in a matter of days. Instruction is not to take the remedy continually and that constitutional care is required in long-standing conditions.

_Resources:_

www.drandrewlockie.com
Mater FJ. Clinical Observations of Children’s Remedies. Lutra 2006

_Homeopathy is a traditional medicine. It may be used in conjunction with other medicines. For any ongoing chronic condition, it is important to be assessed or examined by your healthcare professional or specialist. Always seek medical advice in emergencies._

_The information in this article does not constitute medical advice. It is referenced from the texts approved by Therapeutic Goods Administration and is for information only. If in doubt as to the appropriateness of a treatment seek advice from your homeopath._