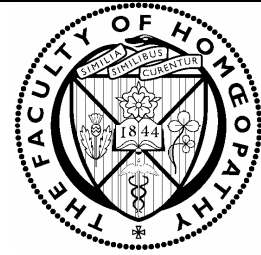


INFORMATION SHEET

HOMEOPATHY AND IMMUNISATION



Immunisation - a balance of risks

There are no risk-free choices in deciding about immunisation. A decision has to be made which balances the respective risks of suffering harm from a particular disease against the risks of harm from the immunisation.

Risks of disease

What are the risks of catching a particular infectious disease? The risks relate to the chances of coming into contact with a particular 'bug', the strength and "nastiness" of that 'bug' and the overall health of the individual.

Not every person is at the same risk. Very young babies, children with other chronic illnesses and children living in poverty all have higher risks of both being infected and of suffering harm from the infection. The chance of catching a particular infectious disease is greatly affected by the numbers of other people in the community that have been immunised.

Risk of immunisation

Immunisation should not be given to the sick or to those who are already trying to fight off an infection.

The commonest problems with vaccines are temporary local reactions, which may occur within days of the injection. Long-term problems have been suspected from time to time and the situation is different with different immunisations but, overall, the consensus view among medical experts is that there is no significant evidence of frequent serious long-term side effects with the currently used vaccines.

The role of homeopathy

Homeopathy can be an appropriate way to treat ill-effects of an immunisation.

It can also be used to help treat infectious diseases caught by those who had medical conditions which prohibited them from being immunised (contra-indications).

There are no proven homeopathic substitutes for immunisation. Some people have suggested using 'nosodes' (homeopathic preparations of the 'bugs' which cause the diseases). There is currently no evidence that nosodes are effective in humans. Relying on nosodes instead of immunisation may create a false sense of security, since efficacy is not proven.

Treating epidemics

Well chosen homeopathic remedies prescribed by trained practitioners, can successfully treat epidemics of infectious disease, even where there are no other alternatives. For example, homeopathic remedies have been shown to relieve and shorten the duration of symptoms during outbreaks of influenza.

Constitutional remedies

You may be prescribed a homeopathic remedy which has been individually selected for you even when you are apparently healthy. Such a remedy may boost your overall well-being and health making it less likely that you will catch an infection or help you to recover more quickly should you become ill. Such a prescription is described as "constitutional."

In summary

In the end, the decision is yours, but discussing your anxieties or fears with a health care professional may help you to decide on the basis of the best information available.

A list of doctors trained in homeopathy is available from the address below.

The Faculty of Homeopathy follows the Department of Health guidelines on immunisation and recommends that immunisation be carried out in the normal way unless there are medical contra-indications.

Immunisation of animals

A separate information sheet about homeopathy and the immunisation of animals, in particular cats and dogs, is available from the Faculty of Homeopathy.

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