

## **A Sufferer's Experience of Migraine and Belladonna**

My migraine was initially diagnosed when I was 36 years old. As with many migraine sufferers the debilitating attacks occurred weekly, affecting my ability to function and lead a 'normal life'.

To find relief and help, my first port of call was to my General Practitioner who was most unsympathetic, implying that three young children, moving house and working were bound to have a detrimental effect on my health and the combination of stresses had 'chosen' to manifest in the form of migraine. When I asked for suggestions for relief, anti-depressants were offered as the 'best course of action'. The GP also intimated that in time the migraines would probably disappear; if not a hysterectomy may be the answer!

There was no discussion regarding my medical or family history, side effects that I may experience or the potential for addiction to the anti-depressants. The whole visit was over within five minutes, I left the surgery reluctantly clutching a prescription. Hopefully this was an atypical experience, and GPs these days are more sympathetic.

I decided to carry out research into the side effects these anti-depressant drugs could induce. I was horrified to find that the symptoms I suffered, headache, nausea, difficulty concentrating etc. could be further aggravated, and there were other potential side effects such as sexual dysfunction, hair loss and abdominal pain. My immediate reaction was to throw the prescription away; in no way did I want all those chemicals inside me, potentially doing untold long term damage to my body. Neither did I want a hysterectomy as my migraines did not coincide with monthly hormonal changes.

After alternative advice from family and friends to change my diet, cut out all known triggers such as cheese, chocolate, caffeine, alcohol and have more sleep. I decided to look into complementary therapies and a friend recommended me to try homeopathy. The use of homeopaths was not as widely known as it is today and many people inferred that their practices were somewhat dubious.

Unperturbed and determined to find someone to help me I used the local telephone directory to seek out registered homeopaths, finally arranging an initial consultation with the one who seemed the most genuinely interested and concerned with my plight during our introductory telephone conversation.

When I arrived, the homeopath began explaining in detail the 'like-for-like' principles of homeopathy. She was not at all offended or alarmed by my questions about her training and qualifications, the answers to which were most reassuring.

My life and medical history were discussed in depth, including family history of migraine and my sister's epilepsy and the thoughts I had that my headaches were an indication of me developing the same, which terrified me. We also discussed my present and past emotional states and the holistic approach to finding suitable relief.

During the consultation I explained that my migraine usually started at the back of the head and spread predominantly to the right temple, accompanied by a pounding, throbbing pain and was worsened by light, noise, jarring and cold hands and feet. From this and careful questioning about other life and family factors, the homeopath concluded that Belladonna would be beneficial for me.

She told me that Belladonna is also known as Deadly Nightshade. I was somewhat alarmed by this and expressed my concerns over using such a toxic and sometimes fatal plant. The homeopath carefully explained that the doses of Belladonna that I would be taking were very diluted but confirmed that it should only be used when prescribed by a qualified practitioner, and should NEVER be used as a self-help measure, for example picking it from the wild.

As an aside, Belladonna means 'beautiful eyes' in Italian and preparations of it were used in days gone-by to dilate the pupils and make women appear more alluring and sexy.

But apart from that, I was interested to learn that the therapeutic use of Belladonna has been known for over 500 years and it has proven to be beneficial in many different homeopathic remedies; It was also reassuring to find out that many non-prescription cough syrups sold over the counter contain atropine which is obtained from Belladonna.

My homeopath explained that should Belladonna not be beneficial there were other homeopathic remedies such as Sanguinarine, which is used to treat migraines with similar symptoms but accompanied by vomiting, which rarely happened in my case. Therefore it was agreed that Belladonna be prescribed initially.

I was recommended to take the Belladonna in tablet form twice a day, three in the morning and three at night over five days and return for further consultation within 7 days. She also advised me to exclude cheese, chocolate, caffeine and alcohol for the time being, while keeping a headache diary to enable triggers to be identified and discussed during future consultations.

I continued visiting the homeopath on a weekly basis for several months, all the while continuing to take daily doses of Belladonna which were gradually reduced. The homeopath always made the visits productive and as she found out more and more about me, my life-style and triggers, she noticed that I have a tendency to clench my jaw and grind my back teeth when subjected to topics of discussion that were upsetting or made me angry. She advised me always to sleep with my mouth slightly ajar to prevent muscle tension. This is something that to this day I consciously make an effort to do not only when drifting off to sleep but when I begin to feel tense. The improvements in the severity, intensity and frequency of my migraines were astounding and gradually they disappeared.

I strongly recommend that anyone who suffers from migraine attacks should consult with a homeopath as I'm sure they will find the experience and their professionalism as 'life-changing' as I have.

To repeat: Belladonna is another name for deadly night-shade, and should NEVER be self-administered. Use it ONLY under the supervision of a registered and qualified practitioner.

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<http://natural-migraine-alternatives.blogspot.com/>

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