



## Softball in Spring

### Homeopathy & natural medicine help one girl step up to the plate

by AMY ROTHENBERG, ND, DHANP

AN ADORABLE AND BRIGHT 11-YEAR-OLD GIRL, LAILA, WAS BROUGHT to see me for the treatment of severe gastritis. About a year before our first visit, she had sustained an injury to her shoulder, though neither she nor her parents remembered exactly how. She had come home from school complaining of pain and, several days later, was taken to the pediatrician who recommended keeping an eye on it.



After almost a month of pain and discomfort, as well as x-ray diagnostic work and visits to a chiropractor and an osteopathic physician, no gross physical abnormalities had been detected. Chiropractic adjustments, osteopathic manipulation, massage, and other forms of bodywork were tried to no avail.

#### Stomachaches and drug side effects

In due time, Laila was prescribed a regimen of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, which she took faithfully and which took the edge off the pain, but did not totally relieve it. After several months on these medications, Laila began to complain of stomachaches. She was diagnosed with gastro-esophageal reflux. Her family physician recommended that she discontinue the anti-inflammatory medicines and take some different drugs for the acid reflux.

Unfortunately, these medications left Laila feeling nauseated and without appetite, and she began to lose weight. A pediatric gastroenterologist diagnosed gastritis and prescribed an additional medication. Laila also developed chronic headaches, which she had not had before.

At this point, Laila's parents decided they had had enough of conventional medications: these methods did not appear to be working for their daughter. In fact, each set of prescriptions seemed to give her more symptoms instead of fewer.

Laila had discontinued the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines some four months before our visit, but her digestive symptoms persisted.

### An articulate, direct young lady

I took the full constitutional homeopathic case, finding out how Laila experienced her shoulder pain, her GI symptoms, and her headaches, and what made them better and worse. We talked about her likes and dislikes, her relationships with family and friends, what she thought of the sixth grade, and what sorts of things she enjoyed. Laila was a most articulate and direct young lady, and a beloved member of her family and church communities. She excelled at most everything she tried and was a good friend to all. She was acutely sensitive to the feelings of others,

### Supporting the digestive tract

I also wanted to use several tried and true naturopathic approaches to help heal some of the GI tract tissue damage caused by the anti-inflammatory medication. The botanical treatment approach is one that focuses more on stimulating proper digestion, while coating and supporting the mucous membrane lining of the esophagus and stomach. For patients such as this, both children and adults, I recommend a product called DGL, or De-Glycyrrhizinated Licorice. This helps to soothe, nourish, and support healthy mucous membrane linings of the esophagus, stomach, and intestine. It comes in different flavors. The tablets are chewed before a meal, and most people can tolerate the taste. I also suggest slippery elm lozenges to help soothe the lining of the GI tract. I encour-

### Much improvement

When I saw Laila six weeks later, she and her mother reported that the GI system was much improved. She had many more days now without stomachache or reflux. She no longer complained of headaches, and she felt much better overall. Her shoulder, however, was still bothering her.

I decided not to give a homeopathic remedy but to modify some of the other supplements Laila was taking, with an eye to discontinuing them when they were no longer necessary. Some might wonder, why not just give the homeopathic remedy? In a case like this, where there has been clear tissue damage, I like to do what I can to help build up and re-nourish the area. These other, non-toxic, effective, and non-habit forming approaches, which do not have side effects, are an elegant bal-

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especially those of her mother, and she seemed mature beyond her years.

As I saw this patient, I had many other thoughts besides the need to assess which homeopathic remedy would best match her presenting state. As you may have read in the news recently, allopathic medicines are not all tested on children. Strong drugs can have serious side effects, especially on sensitive and smaller individuals. When I see a patient like Laila who has complaints that seem largely due to orthodox drugs, I wish I had had the opportunity to offer treatment at the time the initial problem appeared. We cannot turn back time, of course, but we can pick up the case wherever it is and start working our way through.

With regard to a constitutional homeopathic remedy for Laila, my differential diagnosis, supported by my repertorization, revealed the remedies *Phosphorus*, *Pulsatilla*, and *Carcinosin*, the latter of which I settled on, based on my understanding of the cycle/materia medica of that remedy. I prescribed *Carcinosin* 200c, one dose taken in the office. I based this largely on her passion for living and her strong sense of self. She was unusually organized and careful in her life and in the way she expressed herself. She also demonstrated sensitivity and a deep caring nature, which is rare in someone so young.

aged Laila and her family to try some teas containing slippery elm and marshmallow, or a product called Throat Coat tea (also good for sore throat!) made by Traditional Medicinals. All work at soothing and supporting the lining of the digestive tract.

### No water with meals

As far as lifestyle adjustments, I recommended drinking water freely *between* meals—but drinking as little as possible, preferably nothing, *with* meals. I encouraged Laila to chew her food well and slowly, in order to give her food a bit of a head start with the digestive enzymes present in her saliva. I suggested that her largest meal should be at lunch or in the late afternoon and that the best thing to do after eating was to take a short walk or at least sit tall, as opposed to lying down. We also spoke about the importance of sticking with all the things that helped her keep stress down like playing with her friends, bicycling, dancing, reading, and talking!

ance for constitutional homeopathy. Would Laila have gotten better without them? Perhaps. But perhaps not as quickly. She also now has at her fingertips several things she can use at the first sign of any discomfort in the GI system.

### Natural anti-inflammatories

Laila's shoulder continued to bother her for some months. Once her GI problems had been better for about four months, I tried her on natural anti-inflammatory medications including curcumin (derived from turmeric) and bromelain (derived from pineapple), along with extra Vitamin C. After about six weeks on that protocol, she finally got relief from the shoulder pain.

### Starting to play again

As softball season was fast approaching, this improvement gave Laila tremendous relief. Thanks to some gentle and effective natural medicines, she is hoping to be a starting softball infielder this spring.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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