



School Suffers Salmonella Outbreak

How one homeopath helped 100 students

by FRANCIS TREUHERZ, MA, RSHom, FSHom

ONE SUMMER SUNDAY I RECEIVED A phone call from a friend of a friend of a friend. I was their last resort. Who could they find who might be free on a Sunday to visit an alternative boys' residential school in the country just outside London? An epidemic of some sort was occurring there, and no one appeared to be immune. I collected a large case of homeopathic remedies and headed off for an hour's drive into nowhere.

Fresh air, please!

My destination turned out to be a yeshiva for teenage Chasidic Jewish boys—a closed community that does not tend to let in even Jewish outsiders, so I received an unusual inside perspective. The boys were living in cramped dorms and, on that day, very unhygienic conditions. There is no delicate way to describe this: the boys lay about stinking of their own feces, looking weak and feeble, and emitting clouds of smelly gas. Some boys were on the grass in the shade. They wanted fresh air instead of lying in their shared dorm rooms, and some had even spent the night outside in the open. About 100 boys were affected with this severe digestive disturbance, which included diarrhea and vomiting.

Their symptoms immediately led me to consider *Carbo vegetabilis* as a possible remedy. As Arthur Hill Grimmer described it: "*Carbo vegetabilis* is an antidote for many poisoning conditions. Food poisonings from tainted foods, especially tainted fish; with extreme burning pains, flatulence, extreme distension, weakness, cold sweats, weakened pulse and blueness, yet craves the air and is relieved by fanning." (*Homeopathic Recorder*, January 1936)

Gefilte fish & egg mayonnaise

In order to make a good prescription, I wanted to be sure that I learned the whole story, however, so I interviewed some staff and students about what had been going on before the illness hit. The residents had

eaten their usual celebratory Sabbath foods on Friday evening and Saturday. Only on Saturday night had the problems begun. So what did they have for lunch that day? Food that had been taken from a freezer on Friday afternoon, maybe not properly thawed before cooking and/or not properly cooked. The meal included "Gefilte fish" (a mixture of fish, potato, flour, carrot, and probably egg), and most certainly egg mayonnaise.

With this information in mind, I considered some additional possible remedies for the boys. *China officinalis* is a prize remedy for food poisoning, loss of bodily fluids, weakness and prostration, and the after-effects of eating spoiled fish. *Arsenicum* is a classic for diarrhea and vomiting (often at the same time) from food poisoning, and restless, anxious, cold sweats in the early stages of the illness. So, as might be expected, the remedy *China arsenicosum* shares many of the indications of both *China* and *Arsenicum*. *China arsenicosum* is indicated for diarrhea from both eggs and fish. With the assistance of *MacRepertory*TM software, I discovered that *China arsenicosum* is the only remedy listed in the Repertory for the symptom of being worse from both fish and eggs. People needing this remedy may also lose control of their bodily functions. Indeed, *China arsenicosum* seemed like a good match for many of these boys' symptoms, but, unfortunately, I did not have that remedy with me.

The smelliest of the boys who also craved air received *Carbo veg*. Those who were still in the early stage of restless anxiety with simultaneous diarrhea and vomiting were given *Arsenicum*. The ones who had lost the most fluid and lay about weakly received *China*.

Recovery begins

When I visited the school again the next morning, I found that recovery for most of the boys had begun very quickly, especially

for those who had received *Carbo veg*. Some of those who had taken *China* just needed another dose of *China* to complete their cure. Most of those who had initially received *Arsenicum* needed *China arsenicosum*, which I had brought with me on this second visit. This remedy covers the symptom of involuntary passage of stool while urinating—which accounted for some of the smells—and which is also a sign of *Salmonella* poisoning. It proved very useful, and most boys recovered quickly. Two were sent to the hospital, however, as they were prostrated and I opined that they had lost too much fluid and I could not be responsible for them.

I also reported the problem at the school to the public health authorities. They investigated and stated that *Salmonella* was implicated.

A few of the boys with the worst cases were then given *Gaertner** as their final remedy, which is a homeopathic remedy made from the *Salmonella* bacteria. I believe they recovered fully and quickly.

Moral: Avoid poorly cooked and poorly thawed food in hot weather.

*You have likely heard of Dr. Edward Bach, known for his flower remedies. Before he communed with nature, Dr. Bach was a bacteriologist who worked at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital. There, he experimented with homeopathic medicines made from bacteria found in the gut, including the remedy *Gaertner*. Bach's remedies later became known as the Bowel Nosodes.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Francis Treuherz, MA, RSHom, FSHom, lives in London with his wife, 2 sons, a library of 7500 volumes on homeopathy, old bottles, medicine cases, portraits, and ephemera. After

training, he has practiced homeopathy since 1984 including 13 years in the National Health Service. He has written many historical and clinical articles, a research report, and a book. He has served on the Board of the Society of Homeopaths and is now editor of their journal, *The Homeopath*, for the second time around.