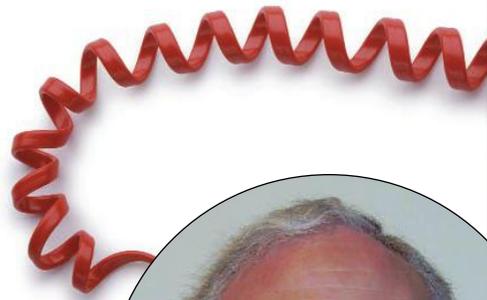
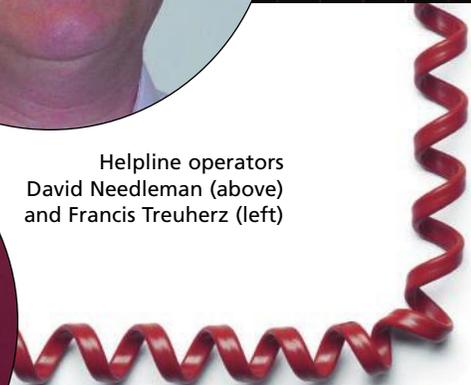


"Hello, This is the Homeopathic Helpline!"



Helpline operators
David Needleman (above)
and Francis Treuherz (left)



On call 365 days a year, 2 experts help people in crisis

Advice for singers, travelers, moms-to-be ... and everyone in between!

by FRANCIS TREUHERZ, MA, RSHom, FSHom

ONCE UPON A TIME, I PRACTICED HOMEOPATHY IN A RENTED CONSULTING ROOM above a retail pharmacy in North London. The store below conveniently carried a full set of homeopathic remedies in a wide range of potencies, collected over the years by an enthusiastic pharmacist, who himself had trained as a homeopath. One day, the owner decided that the pharmacist, David Needleman, was receiving too many calls for homeopathy advice on the store phone and asked him to please obtain his own line.



I spoke to the wife of a man whose throat was swelling from having eaten a peanut. I told her to call an ambulance and give him Apis 30c in that order.

My friend David obliged but went a bit farther; he managed to convince the official UK telecoms regulator that a Homeopathic Helpline was a legitimate service to operate a premium rate (i.e., pay-per-minute) number, and he enlisted me to help answer the calls. When the owner of the pharmacy retired and closed the store soon afterwards, we were on our own. That was in the spring of 1996, 12 years ago. Since then, we have dealt with more than 165,000 calls.

There when you need us

The Homeopathic Helpline is open from 9 a.m. through midnight, 7 days a week, whether it is Christmas or Yom Kippur. It costs callers \$3 a minute (£1.50p) of which British Telecom keeps \$1 (50p). This fee has been the same since we began and is the standard premium number rate. When we answer the phone, we have to say the name of the line and the fee, and we usually say our name so the caller knows who is on duty. David does about two thirds of the time, I do one third, and occasionally we have someone else help out if we are both stuck. When the line is engaged, the caller gets a busy signal.

Typical calls last two minutes, sometimes longer. Some callers know what we are likely to ask them and are prepared; for example, they immediately tell me the

color of their child's tongue and whether the child's appetite for food or drinks has changed since they've been ill. For those callers who carry on for ten minutes or more, we gently explain the cost, but many say they do not mind. Sometimes I cut the person short, ask for their number, look up some symptoms in *MacRepertory*TM (computerized repertory program), and call them back.

When we opened the Helpline, we aimed to fill twin needs: 1) giving patients access to homeopathic help during normal waking hours so they didn't have to resort to antibiotics or stronger conventional drugs or treatments when they could not reach their normal homeopathic prescriber, and 2) providing back-up support to homeopathic professionals so they could have free time in the evenings, when on vacation, when with other patients, and so on. We began two years before the conventional medical helpline offered by the National Health Service ("NHS Direct").

We never had to advertise. Colleagues did that for us by leaving our number on their answering machines and printing it in their literature. Many homeopaths are in the habit of asking that their patients buy a family first-aid kit so the remedies will be handy when they need to call us. There are even some kits that were

designed with the Homeopathic Helpline in mind, for example, kits for pregnancy and childbirth, and for families of very young children.

Calls, calls, calls

So who calls us? Everyone calls us! While some are under the care of a homeopath, many are not. They learn of the Helpline from a friend or relative, so we may be their first contact with a homeopath.

Upper respiratory tract infections, especially in children, are the most frequent reason for calls. But we get a wide range of calls for help with accidents, burns, bruises, falls and traumas, delayed or difficult births, breech presentations, breastfeeding, circumcisions, post-natal discharges or depressions, mastitis, colic, hormonal problems of all sorts, fevers, coughs, colds, croup, measles, allergies, digestive upsets, food poisoning, diarrhea, constipation, insomnia, boils, eczema, dental pain, and abscesses. We listen to people who are depressed, suicidal, compulsive, self-harming, bereaved, anticipating an examination The list is endless.

Do-re-mi...

I have advised an opera singer who lost his voice. He was helped by *Argentum nitricum*, a remedy that is often indicated for singers and actors with stage fright and

hoarseness. (Morrison's *Desktop Guide to Keynotes and Confirmatory Symptoms* states: "Anxiety while anticipating an engagement and hoarseness especially in professional singers, speakers. Complete loss of voice.") This singer called again for advice about jetlag prevention before an international gig. I advised *Arnica* 30c every 2 hours in flight.

We have many, many calls from travelers before and after their voyages. We always advise that they do not permit their homeopathic remedies to be X-rayed. The remedies are best carried in a pocket of a garment that they are wearing or in a lead-lined film bag. On arrival at their destination after a long haul flight, if they are dizzy and feel as if

they're seasick, I suggest *Cocculus* 30c; if their sensation resembles a hangover, I recommend *Nuxvomica* 30c.



A peanut the culprit

I spoke to the wife of a man who was having an extreme allergic reaction with difficult breathing and swelling of the throat (anaphylaxis) from having eaten a peanut. I told her to call an ambulance and give him *Apis* 30c in that order. She called back to tell me he got better so fast after taking the *Apis*, that she cancelled the ambulance. *Apis* is the premier remedy in an allergic reaction where swelling of the skin or mucous membranes is prominent. Another useful remedy in anaphylaxis, but less often carried in home kits, is *Carbolic acid*. Morrison writes: "... mainly used as a specific remedy for nausea of pregnancy, it is also a deeper acting remedy which is useful in states of serious collapse. Kent describes its use in severe anaphylactic reaction to bee-sting."

Babies turning quickly

I spoke to a woman in a late stage of pregnancy with a baby facing the wrong way. Her doctor said with the baby in a breech position, she would need a caesarian section to deliver it. I prescribed *Pulsatilla* 200c and the remedy worked so fast to turn the baby that the woman called back that same evening to ask if it was safe to give some to her friend who had the same problem.

A young boy in trouble

A father called about his small son who was having intense pain in the testicles. I do not know how I knew, but I strongly suspected testicular torsion where the spermatic cord is twisted, cutting off the blood supply to the testicle. It requires surgery within about six hours if the testicle is to be saved. I told the father to grab some *Arnica* and grab his son and go to the hospital. "Don't wait for an ambulance, it would take too long," I said. I told him to give the son some *Arnica* after the operation (for healing the trauma of surgery), and take a dose himself (for the shock he would undoubtedly be experiencing). I said that if I was wrong I apologize but if I was right and the boy did not have surgery, we should all regret it. The father called me a week later, even at the premium rate, to inform me that I had been correct, the boy had needed immediate surgery, but he was fine now and recovering well.

Everyone calls...

Once when I had a kidney stone and was in extreme pain, I myself called the Helpline. David answered, called an ambulance for me, and suggested I take *Calcarea carbonica* 30c, every 15 minutes.

Appendicitis Strikes Thrice! Emergency homeopathic protocol helps three

by DAVID NEEDLEMAN, BScPharm, MRPharmS, LCH, MARH

The December holiday season is a very busy time for the Homeopathic Helpline since other homeopathic practices are closed and we are the only resource available.

One Christmas, I had lots of calls, as usual, but three stood out because they were so similar. Three different mothers phoned, each one reporting that their child was suffering pain on the lower right side of the abdomen. The pains had started around the navel and then descended and moved to the right. The children felt better when applying firm pressure to the painful area and were much worse on release of pressure. All three children felt worse from any movement.

Of course, these symptoms are classic for appendicitis. We also know from our homeopathic literature that the first-line remedy is *Bryonia*, as its indications of sharp, right-sided pain, better from pressure, and worse from

movement match the typical appendicitis symptoms. But some years ago, David Howells of the College of Practical Homeopathy informed me of research suggesting that *Lycopodium* worked better than *Bryonia* in cases of appendicitis. So in typical appendicitis cases, I now advise that a dose of *Bryonia* 30c and a dose of *Lycopodium* 30c both be given on the way to the Emergency Room and that the doses be repeated if the patient is kept waiting in the ER.

I gave this advice to these three mothers, and each one of them later called back to give feedback on what had happened to their children. Calling the Helpline just to give feedback is uncommon, but some people do call back, even at premium rates, to tell us their response to the remedies that we prescribed for them.

The first child was examined on arrival at the ER; she was pain-free and sent home with the caveat to return if



This story was reported to readers of *Homeopathy Today* in December 2003 in an article called “Getting Stoned Was Not Fun.” (NCH members can access the *HT* archives at www.nationalcenterforhomeopathy.org)

The busiest calling times on the Helpline are first thing in the morning, after school, and at dinnertime. Some days are quiet, but at Christmas or on the day before Passover, we are flooded with calls. And when there is an outbreak of measles, flu, or other contagious illness, we may be inundated with 150 calls a day. Because of the volume of calls we answer, it doesn't take us long to determine the most frequently needed remedy during such outbreaks (i.e., the *genus epidemicus*). Other homeopaths with fewer experiences treating these acute illnesses often call us at the premium rate to ask what the remedy might be for the vomiting that's going around this winter or for this summer's hay fever.

Students call us for help with their homework. And some homeopaths call to consult on difficult cases and imply we should not tell their friends that they needed our advice. Some patients call for reassurance; they think they have learned enough to deal with their sick child but require confirmation.

I said that if I was wrong I apologize but if I was right and the boy did not have surgery, we should all regret it.

We often get calls from people whose chronic physical and emotional illnesses go beyond the scope of what can be done in a short phone conversation; they need a full homeopathic consultation, so we attempt to refer them to a colleague. But some people actually prefer to use us instead of face-to-face consultations. And after such long experience on this job, we have extended the possibilities of what we can do by phone; we often manage to help these people, at least to some extent. Of course, we know the phone numbers of the main homeopathic pharmacies by heart.

Helping whole communities

We have received many calls from unexpected people. For me, the most unex-

pected and loyal devotion to homeopathy has come from the very Orthodox and Chasidic Jewish communities from North London, Manchester, and Gateshead (in North-East England). Great numbers of them call; they have very large families, children in double figures, and sometimes mothers and daughters breastfeeding their

children at the same time, as the generations are short. Mothers are exhausted and have mastitis. Childhood illnesses spread rapidly within the communities. Measles has been a problem in recent years. Stress runs high before the religious holidays. We receive calls from residential religious colleges (yeshivas) about their students' health. We know we have made a huge positive impact on the health of these communities. (See the July/August 2007 issue of *Homeopathy Today* where I wrote about my visit to a yeshiva to treat an outbreak of food poisoning.)

Of course, we receive calls from around the whole of the UK (the premium calling line only accepts calls from within the UK), but it is amusing when a caller turns

desperate moms and their children

symptoms reappeared. The mother was thrilled with the amazing turnaround in the child's condition.

The second child was also found to be pain-free on arrival at the ER but was kept in the hospital overnight for observation, and sent home the next day. The child had no further problems, the mother was happy to report.

The third child was examined on arrival and was operated on within ten minutes of being examined. This was timely, as just after the surgeons opened him up the appendix burst. The child recovered well from surgery, with the use of some additional homeopathic remedies.

In my opinion, two out of three complete reversals of appendicitis symptoms is a pretty good percentage. But when you realize that the homeopathic remedies likely delayed the perforation of the third child's appendix until he was operated on, it is even more remarkable.

There are many more interesting stories from the Homeopathic Helpline that I could relate—but that would take a book! Someday, I hope to write one!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Needleman, BScPharm, MRPharmS, LCH, MARH, qualified as a pharmacist in 1970. After many years in the field, he decided there had to be something better and eventually studied homeopathy, which changed his life. He qualified as a homeopath in 1991 and set up the Homeopathic Helpline in 1996. He is a founding director of the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths and is also involved with professional pharmacy organizations. He regularly attends the House of Commons for the Parliamentary Group on Integrated Healthcare, and runs a radio program about health.



Bringing on "Late Babies"

"We are often asked to help bring on late babies when the due date has passed and the mother still hasn't delivered. The first remedy to try is *Calcarea carbonica* 30c (for bashful babies), 1 dose each hour for 3 hours in the morning, followed at 11 p.m. by *Caulophyllum* 200c (for muscle tone), and this is followed at 11:30 p.m. by 1 dose of *Gelsemium* 200c (for slow onset of birth from anticipatory fears). I've found this very successful as the waters usually break between 3 and 4 a.m. If they don't, I advise waiting 24 hours and then repeating this protocol."

—David Needleman

out to be in the neighborhood and pops in to the consulting room in my London home to collect his remedy—and maybe even becomes a full patient. (I split my time between the Homeopathic Helpline and my regular homeopathic practice, doing both from my home.)

Teamwork

I have answered the phone in recent years using a headset or a Bluetooth device, as I was getting repetitive stress injury with my arm raised and the phone plugged to my ear. This enables me to cook, eat, change diapers, and do many things while still answering the phone.

The remedies that I tend to prescribe most frequently on the Helpline are *Belladonna*—in fevers—and *Natrum muriaticum*—in bereavements, at the end of relationships, or for depressed moods with restrained emotions. I think David tends to prescribe *Hepar sulph* more frequently—in fevers with chill or sore throats.

We hand over shifts day to day without

difficulty, however, and seem able to pick up with continuing patients without a problem. But some patients confess with embarrassment that they would prefer to wait until the other one of us is back online. We have learned so much about acute prescribing, and even without regular follow-up, we know that our distant patients are mostly doing well, as they call again when they need us, or we hear about them from the friends that they refer to us.

A gratifying experience

I know how much satisfaction I have from this work or I would not continue doing it. David and I never would have imagined 12 years ago that we'd still be happily offering this unique service to many thousands of largely unknown-to-us callers each year. Even stranger...these strangers who call us have become our friends.

The Homeopathic Helpline is a pay-per-call service that can only be reached from within the United Kingdom. The number is: 09065 343404.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Francis Treuherz, MA, RSHom, FSHom, lives in London with his wife, 2 sons, a library of 7700 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. Contact him at www.homeopathyhelpline.com or fran@gn.apc.org.

Advice from the Homeopathic Helpline

"If you are or will become a regular user of homeopathy make sure you have an appropriate kit—for families, for children, for pregnancy, for travelers, for sports—always at your home, office, or gym. Make sure you have studied a book or two. I like Dana Ullman's

Everybody's Guide to Homeopathic Medicines; Miranda Castro's *Homeopathy for Pregnancy, Birth, and Your Baby's First Year*; Gabrielle Pinto's and Murray Feldman's *Homeopathy for Children*; and Edward Shalts' *Easy Homeopathy*. Dorothy Shepherd's *Homeopathy for the First Aider* is the best book on first aid, while Thomas Kruzel

has written a good book on more serious emergencies, *The Homeopathic Emergency Guide*.

"Never leave home without some *Arnica* 30c or 200c in a protective case. I have a very small glass vial inside my mother's old needle case!" —Francis Treuherz

