

Hands on Healing to Beat the Winter Blues

The Osteopathic approach to treating common colds and flus.

Did you know 21 million people died worldwide in the influenza epidemic of 1918? Mortality rates in American allopathic (standard medical practise – drug based) hospitals during this time were 30-40%, but mortality rates at American Osteopathic hospitals were less than 1%. Why was there such a great difference? In the Osteopathic hospitals, patients were treated using gentle osteopathic techniques to help the function of the immune system, as well as the allopathic approach. This shows the efficacy of Osteopathy and the long heritage it offers in dealing with health issues.

Osteopathy can help reduce the severity of colds and flu's and decrease the need for medications. A general practitioner may suggest an influenza vaccine, which are generally based on last years virus's and doesn't necessarily help with the current strain. Anti-biotics are usually not needed as they have no effect on virus's, and if given indiscriminately can result in resistant strains of bacteria, as well as damaging the normal gut flora.

Osteopathy doesn't suppress symptoms, rather encourages the body's own natural healing capacity to function properly. This works by the practitioner skilfully helping the body to a state of balance where the lymphatic, nervous and circulatory systems can all function unhindered. For instance, the chest area is important as the thymus gland which makes immune cells to help fight infections lies under the sternum (breastbone). Also the main lymphatic channel of the body passes through the chest and enters a vein under the left clavicle. If the ribs or diaphragm are tense and breathing is restricted, it can compromise the thymus gland producing immune cells and lymphatic

flow back to the venous circulation. When the lymphatic flow is slowed the virus has more time to multiply before it is recognised by the body and an effective immune response can be mounted.

Getting sick frequently is a sign that the body's healing mechanisms are inefficient. Most of the time, it doesn't matter if there are many colds and flu's going around. If the body is healthy, it should have the capacity to ward off infections. Treatment helps decrease symptoms and supports immune system function, as well as reducing the use and need for medications.

If a baby or child has had a traumatic birth such as; a long or short labour, assisted by forceps or ventouse, or different head presentation, it can lead to poor formation of sinuses and limit venous drainage, which can make the child more prone to infections like ear and sinus infections. Osteopathy is a valid and gentle way of treating sick babies, children and adults which is cost effective and a healthier alternative to some other common methods of treatment.

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References

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