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Our experts answer your questions

Q Last summer my cat suffered badly from an irritation that caused her a great deal of discomfort resulting in her scratching herself a lot. The vet diagnosed a mild allergic reaction to harvest mites and prescribed medication which treated the symptoms. But is there a homeopathic remedy which I could administer this year to reduce her sensitivity to harvest mites in the first place? *MA, Essex*

Holly Mash replies: Summer does seem to be the time of year when our pets tend to suffer more with sore and itchy skins and this can often be a result of mild sensitivities to pollens or other seasonal allergens.

Since your vet has diagnosed a mild allergic response to a fairly normal summer parasite this is an indication that your cat's system is out of balance, or "over-reacting". As we are aware in homeopathy the body's first way of showing an imbalance within, is through symptoms in the skin, such as your cat's scratching. Therefore, in order to fully resolve the problem, and prevent recurrence this summer, it would be highly beneficial for you to consult a homeopathic veterinary surgeon who will be able to find out, through detailed case-taking, which remedies will suit the individual characteristics of your cat and thus offer treatment at a deeper and more permanent level.

Finally, don't forget the crucial role your cat's diet plays in her overall well-being, and in the condition of her skin and coat. Choosing a natural, additive-free diet is thus a key factor in helping keep her coat shiny, glossy and "itch-free".

In addition to her food, a daily supplement of either flax seed or evening primrose oil will provide the essential fatty acids (Omega 3s and 6s) to maintain a healthy skin and coat.

Q My uncle who is mid-70s has arthritis in his knees and limbs quite badly. He says he can manage as long as he doesn't walk too far. He doesn't like taking conventional medication but is sceptical about homeopathy and won't book himself a consultation. Is there anything I can suggest that might help? *SP, Bedfordshire*

Jenifer Worden replies: There are several remedies that can help with the pain of arthritis. The fact that your uncle limps with the pain suggests that he may be suffering from osteoarthritis and *Rhus tox 6c* four times daily may help. It is particularly used when the pain suffered is relieved by heat but worsened by damp and cold weather and resting. Stiffness is worse in the morning.

Bryonia 30c taken at the same frequency may be used where the pain is made worse by heat and movement and made better by cold applications, such as an ice pack.

If his joint pains flare up in cold dry weather, then try *Aconite 30c* four times daily. All remedies can be tried for up to two weeks at a time and, if effective, can be repeated. Even if your uncle will not see a doctor or medical homeopath, he may agree to seeing a physiotherapist or medical acupuncturist who could advise regarding a more formal diagnosis as well as offering treatment for his pain symptoms.

Q I have rosacea and the prescribed medication I was given by my GP seemed to make it worse. I've stopped taking anything now and my face looks a little calmer but is there a homeopathic remedy which would help? *IR, London*

Keith Souter replies: The skin is not easy to treat and my favoured option is generally to try to pin down a constitutional remedy. The reason is that one wants to treat this from within outwards, rather than simply targeting the skin. Having said that, if you use low potency remedies then you may well be able to bring about improvement, provided you match the remedy to the pattern of rosacea.

Calc silicata is a good remedy to use when in addition to the generalised redness there is a tendency to produce small pimples. It is particularly useful if you are chilly and tend towards constipation.

Arnica does not always come to people's mind, yet it often works wonders with this condition because it is so useful at helping blood vessels. Think of this if you tend to get aching pains or a bruised feeling.

Lachesis is useful if there is a bluish or purplish appearance to the rosacea, especially if you get a bloated feeling and tend to be a chatterbox.

Causticum is another great remedy with rosacea, especially if it tends to produce problems around the nose. Those who tend to benefit most from this remedy are sympathetic people.

And finally, *Sulphur* must never be forgotten. There is always something a little unkempt in people who need this remedy and they tend to be philosophical by nature.