

## Jan de Vries



**WHEN TREATING migraines it's crucial to identify what's causing the problem before giving treatment.**

This is particularly important for psychosomatic migraines. In this case you're dealing with physical symptoms caused by a psychological problem and patience, understanding and trust between patient and practitioner are essential to make this diagnosis.

A good understanding and effective relationship between practitioner and patient takes time to develop, so this problem isn't always identified immediately. You also need time to investigate the patient's personality, character and background.

If this isn't done and their condition doesn't improve, due to misdiagnosis, whatever trust had developed is easily eroded.

The patient may then look for treatment elsewhere and an endless process could begin, where the real problem is never uncovered because the patient doesn't stay with one doctor long enough.

I was fortunate at the beginning of my career to be taught by the best in their field — Dr Alfred Vogel and Dr Benthum-Oosterhuis among others. When taking my first steps in the field of natural medicine, if I was ever puzzled I could always rely on one of my

teachers, who had long years of experience. One of these practitioners taught me a lesson in the field of diagnosis that I've never forgotten.

A friend of our family — a very organised person, married to a headmaster and mother of two teenage children — was suffering terrible migraines. Besides running the family she did voluntary work and helped organise various committees.

I was struggling to find a cure so I asked this practitioner to help me. After spending an hour with her, he asked me how well I knew her. I told him she had long been a friend of the family, had a happy family life and her children were doing well. I filled him in on some general background info, which wasn't much when I thought about it.

# Treat the cause to cure the symptoms

Then he told me there were no signs of physical irregularity to account for her migraines and that he was sure her attacks were psychosomatic.

Having found she could talk freely with my more experienced and mature colleague, she had opened up to him with details which suggested her migraines were related to her emotional state. She took his advice on coping with her attacks and was eventually cured with the help of homoeopathic remedies.

This case shows that if the migraine had been treated conventionally — with drugs — she would never have got rid of them because the cause would have remained undetected. In fact the frustration she suffered would have probably increased and the situation might have grown worse.

On the other hand I remember a young man who had been treated as a psychosomatic migraine patient. When I studied his case I suspected he had been wrongly diagnosed. He was an

extremely complex character and in every discussion we had he would further confuse the issue by adding new emotional problems.

I could readily see why this diagnosis was reached but I then discovered that the trapezius muscle (in the upper back and neck) would swell up at certain times during the day and his neck would become very painful. Then a sickly feeling would follow, which eventually led to a migraine headache. It would have been easy to prescribe treatment for his neck problems, but I had to find out why the swelling was happening.

What really intrigued me was that gases had built up in his stomach and he also complained of biliousness. Eventually tests revealed a peptic ulcer and after the ulcer was treated both his neck pain and migraines disappeared.

This was an excellent example of why symptoms should not be treated alone. The cause has to be unearthed and treated to ensure the symptoms go for

good. It also shows only a correct diagnosis can result in a cure.

Migraines are more prevalent in women than in men but there's no clear answer as to why this is. Many things can lead to psychosomatic migraines, such as jealousy, grief or dissatisfaction at work. We have to trace it back to its beginnings in order to devise a suitable treatment programme.

If you do suffer from migraines don't just give in to them. Be positive, seek help and get the correct diagnosis.

● Jan will try to answer all your health queries personally. **Just send your letters with an SAE to Jan de Vries, The Sunday Post, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ. You can phone Jan's helpline on 01292 318846 from 9 am - 4.30 pm Mon - Fri or email him at info@jandevrieshealth.co.uk**

## the doc replies

# How can she treat a cold when pregnant?

**I'M four months pregnant and worried about catching a cold. If I do get ill can I use the usual over-the-counter medicines?**

Over-the-counter remedies are best avoided when you're pregnant as they may contain products not recommended at this time. You should definitely steer clear of decongestants and anti-inflammatories. The best defence against a cold is to eat a healthy diet and avoid contact with people who have a virus. If you do fall ill paracetamol is safe.

**WHAT COULD be causing the shooting pain at the back of my left ear?**

This sounds like a neuralgic pain but it's worth seeing your doc to check there's no problem within the ear itself.

**SINCE I had my gall bladder removed I've had terrible wind. Could it be related?**

It's difficult to say if these are related, but bowel patterns can often change after abdominal surgery. Peppermint oil can help to relieve symptoms.

**I HAVE stitches on my leg. Can I have a bath or shower or should I keep them dry?**

It's best to keep them dry until the healing process is well on its way and then you can get them wet. Showering is preferable so the stitches don't get too soaked. They're usually removed after a week.

**DO YOU have a problem you would like The Doc to answer? Send brief details to The Doc Replies, 144 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HZ. Please do not include an SAE as the Doc cannot send personal replies.**

**HOW OFTEN should I check for breast cancer? I'm in my early 20s.**

It's rare for someone your age to get breast cancer. Unless you have a family history of the disease you needn't worry too much. There actually isn't much evidence of how useful manual checking is and mammography and ultrasound are much better. These are offered to women over 50 because breast cancer is more common in older women.

**I HAVE a really sore mouth and my doc recently prescribed Fungilin lozenges, which just seem to make it worse. I don't know what to try next, someone suggested vitamin B complex.**

There are a variety of causes for a sore mouth. These lozenges are prescribed for fungal infections such as thrush, but it may be caused by anaemia or vitamin deficiencies. Your doc or practice nurse could do routine blood tests to make sure there's no underlying cause.

**CAN YOGA improve your health?**

Yoga gives a general sense of wellbeing and can improve suppleness of joints and your strength. It's very good for relaxation and unless you have serious spinal problems it can only benefit you.

**MY DAUGHTER and her two children have asthma but are also allergic to eggs. Does this mean they can't have the flu jab?**

If you have a true allergy to eggs you can't have the influenza vaccine.

**I GET cramps in my stomach. The docs don't know what's causing it and I'm afraid to go for more tests, as the last ones were painful. I read manuka honey is good for getting rid of ulcers.**

Manuka honey is a natural antibacterial remedy. A bug called helicobacter pylori may be causing your gastric symptoms and manuka can help eradicate this. It's completely natural and shouldn't do you any harm (unless you're diabetic, as it has a high sugar content) so it's worth a try. However, if your symptoms persist you must go back to your doc.

**MY WIFE passed away recently and the cause of death on the certificate is endometrial adenocarcinoma with ovarian metastasis and cerebrovascular accident. What does this mean?**

Endometrial carcinoma is the name given to a cancer affecting the lining of the womb and in your wife's case it sounds as though it had spread to the ovaries. Cerebrovascular accident is another term for a stroke.

**WHAT FOODS should I eat when exercising a lot?**

Whatever amount of exercise you do you should always eat a healthy, balanced diet. Carbohydrates, especially pasta, are particularly good as they provide a slow release of energy to improve stamina. It's also important to stay hydrated.

**I'VE SUFFERED for years with a bloated feeling that has gradually got worse. Now I can't stand up straight and need a stick and Zimmer to get on my feet. I can only eat small amounts and then have to rest, as it's painful. Doc can't figure out what's wrong.**

It sounds like the problem might actually be with your spine rather than your stomach and this is making you a little mis-shapen. If you have stomach symptoms apart from bloating such as nausea, weight loss or change in bowel pattern then you need to have your bowel investigated.

**I'M ON medication for an enlarged prostate and my urine now has an unpleasant smell. Could the tablets cause this?**

You may have developed a urinary tract infection. This is more common in people with prostate problems as the bladder may not empty fully and the urine can become infected. Your practice nurse can check a specimen for infection and a course of antibiotics should fix it.

## health checks

● **STAY IN** good health during the festive season by boosting your energy levels and immune system.

Emergen-C are little sachets of vitamin goodness that give you an energy boost when you're struggling and also ward off illnesses which can strike when you're run down.

Emergen-C costs £14.99 for 36 sachets and is available from Revital health stores nationwide, via mail order on 0800 252 875 or online at [www.revital.co.uk](http://www.revital.co.uk)



● **IF YOU** catch a cold don't let it ruin your Christmas celebrations — two new Lemsip flavours will set you on the road to recovery.

Lemsip Max All In One is a maximum strength hot drink that provides effective relief from all the symptoms of cold and flu, and it now comes in Wild Berry And Hot Orange and Breathe Easy.



Just like other Lemsip drinks these new flavours start to work in just five minutes. Wild Berry And Hot Orange offers cold and flu sufferers a soothing and comforting hot drink while Breathe Easy has a refreshing menthol flavour.

Lemsip Max All In One is available from pharmacies and supermarkets. Priced from £4.99 for 10 sachets, it's now also available in a new maximum strength liquid form.

● **YOUR SKIN** can seriously suffer in the cold winter months so invest in a good moisturiser.

Essential woman with frangipani from Live Native is a top quality, super absorbent skin cream for body and face.

The essential oil of frangipani gives a feminine and exotic aroma. The cream also contains rose oil for its relaxing and therapeutic properties.



Essential Woman is rich in nature's best moisturising agents to leave your skin revitalised, beautifully nourished and soft without feeling clogged and oily.

Men often neglect their skin, so get them Live Native's Head To Toe.

Head to Toe for men is a spicy, aromatic multi-purpose balm for all-over daily moisturising after bathing, working out in the gym, swimming or sunbathing.

Live Native skin products are available from [www.livenative.co.uk](http://www.livenative.co.uk) and by mail order on 01470 521504.