

## THE CAUSE AND CURE OF CATARRH

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Various tissues of the body contain cells which have the function of secreting mucus. The purpose of this secretion is generally protective and it continues normally throughout life. It is only when the secretion becomes excessive that it qualifies to be diagnosed as catarrh

The respiratory system and the digestive tract with its appendages are the principal sites of mucus secreting cells, but these are also present in the urinary bladder and in the vagina, and consequently a person may evidence catarrh in any of these parts.

While catarrh is generally a manifestation of an abnormally active protective mechanism it may also serve the purpose of elimination. As a protective mechanism it will be called into action by dust in the air we breathe, by chemical irritation of poisonous gases, such as the various chemical impurities in the air of the industrial areas, the exhaust gases of combustion engines and so forth, by smoking, especially inhaling. It may, on occasion, be prompted by rapid changes of temperature and humidity. Mucus arises from the irritant effects of bacterial poisons in conditions such as the common cold, sinus infections, bronchial infections, infections of the gall or urinary bladder, and of the intestine, especially the colon.

The stomach is rich in cells which I believe maintain a protective layer of mucus over its lining, which is physiological in character, but which, in conditions of inflammation and hyperacidity may show considerable increase.

Certain mineral substances provoke catarrh states as part of an eliminatory process. This is made use of by the inclusion of iodides in cough mixtures, but will also be found when bromides and many other substances are ingested. The free use of common salt also provokes catarrh, as does the excessive intake of certain articles of diet - the two most usual being refined sugar and sweetened starchy foods - especially when white flour and sugar are combined and also in the free consumption of milk and milky foods. A sweet rice pudding is an ideal provoker of catarrh.

While Milk sugar is probably the main offender, the excessive consumption of milk proteins is probably a contributory factor and this also applies to partaking of much cheese.

Alcoholic beverages contribute not a little to catarrh, but even the repeated intake of very hot fluids and foods may upset an irritation resulting in catarrh.

Allergy will also manifest itself as catarrh. This occurs when proteins, which are normally acceptable, become unacceptable and act like poisons. Apart from the irritant reaction to specific pollens in hay fever, many ordinary foods may become allergenic, of which the commonest are milk, eggs and fish.

**When catarrh has persisted over many years the mucus cells may increase to the point of maintaining an excessive secretion even when the provocative factor has been removed.** The chronic bronchitic and old people with running eyes and noses are example of this. Drastic measures such as fasting and fruit diets repeated from time to time may be necessary before much amelioration occurs. Much less frequent, at the

opposite extreme, when mucus cells undergo atrophy there is deficient secretion of mucus.

Catarrh may be of varying degrees of acuteness. In acute infections it partakes of a purulent nature - i.e., mucus and pus are mixed together, and when the acute stage has subsided non-purulent mucus discharge may persist. It is obvious that nearly all the causes are remediable, though to escape from the contaminated atmosphere of towns and cities may be difficult. Most people with respiratory catarrh are benefited by mountain or sea air.

I believe it is probable that in the absence of adequate sunshine that the body may find the complete assimilation of carbohydrates (sugar starches) more difficult and so exposure of the body to sun light is beneficial in such cases, both to the general health and to catarrh manifestations.

The proper utilization of starch needs a balancing adequacy of some of the vitamin B factors that is why white flour products are more conducive to catarrh than whole wheat, which has high vitamin B complex content. The utilization of starch is also I believe bound up with thyroid function, and persons with active thyroid glands can deal with a higher carbohydrate intake than those with less active glands.

The treatment of acute catarrh conditions is fasting on fruit juices, but these have to be chosen according to the location of the trouble.

Generally speaking, citrus fruits are most suitable for respiratory infections, - oranges, grape fruit, lemon, but these must be used with discrimination, and an average daily quantity for adults would be the juice of three pounds of the two former, plus that of two moderate size lemons; on the other hand some stomachs are rather more choosy and may resent the intake of much acid fruits, so apple or grape juice may be preferable - oranges must be really ripe to use.

Throat catarrh responds well to pine apple juice. In really acute ear infections water only or very weak lemon water. In acute or chronic gall bladder conditions oranges should be avoided. In kidney or bladder infections (pyelitis and cystitis) vegetable broth and raw vegetable juices, barley water, and barley water with lemon peel are more suitable since citrus fruits often increase bladder irritability. In acute colitis there is often an allergic factor and one type of fluid or juice is not applicable to all cases. Some do best on apple juice (this may be the bottled variety), others do better on plain barley water or pure slipper elm. Again, yet others respond best to sour milk, others to raw carrot juice.

The build up from a fasting diet is usually in the direction of fruit salad and vegetables, the latter in the form of smooth soups for colitis. Onions and garlic are both helpful in respiratory conditions and can usually be taken freely benefit. Onions, garlic and lemon appear to help loosen catarrh and make it easier to get rid of.

In the more chronic conditions preliminary three day fruit juices or raw vegetable broth fasts are a great help, and the subsequent diet may have to be considerably restricted for some weeks or months. As mentioned before, sugar (even unrefined), unbalanced starches, milky foods and much protein, especially dairy proteins, need to be restricted so that bread stuffs and other cereal foods and potatoes can be reduced to a very low level such as flour, six or eight ounces a day in all. Potatoes, containing as they do about 80% of water, as compared with about 40% in whole meal bread,

can be consumed more freely than the latter, and sometimes the substitution of whole potatoes for other starchy foods in the diet is very beneficial, especially as whole potatoes are also more alkaline than bread.

It is necessary to differentiate between curative diets and maintenance diets, the former being quite often below maintenance level, though a maintenance diet can, by altering the proportions of its ingredients, still be curative.

As a rough guide, catarrh diets should consist of a fresh fruit meal (dried fruits by reason of their high sugar content may not be advisable), a vegetable and protein meal, a starch and a salad meal each daily. Fluid intake should not be high though in pyelitis and cystitis a free fluid intake is beneficial, say three or four or even more pints a day.

Apart from the dietetic measures various forms of baths and packs are often of great help, whether by stimulating elimination or as a general tonic. Natural or artificial sunbaths do good. Breathing exercises are of course recommended in respiratory conditions.

In the more chronic conditions afflicting the young and the other wise robust, short regular spells of various exercises are often very helpful. The combination of surf bathing followed by a sunbath is a splendid measure alas only too infrequently available in this country.

Catarrh is a complaint that is not amenable to medication but very responsive to the measures outlined here, and though sedentary city dwellers may, especially is so inclined constitutionally, find difficulty in getting rid of it completely it can certainly be greatly mitigated.

One of the commonest forms of catarrh is associated with smoking, the remedy is obvious if more easily indicated than applied, but most nature cure methods involve self-denial and self-control, at least, the initiatory period, and unless the sufferer is prepared to forego some of his/her pleasures or bad habits, it is useless to promise much.

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