Bearer of Light—
Homeopathic Phosphorus

by Peggy Sawyer

Phosphorus, the 13th element of the periodic table, is a volatile, unstable, combustible substance, known for being reactive, bursting into flame and leaving only ash. It is thus associated with fire, the animating force, and one of the four basic elements, along with earth, water and air. In Greek, phosphorus means “bearer of light.”

Abundant in the human body, phosphorus is a major ingredient of not only bones and teeth, but also the human brain. Phosphorus facilitates permeability of cell membranes, helping nutrients pass in and out of cells. As one of the five elements of DNA, it is a building block for our genes, basic to life itself.

In the metabolism of the body, phosphorus mediates energy. As a component of adenosine triphosphate, or ATP, which transforms glucose to glycogen for energy storage, phosphorus is essential to maintaining consistent blood sugar levels. When the body needs additional energy, ATP releases a phosphate to become adenosine diphosphate, ADP. Phosphorus allows energy to be stored and released when required, rather than burned immediately resulting in burnout and depletion. These functions, in addition to its volatility, are significant in the constitutional picture of homeopathic phosphorus.

A person whose constitutional remedy is phosphorus tends to be a vivacious, animated extrovert who makes strong connections with others. She is a sensitive, affectionate and sympathetic friend, extremely open to impressions from her surroundings. While enjoying her strong, intuitive connections with others, she can become too enmeshed and overextended, leading to energy depletion and withdrawal. Personally sensitive, she craves love, sympathy and affection from others and can have ailments resulting from disappointed love and silent grief. In other words, she is a fiery person who gets out of balance from allowing an unmediated flow of energy out to others and into herself from her environment.

A phosphorus person is usually chilly, while desiring fresh air. She is very thirsty, wanting ice water or cold carbonated water, and may also crave chocolate, ice cream, salt and spicy foods. Lying on her left side or back makes her feel worse. She feels better after a massage or a good sleep.

Phosphorus is a major remedy to consider for profuse, painless, bright red uterine bleeding during threatened miscarriage, labor or postpartum. It can help painful, spasmodic, yet ineffectual labor contractions turn into an optimal labor pattern, has brought on contractions to birth a retained placenta and has relieved painful postpartum contractions. Phosphorus can also remedy morning sickness, diarrhea in pregnancy, toxemia, mastitis and septic fever when the person fits the remedy picture.

Dramatic stories of a dramatic remedy

A woman who came for an interview had a history of three recent miscarriages. All of her pregnancy losses began with bright red, painless bleeding. Eight weeks pregnant now and very much wanting this child, she had been told that three 6–8-week miscarriages made her very high risk for another. Notably, she sipped iced water during the entire interview, pausing several times to refill her glass.

No more were we finished with our discussion, but she called to report profuse, painless bleeding. As she seemed constitutionally phosphorus, she took LMI immediately, and the bleeding subsided and then stopped.

She remained on phosphorus LMI until her next bright red bleeding episode at twelve weeks, when she switched to LMII with good results.

With more major bleeding at seventeen weeks, she moved on to taking LMIII. Although the remedy seemed to be working, we decided to have an ultrasound, which found a healthy baby, a fundal placenta and no observable reason for all this bleeding. She stayed on phosphorus LMIII and had a beautiful homebirth at term.

Another pregnant woman had been told of a large fibroid in her uterus several years after the birth of her first baby. She very much wanted a peaceful homebirth after a hospital birth filled with interventions, yet she was also afraid of seriously hemorrhaging at home as she had in the hospital. Having personally seen all of the herbs, homeopathics, pitocin and methergine given at home not stop a postpartum hemorrhage due to fibroids, I could vividly picture the concern. We decided to work together to find her best options.

We discussed that she might actually be less hemorrhage-prone at home following her own instincts and the physiology of normal labor. I took on researching homeopathics.

There are many homeopathic remedies for various types of hemorrhage. As a
midwife, at that point in my exploration of homeopathy, I had mostly studied remedies for the general needs of pregnancy, birth and postpartum. Research into the specifics of bleeding fibroids indicated a remedy that also fit her constitution and postpartum bleeding—phosphorus. Feeling there is no time like the present for prevention, she began taking phosphorus LMI.

Her birth was beautiful, in the water, by candlelight. Then there was an abnormal gush of blood and she took phosphorus LMI. Getting out of the tub there was a lot of bleeding. Looking at the tub plus what we had on pads, it was new close to two cups and still coming. Our agreement was that we would try the higher potency remedy while continuing as much as possible with normal postpartum activities such as breastfeeding and then assess the need for allopathic drugs and/or transport. She took phosphorus LMI and birthed her placenta, and the bleeding almost completely stopped. After a second dose she had a normal postpartum, tucked into bed, nursing her baby. I stayed at her house while she and her family had their postbirth sleep in the family bed and there was no more bleeding. Technically she hemorrhaged, but just barely.

In another case, after a perfectly normal birth, the baby needed resuscitation. When he began breathing, he continued loud, rapid, rattly gasping, complete with retractions. While giving the baby oxygen, we gave him homeopathic antimonium tartaricum, a specific remedy for rattling breath, which showed no result. Then we took his temperature. It was 102°F. As we got him bundled up for transport to the hospital, I took his temp again with another thermometer. It was the same. It seemed that somehow, in a homebirth, with ruptured membranes for three hours, two vaginal exams and a mother with no fever, this baby was septic.

In our area, transport to the NICU provides treatment the baby may well need but limited parental visiting hours and support for breast pumping only, not breastfeeding. I was dismayed that this family’s birth would culminate in a hospital stay and separation from their baby. Racking my tired brain for something that would ease this baby’s medical odyssey, I thought of phosphorus, a remedy for both rattling, gasping breath and septic fever. We gave it to him as we went out the door.

On the way to the hospital, I felt the baby’s strong presence in my lap. His breathing, still aided with blow-by oxygen, seemed to deepen and calm. I shared this observation with his mother, who was touching and talking to her baby as she sat next to me in the car. Amazingly, she had spontaneously birthed her placenta during the resuscitation and was able to be with her baby on his journey.

Going into the hospital, I was heartened that the baby’s breathing seemed easier. The admitting doctor made a joke about our bringing her such a great-looking baby. I thought, “You just wait until you take his temp.” When they did, they found it completely normal! I had to admit the baby looked fine. We waited for a few more tests and then, much to my amazement, we were told the baby seemed fine and probably had had a rough start. Rough start indeed! When I reminded the doctor that this child had had transient tachypnea and a fever, she gave me a condescending look she might reserve for those who cannot read a thermometer or count.

We went home with mixed feelings, thrilled that the baby appeared healthy and wondering what the future would bring. I stayed with this baby many hours and continued to give phosphorus for the next few days. We never saw a recurrence and decided that our experience together was a blessing.

So, looking back on these births, was it the homeopathic remedy that made the difference? I have asked myself this question many times. After all, in life there are many variables, and situations can resolve spontaneously. However, each of these resolutions seemed an out-of-the-ordinary occurrence. Furthermore, experience over time has revealed a clear link between homeopathy and healing.

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Editor's Note: We are all saddened by Peggy's sudden death at 50 from an aneurysm last December. She was active in the midwifery community, working on many different projects. Among these was a deep study of homeopathy, which she was sharing with all of us through her articles. This will be Peggy's last homeopathic article.