

UNDERSTANDING LOBELIA

Dr. Christopher said that Lobelia is one of the greatest herbs in the world. It is certainly one of the most disputed herbs in the world, yet those who use it consider it to be indispensable in their herbal repertoire, acting as a “thinking” agent which goes to whatever part of the body is ailing and treats it, often in conjunction with other herbs.

Dr. Christopher considered that Lobelia would help correct the entire bodily system, as it is easily diffused and utilized. Its greatest aspect is **that it removes obstructions and congestion within the body**, especially the blood vessels. Over his years of practice, Dr. Christopher administered Lobelia many times, and there were numerous miraculous healings. Time after time, Lobelia helped all, from the very young to the very old, with only positive results.

Not a Poison

As for Lobelia being a poison, Dr. Christopher considered this one of the most ridiculous falsehoods ever foisted upon the public by orthodox allopath's. Dr. Christopher himself quickly swallowed as much as four tablespoons of honey-sweetened tincture of Lobelia at one time, mistaking it for apple cider vinegar. After vomiting profusely, he felt nothing but improvement, and suffered no damage whatever; only a good cleaning out!

Lobelia is a Selective Herb

Dr. Christopher said that Lobelia is a selective herb. Lobelia will cause a dead or extremely weakened fetus to abort, for example, but if the fetus is strong and healthy, it will cause the mother to strengthen and allow her to carry the child until the proper time of delivery. Lobelia selects which way it should go. It acts in this way in many instances.

Example

Dr. Christopher made up a simple but extremely effective formula for glands, of three parts mullein and one part Lobelia, to be taken as tea, in capsules, or to be used as a fomentation. This is used anywhere in the body that the glands are swollen and malfunctioning. Dr. Christopher liked to relate the cases of two small boys suffering from an enlarged gland on the side of the neck behind the ear. A nurse had called him in desperation to ask his advice on the first case. Usually the medical practice for this malady, besides antibiotics, which are usually ineffective, is just to wait for the child to grow out of it. The nurse accepted Dr. Christopher's advice to use the mullein and

Lobelia fomentation. She asked, “Which way is the toxic accumulation going to come out of the body? Will it come out directly through the skin like a bursting boil or will it be routed through the bloodstream and be taken out through the bowel?” Dr. Christopher replied that he did not know; that it would be “decided” by the Lobelia. If the bloodstream cannot handle the poison, it will be taken out through the skin; otherwise, the bloodstream will carry it out to be eliminated.

The second little boy had a similar swelling behind his ear. His mother called Dr. Christopher and asked him what to do; he gave exactly the same advice, the mullein and Lobelia fomentation. She applied the fomentation as described.

In the first case, the poison gathered up and burst, and it drained out straight through the neck. The boy cleared up and suffered no more from the problem. In the second case, the poison was absorbed by the body and the toxic material eliminated through the bowel.

Another Example

In another case, this formula was applied as a fomentation to a small boy who had been playing by a trailer. It flipped up and split his scrotum so badly that the family doctor felt that the only solution would be castration. The fomentation was applied and the damage repaired; the boy grew up normal.

We have applied this fomentation to a young boy whose glands became so swollen that he had huge lumps at the back of his neck as well as almond-shaped lumps behind his ears. This had become such a chronic condition that we had little hope of improvement. We applied it to him last thing at night and in the morning, when he awoke, the swelling was absolutely and completely gone. We were so amazed that we decided that we must have this combination in the house at all times!

The Case of Lockjaw

Dr. Christopher was once called out on a case where an old man had a terrible case of lockjaw. The Doctor poured a small amount of the tincture into his mouth through his clenched teeth and within minutes he opened his jaws and was able to thank the Lord for relief. Lobelia solved the effect; when the man could speak, he described working out

on his farm, where he stepped on a rusty spike left out in the field by someone years ago. It had penetrated through his boot and now blood poisoning had set in. Dr. Christopher then went to work on this cause. He used plantain ointment to draw out the poison, and other herbs to cleanse the bowel and the bloodstream of the poison.

Clear Asthma

Dr. Christopher used the tincture of Lobelia to clear people of asthma, although they had it many years. A couple of young fellows brought an old, old man into the Doctor at about two o'clock one morning in Evanston, Wyoming. The old man had asthma for 26 years. For 20 years of the 26, he had never been able to work. He had not lain in a bed for 20 years. They had to build a special chair so he could sit up at night with his feet stretched out. He had a doctor at the home an average of once a week, either to give him some drug orally to keep him alive, to give a shot, or to administer oxygen. Since the family couldn't locate the doctor that night, they came in desperation to Dr. Christopher.

Since the Doctor did not want a naturopathic physician in town, most people had never heard of such a thing. The young fellows asked, "Do you treat human beings?" The Doctor said yes and to bring him in.

As the man sat down, the Doctor gave him a cup of elder leaf tea to drink gradually. He told him how he had suffered from the asthma. He had been quite independent, but lately they had had to mortgage their home in order to go on with the doctoring. After he had sipped the elderberry tea for about ten minutes, the Doctor gave him a teaspoonful of the tincture of Lobelia.

He waited ten minutes—being sure to be very accurate about this—and gave him a second teaspoonful of the tincture. After another ten minutes he gave him the third.

In 40 years of practice, the Doctor commented, he never had to use the tincture of Lobelia more than three teaspoons full to a patient. He explained that this was so because each time he was called it was at a crisis, at the climax of the disease, the right time for clearing the disease.

They just sat around and chatted. The Doctor had buckets and pans around and, all of a sudden, the man started to heave. This was a little after two o'clock in the morning and he heaved on until five o'clock, for three full hours. At the finish it was dry heaves, but

he brought up everything he had eaten for days, plus nearly a cup of phlegm and pus from his lungs and bronchi from yellow to green. After he was done, the Doctor told his son to take him home. “Should I bring him back tomorrow,” he asked. “No,” answered the Doctor, “It’s a do-it-yourself-kit; it’s all finished.”

They took him in and started to walk him to his chair, but the man said, “No, boys, I’m sleeping in the bed tonight.” But, Dad, it’ll kill you!” they pleaded. “No, I’m the boss—take me to bed.” They were afraid to stretch him out in case he should choke up and die.

This was at five o’clock in the morning. He slept through until five o’clock the next morning—which is 24 hours—then slept on past noon—30 hours he slept!

When he woke up, for the first time in over 20 years he took a deep breath of air. He could take it without choking or coughing, and he said, “I’m healed.” The boys were quite pleased about this.

Twenty years later, one of them touched Dr. Christopher on the shoulder in Salt Lake City. He said, “My name’s Workman; remember me?” Dr. Christopher said, “No.” “We brought our pap into you in Evanston, Wyoming at two o’clock one morning. The Doctor then remembered him. He asked, “What happened to your dad?” The young man answered, “He never had an asthma attack from that day to this, and he went to work as a gardener and never missed a day’s work since that time. The family thanks you very much.”

Dr. Christopher reiterated that his program will only work if a person is at a crisis, at a climax, where they think they are going to die in a few minutes. If a person has a slight asthmatic condition, this would not do them any good.

Anti-Miscarriage Formula

Lobelia is also an important herb in the anti-miscarriage formula. It will do such wonders as seal up a tear in the bag of waters in an instance of a threatened miscarriage. It will also help to expel, without complication, a fetus that is already dead. One lady who was about five-and-one-half months along in her pregnancy began to show signs of bleeding, as if a miscarriage was about to occur. Some women who were assisting her gave her one-half cup of the tea every half hour, while the pregnant woman remained in bed. The woman noticed that the bleeding had not subsided after several hours, so they packed her off to the hospital. No sooner had she arrived in the emergency room and

was about to be examined by the doctor, when she expelled a fetus that had been dead for several weeks, unbeknown to her. The doctor was amazed, and questioned the attendants about the events leading to this spontaneous abortion. The woman told him about the false unicorn and Lobelia formula. The doctor commented, "Never in all my years of practice have I seen a dead fetus evacuated from the womb in such a clean manner. Usually we have to surgically remove particles of the placenta which adhere to the uterine walls. The herbs you have used are miraculous. I wish I could use them in my practice—but my hands are tied."

HERB OF MANY USES

Most people agree that Lobelia is a specific treatment for asthma, as well as other bronchial or spasmodic troubles. Because the herb removes obstructions, giving it when an attack comes on will often cause vomiting; matter will accumulate in the stomach which will cause obstructions. When the person vomits, it removes the intestinal blockage and often removes the mucus accumulations in the bronchial system as well. Dr. Nowell told the story of a woman who at 40 years old was pregnant with her first baby. She was suffering terribly with asthmatic spasms, unable to lie in bed, fighting for breath; both she and her husband begged their doctor to stop the cough. They were told that nothing could be done until the child was born.

Dr. Nowell gave them a bottle of tincture of Lobelia, telling her to take a teaspoonful whenever the coughing began. The next morning, the patient told the Doctor that almost immediately after taking the first dose, the patient brought up long, thick masses of phlegm from the lungs the size of a man's fist. No further dose was taken and the patient never had a trace of any chest trouble since and lived a long and fruitful life.

Superior Antispasmodic

Lobelia is in this regard and in other conditions a superior antispasmodic, which is an herb to stop spasms and pains related to spasms. It relaxes the system powerfully, although cayenne should be taken with it to lengthen the duration of the herb's effect. For baby convulsions, place a drop or two of the tincture on the tip of a clean finger and place it in the baby's mouth. This should stop the spasms immediately. The antispasmodic tincture, which combines equal parts of Lobelia, scullcap, skunk cabbage, gum myrrh, black cohosh, and a half part of cayenne, is even more effective. This is also used by the teaspoonful in sweetened warm water for painful spasms of any kind in the

body. It should relieve attacks of epilepsy, lockjaw, delirium tremens, fainting, hysteria, suspended animation, etc.

The relaxant or releasing quality of Lobelia is related in a case handled by an associate, Richard Schultz M.H., N.D., when a three-year-old child was brought to him, after receiving no help from medical doctors. The little girl was swollen so badly with edema that a person could not see her eyes through the puffiness. Schultz administered previously successful herbal diuretics to no avail. Knowing that she must release these fluids, he administered Lobelia seed tea, one teaspoon three times per day, which gave some immediate pain relief and reduced the swelling gradually, clearing the condition completely within two weeks.

Lobelia is said to be an excellent remedy (and preventative) for infectious diseases. Since most fevers result from obstruction in some part of the system—usually the digestive tract, we have found Lobelia “locates” and removes the obstruction. We have seen this happen many times with the children; they begin to sicken, and you can tell there is something congesting their system. By removing the congestion, you remove the cause of the illness. Lobelia can be used as an enema to remove congestion from the body via the colon. When Lobelia causes vomiting, Malstrom claims, it usually signals a cleansing process in the body expelling debris that cannot be expelled in any other way (Malstrom:94). He considers it an effective remedy in scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, mumps, and other contagious diseases. It gives almost immediate relief from suffocating mucus and phlegm that has accumulated in the respiratory tract and which is often associated with these diseases (Rose:Herbs:77). In connection with infectious diseases, Dr. Christopher told a story about one of the most contagious of them all—mononucleosis. A woman, an elderly student of Dr. Christopher’s, was in contact with the disease with the employees she worked with at a nursery hothouse. Since all of them had been using the company drinking fountain, all of them were exposed to the disease, and there was almost a complete turnover in employees because of it. The lady tried to locate Dr. Christopher to ask what she should take to prevent getting the disease, but he was away lecturing. She took a bottle of the tincture to work with her, and took two drops in a teaspoonful of distilled water every 15 or 20 minutes. Out of all the employees, she was the only one who did not get mononucleosis! Dr. Christopher thought that she might have needed to drink a teaspoonful every so often, as he thought more might be needed to do the job!

Often a person who has a fever coming on will take the teaspoonful of tincture of Lobelia with a glass of water. After vomiting, the fever breaks and the person is able to go about his regular duties. Dr. Christopher said that Lobelia is an anti-infection herb as well as a relaxant.

Important in the Relief of Pain

It is also very important in the relief of pain. **However, we must stress here that the pain should be of an acute nature and not simply a minor irritation.** We feel that there are other herbs of a less potent nature, such as Catnip, which will alleviate pain without requiring the skillful and knowledgeable use that Lobelia does. However, in accidents Lobelia can help immediately. Once a student of Dr. Christopher's smashed his finger with a hammer. He immersed the injury in tincture of Lobelia and the pain subsided in seconds. Terrific pain from muscle over-exertion has been abated by massaging Lobelia into the affected muscles. People writhing in pain and rolling on the floor have been immediately calmed with the administering of one-half teaspoonful of tincture of Lobelia. When there is acute swelling, such as with bolls or inflammation, an external rub of the tincture or a poultice of the bruised herb mixed with flaxseed or bran, suitably moistened, will relieve the pain.

However, used as a sedative, Lobelia depresses the spinal cord function excessively.

Lobelia seems to have been a specific for poisoning from various reasons.

It is used in cases of hydrophobia, where a mad animal bites a human (we suppose that it could be used for animals who have been bitten as well). Give the tincture by the teaspoonful, give the tea as an enema, and rub the tincture over the bitten part. Emesis may result as the poison is eliminated from the body, but the rabies should cause no harm. For tetanus, follow the same procedure. In fact, when any poison is ingested, if you feel that the care of a doctor is not required but you would like to administer something to remove the poison, Lobelia is the answer.

There are various other uses for Lobelia.

1. For pleurisy, you can give Lobelia and pleurisy root for a certain action.
2. For earache, place a few drops of warm Lobelia tincture in both ears (even if only one is aching, put the tincture in both) and plug with cotton. You can put oil of garlic in first.
3. Of course, combinations such as B&B Tincture or the antispasmodic tincture, both of which contain Lobelia, will do the job as effectively or perhaps even more effectively.

4. For any external problems, such as irritations, swellings, inflammations, boils, and so on, make a mixture of one part Lobelia and two parts Slippery Elm; moisten to make a thick consistency, and apply.
5. For liver problems, Lobelia is mixed in equal parts with pleurisy root, catnip, and bitter root; these herbs are made into tea and taken by the tablespoon every couple of hours.
6. Lobelia is used in the case of mumps; when catnip enemas and Lobelia are given, mumps usually have very little effect on males, although there is usually concern when males contract the disease. The illness will disappear, after mild symptoms, within five days (Malstrom:94).
7. Lobelia reduces palpitation of the heart, and it is in this regard that many herbalists use the plant.
8. Lobelia is employed in midwifery to alleviate rigidity of the pelvic musculature during childbirth
9. It is taken internally to help break the smoking habit, as the action of the alkaloid lobeline greatly resembles the action of nicotine. For this reason, doses of lobeline sulfate are incorporated in tablets of lozenges that are intended to aid in breaking the habit.
10. Lobelia is helpful in meningitis, hepatitis, peritonitis, nephritis, etc.
11. Used in very small doses, frequently given it can raise a vigorous perspiration, being a diaphoretic, after which a long sleep of ten to twelve hours often follows. When the patient awakes, he is either cured of his illness or feels greatly improved.

LOBELIA POISONING?

With so many applications of the herb, and with the virulent claims that Lobelia is a poison, it might be well to discuss the history of Lobelia and poisoning.

From the beginning of its use, Lobelia was labeled a poison by Thomson's enemies. Although no deaths have ever been proven to have been caused by Lobelia, there are certain symptoms when much of the herb is taken. These include great dejection, exhaustion, mental depression; nausea and vertigo; contraction of the pupil; profuse clammy salivation; dryness and prickling of the throat; pressure in the esophagus with a sensation of strong vermucular motion; sensation as of a lump in the throat; incessant and violent nausea with pain, heat, and oppression of the respiratory tract; vomiting, followed by great prostration; violent and painful cardiac constriction; griping and drawing abdominal pains; increased urine, easily decomposing and depositing much uric acid; violent racking paroxysmal cough with expectoration; small, irregular, slow

pulse, general weakness; violent spasmodic pains, with paralytic feeling, weariness of the limbs, with cramps in the gastrocnemii, and sensation of chill and fever (Millsbaugh:388).

We have experienced many of these symptoms upon taking much Lobelia, however, we nor anyone else have ever experienced the last one: death, preceded by insensibility and convulsions. The critics' great question is whether the effects of Lobelia are a cleansing crisis or simply a poison effect on the body.

Do people improve after the vomiting sequence from the herb?

Is this improvement a healing; is it relief from illness?

Herbalists with sufficient Lobelia experience will affirm its benefits. Some people say they never experience the weakness and giddiness, only a tobacco-like irritation until the vomiting occurs. Moore treats the subject rather humorously.

“The presumption that a patient should puke his or her brains out and then take even more Lobelia is past my understanding...The pedantic idea that Lobelia cannot be poisonous is clearly antithetical to the facts. I know of one genial addlepatte who was rushed to a hospital in Los Angeles in near coma, turning strange colors from respiratory failure, after attempting a Thomsonian ‘cleansing’ emetic” (Moore:98).

We should not simply dismiss the fact that Lobelia sometimes has greatly distressing effects on individuals; as all of us know, herbs react differently upon different people.

For this reason, we usually recommend two things. One is that people taking Lobelia should do so for distressing situations that cannot be handled by other means. If a mother is unable to deliver her infant and has suffered many hours of unproductive labor, this is a situation worthy of using a strong medicine. If a person can hardly breathe due to asthma distress, this again would merit the use of the herb. Dr. Christopher said that the herb simply won't work unless a person is at a crisis.

We discourage people from using the herb for simple, everyday problems that can be solved using a milder herb that requires less skill in administration.

The second condition we like to apply is that a skilled person administer Lobelia. This doesn't mean a doctor necessarily; it doesn't even mean an herbalist or a naturopath. But it means someone sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled in the application of herbs that they don't overdose with Lobelia. As Brigham Young said, the best doctor is someone with the gift of the Holy Ghost who can discern what is wrong with a person and then discern what is best to overcome it.

Dr. Commichaux, a noted reflexologist in Salt Lake City, warned us not to use Lobelia except in the case of heart palpitations. We do think, however, that Dr. Christopher's use of the herb in small amounts mixed with others in formulas, to act as a carrier is certainly within the limits of good application. What we are concerned with is people using the herb excessively without proper cause and without adequate skill. Most really potent medicines require this same skill; **this doesn't mean that Lobelia is dangerous, but simply that it is powerful.**

In 1981, Dr. Christopher's staff called the Division of Toxicology of the Food and Drug Administration in Washington D.C. At that time the FDA was removing Lobelia from the shelves of herb and health stores, claiming that it was a poison. Shortly thereafter the agency discontinued its illegal action, although we understand that the FDA still considers it a poison and in 1986 is renewing its efforts. Dr. Christopher's staff spoke with Dr. Sara Henry at that office to find out what sort of criteria the FDA uses to classify Lobelia as a dangerous drug. Dr. Henry graciously looked through the files on Lobelia, although she mentioned that there were so many substances for the FDA to investigate, only a limited amount of time could be allotted for the judgment of each one. She mentioned that Lobelia contains lobeline, "a poisonous alkaloid possessing properties similar to those of nicotine." Lobeline itself was not considered extremely toxic, however.

There was almost no research in the file on the use of Lobelia by human beings. There was simply not very good clinical data available to the FDA. They relied mostly upon written sources, such as books dealing with poisonous plants. Dr. Henry said that using Lobelia was dangerous because if people used it as an emetic, perhaps 99% of the people might vomit, while 1% might retain the lobeline within their systems and become poisoned. However, this 99% figure was purely hypothetical.

Dr. Henry considered that there were much better expectorants and emetics nowadays whose dosages are measured and whose purity could be controlled. Dr. Henry

mentioned that it is not sure how much lobeline is in the crude herb; plants vary, she said. She mentioned that 8 mg. is the maximum tolerated dose in a human and that most people take 100 mg. of the herb. Of course, these figures are not documented in the FDA files. Dr. Henry was kind enough to supply the inadequate information that the FDA had.

But Dr. Christopher's staff went a bit further. Consulting Phytotoxin Tables by James A. Duke of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, published in 1977, we find that lobeline can be fatal to 50% of a mouse population if injected intraperitoneally in a dose of 39.9 mg. or if 37 mg. is injected subcutaneously or 78 mg. if injected into the veins.

Setting up a relationship between the human average weight of 150 pounds and the mouse's weight, the amount of lobeline in Lobelia to be toxic in a human is as follows:

If six pounds of raw Lobelia were injected subcutaneously (under the skin) individually into a human population, the lobeline would be sufficient to kill 50% of that population! Orally is even more absurd; it is suggested that most folks would vomit before taking a minute fraction of the six-pound lethal dose! Of course, we are talking about Lobelia herb and not the extracted lobeline. Dr. Christopher always stressed that the herb in its entire state contains elements that help in its assimilation and use in the body. If we begin to isolate the ingredients, we pervert the action of the herb plant—eliminate the synergistic safety from other chemicals, and increase the risks of overdose.