

SUSCEPTIBILITY

WHY CHRONIC ILLNESS IMPACTS SOME PEOPLE AND NOT OTHERS

In the allopathic model of medicine, we see the symptoms of sickness as something happening to us. When we get strep throat, it is 100% the streptococcus bacteria doing it to us, so we take an antibiotic and call it a day. When we have depression it is believed that our brains aren't producing enough serotonin, so we take a medication to force our body to keep more serotonin around. When we have migraines, we take a triptan to stop the pain. When we have multiple symptoms affecting several parts of the body, we see a specialist for each thing and take just as many medications as specialists we see.

By contrast, in the homeopathic model of medicine, we see the symptoms of sickness as signals from the body of the actual problem - susceptibility and weakness of the vital force. These are two important concepts we'll discuss, but let's begin with PANS/PANDAS.



PANS/PANDAS AND THE SEARCH FOR THE ROOT CAUSE

PANS/PANDAS is a tricky condition. It ebbs and flows, flares and remits. It attacks the brain, the bladder, the bowels - the whole body really. It changes as it progresses. It affects one part of the body in this flare, another part in the next. It is triggered by one bacteria or virus, but then inevitably is triggered by many more. Eventually, every sniffle or cough threatens to bring on a flare. Then, it is triggered by environmental toxins like mold and solvents/cleaners. No place feels safe. If you even get the slightest whiff of a musty odor, you head for the hills. This is hard because it can happen even if the odor is in a family home. Suddenly, that home is now off-limits. Then PANS/PANDAS gets triggered by foods. Your life gets taken over by finding safe foods. Even once you have them, you have to battle a child with OCD around food to try and get them to eat it. And then allergy season starts up, and BAM - now pollen is causing a flare too.

Most people end up chasing triggers and treatments as a full-time job. They spend their nights and every free moment researching, desperate to find answers.

The chase for the triggers is never-ending. Because the trigger is NOT the problem.

I can hear the gears turning in your brain as you try to process this information. You are probably wondering something along the lines of “How could the trigger not be the problem? If strep is the trigger for PANDAS and you kill the strep, your kid will get better, right?”

Wrong.

Most kids do well with their first dose of antibiotics. It is almost miraculous how much better they are doing within 24 hours of starting. Some even stay better for a while. But then, inevitably, they get sick again. Most parents don't panic the second time - they have seen this before and have a tool at their disposal, ready to go. So they scurry off to the pediatrician, get another round of antibiotics, and settle in, ready for another miracle. But this time, the results are less miraculous. Maybe they only lead to 70% improvement. Or maybe they see similar results as the first time, but then as soon as the antibiotic is stopped, the symptoms return. New antibiotics are tried. Doubling up on antibiotics might be suggested. More medications to suppress inflammation or histamine might be added. Psychiatric medications might also be recommended.

Eventually, the medications stop working, so supplements and extensive testing are done to try and figure out the root cause. Is it genetics? Nutrient deficiencies? Yeast or other dysbiosis in the gut? Other infections you haven't looked for? Every test brings a new set of questions, 2-3 more supplements, and another test recommendation to dig deeper. Some of the supplements are great and help almost as miraculously as the antibiotic did.

But much like the antibiotics and other meds, the supplements don't seem to keep working as well over time and they have to be changed or more need to be added. You clean out shelves in your linen closet to organize all the supplements and medications.

The only thing left is to consider the more invasive recommendations - tonsillectomy and/or intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg). Even these can bring some relief, but it typically doesn't last. And for some kids, these can actually make symptoms worse.

The reason these therapies aren't effective in the long run is that they are all missing the ultimate underlying cause - **SUSCEPTIBILITY**.



THE VITAL FORCE

When Samuel Hahnemann first put together the concepts that govern the practice of homeopathy, he was looking for ways to explain what was actually happening with ill health and what would stimulate healing. He was a man of science, and used the best of scientific reasoning available in his lifetime. He was even advanced in his observation and theory for how diseases spread. His writings discuss steps to mitigate the spread of disease that we still employ today. This in spite of the fact that he died nearly 20 years before the discovery of germ theory credited to Louis Pasteur.

In spite of his scientific approach to everything, Hahnemann's explanation for what happens in disease can feel a bit "woo woo" to some. In aphorism 9 of *The Organon of Medicine*, his treatise that outlines the theory and practice of homeopathic medicine, he introduces the concept of the vital force. He describes how the vital force functions in health, saying that it "maintains the sensations and activities of all the parts of the living organism in a harmony."

A weakening of Hahnemann's "vital force" is the basis of the concept that is crucial to understanding healing with homeopathy - susceptibility.

¹ *Organon of Medicine*, 6th Edition, Kunzli translation

Think about it - you don't get every cold you come across. So the virus itself isn't the only problem. It is the virus plus the susceptibility of the host to getting sick with that specific virus at that specific time. There are lots of things you can do to support health and lower susceptibility. You can eat a lot of nutrient rich whole foods, you can sleep well, meditate and exercise daily. These all support the immune system and the vital force to be as functional as possible. These things are supportive, but not the main thing that matters. Sometimes you can do all the "right" things, and still get sick. Other times you are not doing anything "right" and are the only one in the family that doesn't get sick.

When you do get sick, you also have your own specific susceptibility to the way you experience sickness. Your whole family could get COVID, but the way you experience it might be different. One person has a really high fever, body aches, and a terrible cough. Another has fatigue and loses taste and smell. A third might have no symptoms at all but tests positive. The first person might be sick for 7 days and then feel fine, while the second person is sick for months on end. This unique way of experiencing an illness is another part of our susceptibility.

The vital force and susceptibility overlap and intertwine in a complex way. Your vital force might have been born with a specific set of susceptibilities related to genetics, the prenatal environment (i.e. the health of your biological mother), and more.

Your vital force can also be impacted by things in your environment (e.g. viruses, trauma, stress, dietary choices, etc) that change, expose, or temporarily increase your susceptibility.

When weakened, or “untuned”, your vital force starts to produce symptoms. In allopathic thinking, we see the symptoms as clues to the disease in order to name it and then give the medicine to counter it rather than looking at what contributed to it in the first place. In homeopathy, we see that the symptoms are the disease of the untuned vital force.



SUSCEPTIBILITY AND TRUE HEALING

If strep was the cause of PANDAS, then everyone who got strep would get PANDAS. Yet most people don't. Most people get a sore throat and a fever, and a few days later, are good as new. If it were genetics, everyone who has an MTHFR variant combined with COMT, MAO, DAO, or any other SNPs would have a similar presentation. But we don't. Even when you look at kids with PANS/PANDAS, we see similarities, but every single person has their own unique way of presenting with the condition.

The different ways that we present are due to our underlying susceptibility to those specific symptoms and sensitivities. Strep isn't the problem; it is the susceptibility to having an atypical immune response to it. You could substitute Lyme or mold or allergens in for strep and it is still the same thing - ____ is not the problem; it is the susceptibility to this sensitivity and specific response.

The only therapy that specifically targets individual susceptibility is homeopathy.

When we heal with homeopathy, we are healing the sensitivity and atypical response to all of the triggers. When we heal this response, it means that we can be exposed to them in the future and not have a flare of PANS/PANDAS symptoms.

It doesn't mean you will never get sick again, but you should have a typical presentation and quick resolution. Healing with homeopathy also helps address the triggers directly. It helps fight bacteria and viruses. It helps detox mold or other irritants. It reduces histamine response or overproduction. It helps the genes you have work optimally. It can even help with nutrient deficiencies because most of these are caused by issues with absorption or how the body is using the nutrients, not because you aren't eating well or taking enough pills. It does all of these things by stimulating the body's innate ability to heal.

Our bodies are capable of remarkable healing if we just give it a small nudge and then trust them. We seem to have lost sight of that in modern times. But think about it. Not every cut requires stitches. Even those that do are only temporary. Our body heals the wound by activating the immune system to repair the skin and fight off any infections that may have come along with the cut. We don't have effective treatment for most viruses, and yet, we don't die with the common cold.

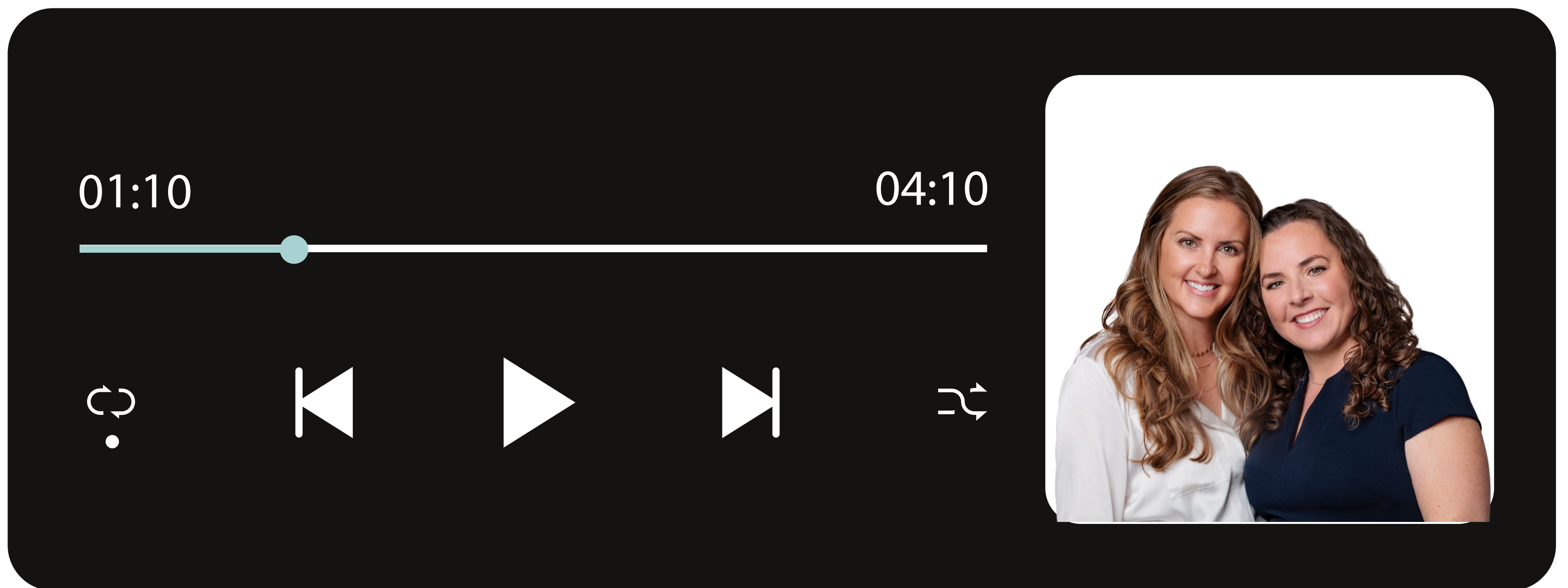
While the condition PANS/PANDAS is more complex than a small wound or the common cold, healing from it isn't more complex. It can take longer, which sometimes makes it feel more complex. This longer path can sometimes make us feel like we need to reach for other therapies. In fact, the more we try to force healing with pharmaceuticals, herbs, and high-dose nutrients, the more complex we make things.

With the right nudges from homeopathic remedies, removal of obstacles to healing, and patience, we can truly heal from PANS/PANDAS.

When you have truly healed, you no longer have to live in fear of every illness. You can trust that even if your child picks up strep that is going around the class, you won't have a months-long regression. You can walk into a musty smelling building and not have to immediately flee in fear of a flare. You can have properly functioning detox pathways without taking handfuls of nutritional supplements and binders. You can rely on your body to appropriately absorb and use the nutrients from your food.

In short, you can live life much like the people you have watched with envy while your child is in the throes of PANS/PANDAS hell. But life can also feel a bit sweeter than you imagined, because you know how beautiful the simple things are. The sweetness of watching your child play with a new friend on the playground. The joy of having a family gathering where you can relax and let down your guard. The life-giving rest of a full night of sleep. PANS/PANDAS takes so much from you and your children. Recovery from PANS/PANDAS with homeopathy gives you back all of what you lost and more.

To learn more about homeopathy for
PANS/PANDAS join us on the
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