

Rheumatism

The word rheumatism is derived from the Greek word "rheuma" which means a swelling. This disease is recognized as one of the most serious threats to health. It is a crippling disease which causes widespread invalidism, but seldom kills.

Symptoms

The onset of the acute type of rheumatism is characterized by fever and rapid pulse with intense soreness and pain. In the acute muscular type, the tissues become so sensitive that even the weight of bed clothing aggravates the pain. The liver is found to be swollen. Acute rheumatism is extremely painful but it leaves no permanent defects, if treated properly. It may settle into a chronic state under a wrong mode of treatment.

The symptoms of chronic muscular rheumatism are pain and stiffness of the affected muscles. The pain increases when an effort is made to move these muscles. In cases of chronic articular rheumatism, pain and stiffness are felt in one or more joints of the body, with swelling in most cases. It is not usually fatal but there is a danger of permanent deformity.

Treatment

In the case of acute rheumatism, the patient should be put on a short fast of orange juice and water for three or four days. While fasting, the bowels should be cleansed through a warm water enema. After the juice fast, the patient should be placed on a restricted diet for 14 days. In this regimen, orange or grapefruit may be taken for breakfast, lunch may consist of a raw salad of any vegetables in season, with raisins, prunes, figs or dates; and for dinner, one or two steamed vegetables such as spinach, cabbage, carrots, turnips, cauliflower, etc., and a few nuts or some sweet fruit may be taken. NO bread or potatoes or other starchy food should be taken; otherwise the effect of the diet will be lost. Thereafter, the patient may gradually commence a well balanced diet of three basic food groups, namely (i) seeds, nuts and grains (ii) vegetables and (iii) fruits.

In case of chronic rheumatism, the patient may be placed on an all-fruit diet for four or five days.

In this regimen, he should have three meals a day of fresh, juicy fruits such as apples, grapes, peaches, pears, oranges, pineapples and grapefruit. He may thereafter gradually adopt a well-balanced diet.

The patient should take ripe fruits and fresh vegetables in abundance. Lots of buttermilk should be taken. The foods which should be avoided are meat, fish, white bread, sugar, refined cereals, rich, indigestible and highly seasoned foods tea, coffee, alcohol, sauces, pickles and condiments.

Raw potato juice is regarded as an excellent food remedy for rheumatism. One or two teaspoonful of the juice pressed out of mashed raw potato should be taken before meals. This will help eliminate an acid condition and relieve rheumatism. In some rural areas in Great Britain, it is

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a custom for rheumatic sufferers to carry a potato in their pockets, in the belief that the potato will absorb in itself some of the acid from the sufferer's body. The old potato is thrown away and replaced by a new one after a few days.

The skin of the potato is also an excellent food remedy for rheumatism. The skin is exceptionally rich in vital mineral salts and the water in which the peelings have been boiled is one of the best medicines for the ailments caused by excess of acid in the system. The potato peelings should be thoroughly washed and boiled for a few minutes. The decoction should then be strained and a glassful of the same should be taken three or four times daily.

Celery is another effective food remedy for rheumatism. A fluid extract of the seeds is more powerful than the raw vegetable. This also has a tonic action on the stomach and kidneys. Five to ten drops of this fluid should be taken in hot water before meals. Powdered seeds can be used as a condiment. Lemons are also valuable and the juice of two or three lemons may be taken each day.

Other helpful methods in the treatment of rheumatism are application of radiant heat and hot packs to the affected parts, a hot tub bath, cabinet steam bath, dry friction and a sponge bath. Hot Epsom-salt baths are also beneficial and should be taken twice a week for three months in case of chronic rheumatism and once weekly thereafter. The affected parts should also be bathed twice daily in hot water containing Epsom-salt after which some olive oil should be applied. Fresh air, deep breathing and light outdoor exercises are also beneficial. Dampness and cold should be avoided.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.