

EM Chapter 32 Tools: iodine - another vital multitasking tool that should be a household word

Historical Note - Iodine was discovered by the French chemist Bernard Courtois (8 February 1777 – 27 September 1838) in 1811. It exists as a purple black solid or sublimes to a violet-coloured gas and so it was named after the Greek *ιώδης* ['iodes'], or 'violet-coloured'. Although they did not know why, as far back as 1600 BC, Chinese writers described goitre treatment using burnt seaweed and sponge, as did European physicians, including Roger of Palermo and Arnold of Villanova in the 12th and 13th centuries. There are also records of the ancient Chinese using such burnt seaweed and sponge as anti-microbials. Of course, the seaweed and sponge were delivering iodine which was supporting the thyroid [goitre] and fighting infections. This is a classic example of 'science catching up with clinical experience'. Those early Chinese doctors knew that the seaweed and sponge worked, weren't sure why, but carried on anyway!

Iodine is another tool that has revolutionised my practice! Like vitamin C it contact-kills all microbes. It is the only agent that is consistently active against gram positive and gram-negative bacteria, mycobacteria, spores, amoebic cysts, fungi, protozoa, yeasts, drug-resistant bacteria such as MRSA and viruses. In the doses below, it is non-toxic to the immune system cells responsible for healing and repair – indeed studies show it enhances healing. This is why the surgeons love it. Skin painted with iodine before incision does not get infected and heals perfectly. Again, much more detail in "The Infection Game -life is an arms race".

Furthermore, iodine is volatile and so it can get to areas that vitamin C does not. Even if it cannot be applied directly to the infected area, it will penetrate flesh easily and is carried in the air to be inhaled.

Infection is hit from within by vitamin C and from without by iodine. I use it in two ways to deal with infection and indeed Lugol's iodine, salt pipe and coconut oil should be an essential part of your first aid box.

To treat all conditions of the mouth and airways: gingivitis, pharyngitis, tonsillitis, rhinitis, sinusitis, laryngitis, bronchitis, chest infections and bronchiectasis.

Use a Salt pipe. This is simply a clay pot filled with sea salt that can be used as an inhaler. Drizzle Lugol's iodine 1-4 drops (whatever is tolerated) into the mouth piece – sniff this through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Also use Valsalva manoeuvre to blow the iodine vapour into the middle ear and sinuses. Pinch the nose and blow into it so the ears pop - see <http://goflightmedicine.com/clearing-ears/> Keep going until the iodine smell is gone (about 20 sniffs). Do this at least three times daily but as often as you can according to the severity of the infection. In the short term expect to see more catarrh as the body sweeps out the dead microbes.

For a child who cannot manage a salt pipe, smear the nostrils and lips with coconut oil/iodine mix. The volatile iodine will be inhaled. You will have to think of a good joke to explain the necessity for a yellow nose and mouth!

Iodine to treat:

All skin conditions and superficial pathology such as infected spots, chicken pox, cold sores, swollen lymph nodes, nail infections, ear infections, cradlecap, skin fungal infections (tinea, ringworm, acne, boils) scabs and bruises.

Take 100mls of coconut oil and place the pot in a warm place so the oil just melts. Stir in 10mls of Lugol's 15% iodine to give you a 1.5% mix. Here is your real "medicinal compound" as advocated by Lily the Pink (they got the recipe wrong - see Historical Note at the end of this chapter.) Coconut oil

is additionally beneficial as this contains the fuel that powers the immune system also further helping the healing and repair process.

Nobel Laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, who discovered vitamin C in 1928, agreed:

"when I was a medical student, iodine in the form of KI was the universal medicine. Nobody knew what it did, but it did something and did something good. We students used to sum up the situation in this little rhyme: If you do not know where, what and why, prescribe ye then K and I."

Just like the Chinese thousands of years before them, no one knew how it worked but they could see with their own eyes that it did work, and so they used it! Just like vitamin C, the key is in the dose. Iodine can only kill if present. You know it is present because you can see the yellow colour. You must apply as often as necessary to keep the area stained yellow/orange/brown.

Lymph node swelling (often called "glands" but they are not)

As one may see in acute tonsillitis, glandular fever, local skin infections.

Parotitis (for example mumps)

I saw one case of mumps disappear overnight with topical ad lib iodine oil. Yes – the iodine stain made her look like a victim of wife beating but she felt so much better! I have yet to try this with a mumps orchitis - I can hardly wait for the opportunity!

Vaginal and perineal infections

Warm your iodine oil so it melts and steep tampons. Allow to cool so the oil solidifies. Use at least twice daily possibly more often. This has the potential to contact kill any vaginal infection and possibly viruses occupying the cervix.

Eye Infections eg blepharitis, conjunctivitis, iritis etc

Do not put the iodine oil into the eye. Smear it over the eyelids and the iodine will evaporate and get into the eye.

Wounds, ulcers or broken skin

Any such must be kept still to allow the immune system to build new flesh. This is where pain is such a vital symptom because that ensures such! The wound should be fully debrided, comfortably dressed in non-sticky gauze and a bandage. Keep this dressing undisturbed for at least a week. But drizzle pure Lugol's onto the outside of the dressing. The volatile iodine will keep the wound infection free so it can heal without disturbing the rebuilding process. I have to say this works very well with dogs and horses too!

Warts, verrucas – put a spot of pure Lugol's iodine directly onto the lesion. Keep it stained brown. It will kill the virus, but you must keep applying for several weeks until the skin has grown out the lesion.

Finally, be mindful it is possible to be allergic to iodine. This is very rare. It is only a real problem when iodine is injected intravenously by radiologist for imaging. But as with all treatments, start low dose and build up.

Iodine multitasks too

It is an essential raw material to make thyroid hormones and oxytocin (the love hormone).

Iodine detoxes and greatly increases the excretion of mercury, lead, cadmium, aluminium, fluoride and bromine (see chapter 34).

Deficiency is associated with cysts such as breast and ovarian I do not know the mechanism of this. Clinically it has also been used with good results to:

Treat cardiac dysrhythmias (indeed it may be this is the mechanism by which the iodine containing drug amiodarone is effective)

Treat thyrotoxicosis

To treat fatigue

Just like vitamin C, many patients with fatigue respond well to large doses. They reported improved overall wellbeing when prescribed a 90% urinary tolerance dose. Again, the dose is critical! Drs Flechas and Brownstein used up to 50mgs (8 drops of Lugol's 12%) a day of iodine. They did this by measuring urinary iodine excretion and increasing the dose until 90% was excreted, thereby they could infer body stores were saturated. They did this for 4,000 patients over 3 years and saw no cases of allergy or Wolff Chaikoff effect – see below. They commented that iodine sufficiency was associated with a sense of overall wellbeing, lifting of a brain fog, feeling warmer in cold environments, increased energy, needing less sleep, achieving more in less time, experiencing regular bowel movements and improved skin complexion. In some subjects with overweight or obesity, this ortho-iodo (“correct dose”) supplementation resulted in weight loss, decreased percent body fat and increased muscle mass.

Iodine is multitasking here to improve energy delivery mechanisms, correct hormone receptor resistance issues, detox, treat the upper fermenting gut and reduce any infectious load.

My guess is one could safely do this without the need for urine testing. Start low and build up slowly by one drop every 3 days. You may well see detox and die off reactions as per chapter 28 so do not be put off by such. Read more at <http://www.optimox.com/iodine-study-8>

Take vitamin C away from iodine – they work in different ways and combining them reduces the effectiveness of both.

The Wolff–Chaikoff effect

This is a reduction in thyroid hormone levels caused by ingestion of a large amount of iodine. It is a protective mechanism against iodine overdose whereby the blood supply to the thyroid is temporarily reduced and, in consequence, the output of thyroid hormones. It is often quoted as a reason not to take iodine, but the fact is the thyroid quickly adjusts so normal function is restored. Again, further reason to build the dose of iodine up slowly.

Historical Note re Lily the Pink:

The song ‘Lily the Pink’ was based on an American folk song ‘Lydia Pinkham’ or ‘The Ballad of Lydia Pinkham’. This original song was inspired by Lydia E Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound. It was originally supposed to relieve menstrual and menopausal symptoms. From 1876 onwards the compound was mass marketed in the US. It is thought that the song ‘travelled’ over to Europe when Canadian WWI POWs sang their version in camps:

*Have you heard of Lydia Pinkum,
And her love for the human race?
How she sells (she sells, she sells) her wonderful compound,
And the papers publish her face?*

Lydia Estes Pinkham (February 9, 1819 – May 17, 1883), inventor and marketer of the herbal-alcoholic "women's tonic" for menstrual and menopausal problems.

You can still buy [a slightly changed] supplement version or the compound here - http://www.numarkbrands.com/products/#product_lydia-pinkham-supplement