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## Jerisch-Herxheimer Effect & Colloidal Silver Integrative and Alternative Medicine

The Herxheimer reaction is often implicated when symptoms of illness occur with the use of colloidal silver to treat any condition. This can cause new colloidal silver users some confusion, as an individual expects to feel better as an illness is eliminated from the body. This document explores the origin of the Herxheimer reaction, its formal definition, its relationship to colloidal silver use, and strategies to deal with any reaction.

### The Jerisch-Herxheimer Reaction - What is It?

According to the Merriam-Webster definition, a Herx reaction is the result of using spirocheticidal drugs ( mainly antibiotics ) to treat individuals with a [spirochetel](#) disease which results in an increase in the symptoms of the treated condition. Dorlands Medical Dictionary adds that the condition is a short term immunological reaction which causes fever, chills, muscle pain, headaches, and skin lesions. Both Adolph Jerisch, an Australian dermatologist, and Karl Herxheimer, a German dermatologist, are credited with the discovery of the condition, although Jerisch published his findings in 1895, seven years earlier than his brother.

It is widely recognized that the reaction is caused by the release of toxic chemicals ( endotoxin ) released from the cell walls of dying bacteria due to effective treatment. This, in turn, results in a response from the immune system which manifests the symptoms experienced by the individual being treated.

The generalized symptoms of a herx reaction, as listed above, are not all inclusive. The severity of the reaction is proportional to the dosage of the drug causing the reaction, and a wide variety of symptoms can result if the waste products reach any specific areas of the body. In such cases, the added symptoms are localized to the area or affected system. Nausea, diarrhea and soreness of the throat may also result.

Thomas McPherson Brown, MD ( see [www.roadback.org](http://www.roadback.org) for further information ) and author of The Road Back, documented many interesting observations concerning the Herxheimer reaction:

- The condition is caused by a reaction to toxins caused by the presence of drugs, and not the drug(s) used in treatment
- The reaction provided an opportunity for the treatment of arthritic and rheumatic condition with medications
- The reaction is very similar to a reaction often observed when treating rheumatoid arthritis with gold salts
- The severity of the herxheimer reaction could be managed by careful dose monitoring, and that the severity of the reaction lessened as successful treatment progressed, while at the same time tolerance for the drugs used increased
- Symptoms associated with a Herx reaction can last a few weeks

For most individuals, any Herxheimer reaction could be readily described as causing "flu-like"

symptoms. Generally speaking ( rather than clinically speaking ), such a reaction occurs between four and 24 hours from the onset of treatment, and is caused by a large number of pathogens being eradicated in the body.

### **The Jerisch-Herxheimer Reaction - Colloidal Silver**

Pronounced Herxheimer reactions with colloidal silver are rare, but not unheard of. It has not been established whether or not Herxheimer-*like* reactions only occur in individuals infected with pathogenic spirochetes, although users that have confirmed spirochetical illnesses certainly experience symptoms, such as those with Lyme disease.

It is very likely, however, that herxheimer-like effects occur any time large amounts of pathogens are killed in the body ( commonly known as "die-off" ), in situations where the endotoxin released is not quickly handled by the body's elimination system. Our own experiments, which are not statistically significant, indicate that herxheimer-like reactions are related to the amount of colloidal silver intake, or more correctly, the amount of colloidal silver reaching any pathogenic organisms.

As an example, in one situation, six ounces of colloidal silver ( approximately ) taken daily for 72 hours produced no reaction. Subsequent treatment with roughly 2 ounces of colloidal silver used via an oxygen nebulizer, administered constantly throughout the day, produced marked signs of a reaction within 24 hours, including nervous system sensitivity and small skin lesions.

In the above situation, it is likely that a greater concentration of silver was reaching the blood stream, where larger numbers of pathogens were being eliminated. Frequency of use helped to address the dilution factor ( the concentration of silver must be high enough at the infection for efficacy, and must be maintained for sustained effectiveness ), as did bypassing the digestive system. Symptoms passed quickly upon cessation of silver use ( except for the small lesions, which took a few weeks to clear up without the assistance of any treatment ), and re-manifested once again to a lesser extent upon resumption.

It is wise to test for a reaction at the beginning of colloidal silver use by consuming small amounts of colloidal silver, daily, for a period of 72 hours. Treatment can then be tailored based on how an individual responds.

Our experience, however, suggests that most people will experience no pronounced reaction at all.

### **The Exteriorization of Illness - A Natural Medicine Perspective**

A reaction caused as a byproduct of the successful treatment of an illness is known as the *exteriorization of the illness* in natural medicine, where the given treatment is known to be nontoxic, and abnormal physiological symptoms are exhibited. This phenomenon is not limited strictly to pathogenic infections. Successful treatment of tumors by non-suppressive and non-evasive therapies, as an example, sometimes first results in the tumors increasing in size before dissolving ( this has been widely documented by natural therapy practitioners world-wide ).

While the idea of a Herxheimer reaction closely parallels the idea of the exteriorization of an illness, natural medicine takes the ideology a step further. Secondary reactions are recognized as a result of a change in the "biological terrain", including changes caused by a shift in bacteria populations, a temporary load increase on the lymphatic system which effects elimination system function, and possible shifts in the body's PH levels. Therefore, an adjustment period whereby the body exhibits numerous changes is expected when treating systemic, chronic, or otherwise severe conditions.

None of these ideas are foreign to allopathic medicine under the wing of modern medical science. Where the two ideologies ( modern medicine and natural medicine ) part company is in the subsequent treatment ideology. Modern medicine leans towards the suppression of symptoms and corrective action wherever possible, whereas natural medicine leans towards allowing time to run its course, while focusing on

naturally supporting the affected systems of the body.

## **The Jerisch-Herxheimer Reaction - Identifying, Predicting, and Managing Exteriorizations**

Severe Herxheimer-like effects are seldom experienced with small amounts of isolated colloidal silver taken orally. More pronounced reactions can be expected with frequent nebulizer use, and even greater possible reactions can be expected with IV treatment-- all when colloidal silver is first used to address a given condition. Still, the occurrence of any noticeable reaction at all due to oral use is likely at least one out of every one thousand new users from a general population sample.

### **What isn't a Herxheimer reaction?**

The list of possible symptoms associated with a Herx reaction is fairly extensive. However, Herxheimer-like reactions will never *cause* cardiac problems or irregularities, breathing difficulties ( which were not present initially ), constriction of air passageways, extreme swelling, or other severe and non-generalized symptoms.

### **Can a Herxheimer-like reaction be predicted?**

Obviously, individuals who are new to silver who have a condition such as Syphilis or Lyme disease can expect a reaction when adequate amounts of colloidal silver are administered. In addition, those with chronic and degenerative disease, such as Multiple Sclerosis, can expect some sort of reaction when dose levels reach a level of saturation in the body. Treatment of chronic bacterial and viral conditions may also cause a reaction when higher concentrations of silver are used in the body.

Most of the time, a reaction is predictable: 1) There won't be one, 2) a condition is identified whereby a reaction is expected, or 3) the condition is severe enough that the reaction will go unnoticed.

### **Can a reaction be treated while continuing treatment?**

Common sense is a great asset when determining when any product should be discontinued. In the unlikely event of a severe reaction through oral use, administration of colloidal silver can be reduced or eliminated temporarily to allow the body time to adjust.

Alternately, a natural treatment regime can be followed to stimulate the body's elimination system and support primary organ function. Simple dietary modifications can make a great impact on symptoms associated with "die-off":

- Increased water intake with fresh lemon juice added to the water
- One teaspoonful of first cold press olive oil taken first thing in the morning
- Warm bentonite and sea salt baths can be taken
- *Gentle* whole herb medicinal concoctions can be used for liver support
- Internal-quality healing clays can be used to reduce stress on the elimination system

Consult a natural medicine practitioner for other non-stress and non-toxic methods to support lymphatic and eliminatory functions of the body.