

Cantharide plaster therapy

Naturopathy also used vesicants, which are vesicating substances, besides pustulants. An excretory process through the skin is involved here. The plaster leads to "healing inflammation". Even traditional healers back in the first century in Byzantium knew about it who used these plasters to tackle chronic joint rheumatism. In medieval times, the Arabs brought these methods to Europe and especially to Spain, and hence the plasters are made using Spanish flies. In our century, they were not used until ten years back. Since then, it has won over new importance in the field of traditional medicine. Today, the cantharide plaster is once again an officially prescribed component found in the stock of every chemist. There are other vesicating substances as well but they do not have as prompt an effect. These include: savoy cabbage, white cabbage, buttercups, spurge and daphne.

The paste made from dried and powdered cantharides mixed with resin plays an important role with regard to the effect caused by these cantharide plasters. At first impression, they might seem to be flies but they actually aren't. They are rather beetles that are called cantarella in Spanish language. They are green coloured beetles which are found in all countries located in the moderate and subtropical zone. They belong to the genus of oil beetles (meloidae) and produce a highly effective toxic substance cantharidin. Dried *lytta vesicatoria* (Latin name) have a cantharidin content of at least 0.7 percent. If the beetles sense any danger or contact, they release the toxic substance cantharidin with their blood. It is the most effective toxic substance released by beetles.

Other possibilities for use: The Spanish fly is the most important aphrodisiac in the animal kingdom. Even the ancient Egyptians and the love-starved people in medieval times used its effect. For the first time, it was mentioned in Egyptian papyrus Ebers and it was well known to all antique authors. In the past, cantharidin was processed to make several medicines and was also used inside the body as a poison for executions, murders and other doubtful purposes. As always, the high dose makes it poisonous (Paracelsus). Positive and negative effects lie close to each other. Therefore, in western countries, use of the Spanish fly as aphrodisiac is completely forbidden. However, in other countries including Mexico and Morocco, they are still used as aphrodisiac. In the homeopathic diluted solutions D4 and D6, cantharidin is used for homeopathic purposes.

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