

Asthma—Breathing with ease is the goal

By Rodd Stockwell, MD

The important thing with asthma is to have less frequent and less severe episodes of wheezing. Two treatment systems succeed at doing so: holistic (natural healing) and conventional (medication-oriented). Conventional treatments like inhalers and steroids initiate an atmosphere of dependence and fear. Holistic treatments provide self-sufficiency, empowerment, and wellness. For people who take conventional medications, both systems can be used concurrently.

What is the conventional medical approach to asthma and allergies?

Asthma, environmental allergies, and eczema are treated with conventional medicines such as steroids that relieve symptoms temporarily, but there is a serious consequence. The body's natural production of stress hormones is compromised. Consequently, the adrenal glands *decrease* their production of stress hormones, which the body needs to combat an asthmatic episode. Without a strong reserve of stress hormones, asthma symptoms appear which leads to frequent and increased doses of medication. Dependence on inhalers and other medications follow.

What is the holistic approach?

Holistic medicine views asthma as a curable condition and offers a path toward healing. The holistic approach helps the body come into balance naturally, through nutrition, stress reduction, and the use of effective but gentle remedies. Success can be dramatic or gradual, depending on the person's current disease state and his or her comfort transitioning from conventional medications to successful holistic treatments.

How can homeopathy help with asthma?

Homeopathic remedies, which I often use, provide an excellent natural treatment to help the body heal from the trauma of asthma attacks. They are minute doses of medicines derived from plants, minerals, or naturally found chemicals that stimulate the body's own defense systems. They provide a substitute for conventional medications; children and adults use them as a bridge to become disease-free.

Can you provide specific case studies to show how holistic treatments work for asthma?

The following case studies illustrate the importance of using homeopathy and other holistic therapies to treat asthma. While they tell the stories of real patients, I have changed the names for confidentiality purposes.

Amanda, age four

Every winter Amanda would have at least two colds requiring treatment with a nebulizer containing albuterol. Her pediatrician diagnosed her with reactive airway disease. I prescribed homeopathic remedies in place of albuterol to strengthen her immune system. In addition, I made dietary recommendations to improve adrenal function. The following winter she experienced only one cold and she did not require albuterol. Two years later, Amanda needs no further holistic treatments and there are no signs of reactive airway disease. Her response to holistic treatment was rapid and complete for several reasons: the homeopathic remedy strengthened her immune system, a better diet helped to restore necessary hormones, and because her albuterol use was minimal, she was not yet dependent.

Joshua, age ten

At six years old, Joshua was diagnosed with asthma. I met him four years later and his medication list included a steroid inhaler (Flovent) used daily, an anti-asthma pill (Singulair) taken daily, and an albuterol inhaler used three to four times per month for breathing trouble. Respiratory illness and exercise were his triggers, especially challenging since he loves to play soccer. To treat Joshua, I began with a transitional phase in which natural remedies progressively replaced the conventional medicines. Remedies for immune system support were also given. It took four months to wean Joshua off the medications and replace them with natural ones. Now, after twelve months of treatment, he remains free of medications and inhalers, needing only to take a homeopathic remedy for tightness in breathing once or twice a month. Additionally, Joshua's parents and teachers notice that he is more comfortable with trying new things and is less stressed-out.

Regina, thirty-four

For her asthma attacks, Regina used a steroid inhaler (Advair) and albuterol as needed. Two or three times a year, she would experience a severe asthma episode landing her in an emergency room where she was prescribed the steroid prednisone. For the seasonal allergies she had since childhood (runny nose and itchy eyes), she took Claritin. She was allergic to cats too and rarely visited her sister because she had a cat. Desperate and skeptical, Regina scheduled an appointment with me because she wanted to take less medication. She required a transition phase to ease her off the medications that created a dependent state. We focused on homeopathy to strengthen her immune system and good nutrition leading to a healthier lifestyle. At the end of Regina's transition phase, her asthma symptoms lessened, her allergies were mild, and she was able to visit her sister. With nutritional changes, regular exercise, and taking a homeopathic remedy once a month, Regina's asthma management is highly satisfactory to her and she reports feeling more vibrant and healthy than ever.

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