

Homeopathic Healthcare

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Asthma

Asthma is becoming increasingly prevalent and dangerous today. The death rate from severe asthmatic crises is on the rise. This alarming trend has motivated modern medicine to ever more aggressively attempt to suppress asthma with powerful drugs — bronchodilators, cromolyn sodium, inhaled steroids, systemic steroids given in short bursts or chronically for long-term asthma suppression, even very strong immune suppressing drugs. In many cases such suppression is essential for the continued survival and well-being of severely ill patients. However, alternative/complementary medicine, and homeopathy in particular, can provide vitally needed assistance for this modern scourge. Constitutional homeopathic treatment provided relatively early in the clinical course of asthma can avert the later development of chronic unremitting asthma; often, complete cures of asthma can be achieved. Such results are far easier to attain in milder cases of asthma, though even severe chronic asthma can be alleviated and orthodox medications reduced with the assistance of homeopathic treatment.

The treatment of asthma is a serious matter and should not be attempted by one's self. Orthodox medications should never be reduced or discontinued without careful guidance and monitoring by a qualified physician. When homeopathic treatment is successful, clinical and laboratory (home spirometry) improvement in a patient's condition provide justification for gradual, careful reduction in allopathic medication. Over time it may be possible to completely withdraw all allopathic medicines. This potential outcome is, of course, dependent on a number of factors, the most important being the severity of the asthma at the outset.

Space limitations preclude a thorough listing of the number of nutritional and lifestyle strategies that can benefit asthma. There are useful books on the subject available. A few useful measures include identification and avoidance of food allergens, the bioflavonoid quercetin, vitamin C, and high-quality pancreatic enzymes.

To illustrate one case of asthma benefited by homeopathy, a brief case history follows. Ryan, a four year-old boy, was seen in 1997 for asthma which developed two years previously after a bout of pneumonia. His asthma was always aggravated after catching cold, worse in the autumn as the weather turned colder, worse in wind and damp weather, worse at night, in cold air, and when lying down; it was ameliorated when he sat erect. He was using an Albuterol inhaler regularly. He also suffered from hay fever. Other pertinent symptoms and characteristics relevant to his homeopathic prescription were: grinding of the teeth at night in sleep, talking in sleep, an aversion to milk and green vegetables, waking at three or four a.m. and wanting company. Ryan feared high places and insects and scary stories; he was a worrier, shy, cautious, eager to please, very sensitive to reprimand and preferred to stay at home. For about one year after his initial bout with asthma Ryan's growth was delayed. The image above is highly characteristic of the remedy *Calcarea carbonica*, and one dose of 200C potency of that remedy was given. Ryan enjoyed an immediate amelioration of his asthma. In the four years since his homeopathic treatment was begun Ryan has had four doses of the remedy. His asthma is essentially gone; additionally, his anxiety and fears are also markedly diminished.

The homeopathic cure of chronic asthma usually entails careful "constitutional" prescribing, taking into account the many and varied characteristics of a patient and his or her symptoms. Acute flare-ups of asthma can also be relieved through homeopathic prescribing; in these instances remedy selection is usually (but not always) based upon more narrow criteria, usually those relating only to the asthmatic symptoms themselves. By way of illustration, a few such acute asthma remedies are described below. I want to emphasize again that self (or family) treatment of asthma is to be discouraged.

Homeopathic Remedies

Antimonium tartaricum: acute asthmatic episodes usually associated with infection (bronchitis) and occurring more commonly in the very young and the elderly; there is copious mucus in the chest with

rattling respiration; a loose, rattling cough is usually present which fails to expel any mucus; if but a small amount of sticky mucus is finally expelled, there is substantial relief of the patient's shortness of breath; warm rooms aggravate the asthma.

Arsenicum album: infections or allergy (cats, dust, smoke) typically provoke the asthma crisis; the chest is tight and dry usually, with wheezing; the asthma is aggravated at night between midnight and two a.m., when lying (sitting upright or bending forward helps), and by cold air; warmth and hot drinks help; the patient is usually anxious and restless.

Ipecacuanha: a rattling and suffocating cough accompany the asthma; coughing with gagging and vomiting; marked nausea may attend the asthma; warm, wet weather aggravates, as do lying and exertion; open air and sitting up alleviate the asthma.

Carbo vegetabilis: asthma/wheezing accompanied by flatulence is highly characteristic of this remedy; belching, flatus and abdominal distention; belching can provide great relief of the shortness of breath; lying with the head low and eating aggravate the asthma.

Cuprum metallicum: sudden, severe spasms of asthma; coughing and cyanosis (blue face, lips); there may be spasms and cramps elsewhere in the body — thumbs, calves, etc.; cold drinks provide significant relief of the cough.

There are numerous other remedies for both the acute and chronic treatment of asthma. With sensible caution and persistence, many individuals suffering from this potentially devastating condition can benefit tremendously from homeopathic treatment.

Dr. Guess is a family physician and has practiced classical homeopathic medicine since 1978. He maintains a private family practice in Crozet, Virginia, near Charlottesville. He is the past editor of the American Journal of Homeopathic Medicine (a professional homeopathic medical journal) and Vice-President of the American Board of Homeotherapeutics (a national homeopathic specialty board). www.drgeorgeguess.com