

Review Article

Homoeopathy and Asthma

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ABSTRACT

Asthma is a chronic condition that can cause the airways in the lungs to become inflamed and narrow. This makes it hard for the person to breathe. Asthma can cause symptoms that included shortness of breath, coughing, and wheezing. To date, no studies prove that homeopathic remedies work for asthma. Nonetheless, it may be safe to try homeopathy in combination with traditional asthma treatment if a healthcare provider approves it.

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INTRODUCTION

The American Lung Association say more than 26 million people in the United States have asthma, including more than 6 million children. While there is no cure for asthma, traditional treatment is effective for managing symptoms when a person is under the care of a qualified health practitioner.

However, some people are interested in natural remedies, such as homeopathic medicine, to help manage and treat their asthma symptoms.

Homeopathy, also called homeopathic medicine, is a holistic or natural treatment that people use for a variety of diseases and conditions.

Active ingredients in homeopathic remedies are usually natural substances, such as flowers, herbs, or minerals.

Homeopathy uses the concept of “like cures like,” which means that the remedy consists of a diluted substance that, when taken in a higher dose, can potentially cause symptoms similar to the person’s condition or other symptoms.

The amount of active ingredient in a homeopathic remedy is very small.

Homeopathic remedies are made by diluting the amount of active ingredient several times until it is miniscule or undetectable. Homeopathic principles state that a higher dilution makes the remedy more powerful.

In homeopathic treatment for asthma, a person takes a minute amount of a substance that causes asthma-like symptoms.

What does the research say?

Many studies have looked into the effectiveness of homeopathy for asthma symptoms, and the results are mixed.

In a 2004 Cochrane review of research into homeopathy and asthma, the researchers concluded that there is “not enough evidence to reliably assess the possible role of homeopathy in asthma.”

Individual studies have suggested that homeopathy can have some benefits, however.

A 2018 double-blind study on 140 adults with bronchial asthma found that adding homeopathic remedies to usual asthma treatment was more effective than the usual treatment with a placebo.

In a review of studies that researchers did in

India, participants had used one or more of the following homeopathic remedies or plant extracts:

- Arsenicum album
- Tuberculinum
- Natrum sulphuricum
- Sulfur
- Pulsatilla
- Phosphorus
- Nux vomica
- Lycopodium
- Kali carbonicum

Other research shows unclear or inconclusive results about whether homeopathy can help with asthma. A 2019 review found that studies on homeopathic treatment for asthma had bias, incomplete reporting, and small sample sizes.

However, a 2015 review said that homeopathy did appear to help with reducing the frequency and intensity of asthma attacks but the authors could not draw firm conclusions.

The authors stated that these results did not come from randomized controlled trials but from observational studies that looked at the subjects' symptoms. Many medical experts believe that homeopathy is not effective. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health Trusted Source state that there is little evidence to support homeopathic remedies as effective treatments for health problems.

Nonetheless, people do use homeopathic remedies, with 2.1% of the United States population reporting the use of homeopathy in a 2012 national survey. Respiratory conditions, such as asthma, were one of the most common ailments for which people used homeopathic remedies.

Risks of homeopathy

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Trusted Source have warned people "not to rely on asthma products labeled as homeopathic that are sold over the counter (OTC)." This is because the FDA has not evaluated these products for safety and effectiveness.

According to the NCCIH Trusted Source, many products labeled as homeopathic are highly diluted, but others can contain large amounts of active ingredients. Some of these

ingredients could cause side effects or interact with drugs a person is taking for medical conditions.

For these reasons, people should always speak to a doctor before taking any homeopathic medications.

Traditional asthma treatment

Share on PinterestAs part of their treatment, a person should find out what causes asthma flares.

Traditional asthma treatment may involve taking certain medicines and avoiding asthma triggers. A person and their healthcare practitioner can decide what treatments work best.

A person may need to keep track of asthma symptoms and triggers by using a journal. Finding out what causes asthma flares is an important part of treatment.

Common asthma triggers include:

- allergens, such as pollen, dust mites, mold, cockroaches, or animal dander
- irritants in the air, such as smoke, fragrances, perfumes, or chemicals
- illnesses, including the flu, colds, or a sinus infection
- strenuous exercise
- extreme weather, especially very cold and dry air
- high levels of stress or intense emotions that lead to hyperventilation with rapid breathing

Some people with asthma may need to take medicines that can help keep asthma under control and prevent asthma attacks. A person must take these medicines regularly, even if they are not having symptoms of asthma. These are known as long-term control medicines.

Another part of asthma treatment involves rescue medicines, also known as quick-relief medicines. A person uses quick-relief medicines during an asthma attack. These are usually in the form of an inhaler or nebulized solution.

Sometimes, a person may also need oral or injectable corticosteroid therapy or other medications to treat an asthma attack. If severe, hospitalization may be required.

When to see a doctor

If a person cannot quickly get their asthma attack under control, they should seek

emergency medical care. During an asthma attack, quick-relief medicine should allow them to breathe freely again within 15 minutes or less.

If the person does not have quick-relief medicine and is having an asthma attack, they or someone with them should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. It is also an emergency when the person:

- has blue lips or nails
- takes 30 or more breaths per minute, which a stopwatch can count
- cannot talk or walk normally
- has flared nostrils when breathing
- has a chest that “pulls in” between the rib spaces when they breathe in

In addition, the American Lung Association say a person should call their healthcare provider if they:

- feel dizzy, faint, or weak
- cannot do daily activities because they are not breathing normally
- have a cough that does not go away
- wheeze or have changes in breathing
- continue wheezing after taking quick-relief medicine

People who have asthma should see a doctor regularly and at least once a year to be sure their symptoms are under control. They should not try to use homeopathic remedies or other treatments on their own without a doctor’s care.

People who have frequent asthma attacks, for instance, may need to try a different long-term control medicine regimen with guidance from their doctor. They may also need to look at triggers and determine whether they have any new ones or need to take different steps to avoid their triggers.

Outlook

Many people with asthma lead healthy lives with proper management of their asthma. Following a doctor’s plan with medication and avoiding triggers means people with asthma can carry on with normal daily activities.

Most activities, including sports and exercise, are possible for people who have asthma. In fact, the American Lung Association recommend exercise for those with asthma, as long as they are working with a doctor to keep their condition well

controlled. Exercise improves overall health and the well-being of the lungs, which benefits people with this condition.

If a person wishes to try homeopathic remedies or other natural treatments, they should discuss it with a doctor.

Although evidence is limited, homeopathy may be safe to try in combination with traditional asthma care for some people. It should not replace traditional, proven medications or the advice of a healthcare practitioner.

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