

Integrative Therapy for Breathing Disorders

What are breathing disorders?

These are lung diseases such as:

- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Acute bronchitis
- Upper-respiratory tract infections (URTI's), such as influenza and the common cold

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)^{1,2}:

- Each year, nearly 121,000 Americans die breathing disorders and lung diseases
- Lung diseases are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States
- Lung disease and other breathing problems are the number one reason for death in infants
- Today, more than 35 million Americans are living with chronic lung disease
- Lung disease can affect people of all ages, both genders, and all incomes, but affects a disproportionate share of minority populations

What integrative therapies are available?

There are several complimentary or alternative therapies that have shown promise in the relief of breathing problems. 3 we will focus on are:

- **Synbiotic Therapy** – the use of *probiotic* therapy plus a *prebiotic* to restore normal intestinal flora and reduce yeast overgrowth which may be associated with allergic immune response and decreased lung function⁴
- **Vitamin D** – hypothesized to help the immune system function more correctly and may help to reduce asthma exacerbations and URTI's⁵⁻⁷
- **Magnesium** – shown to relax smooth airway muscles, opening up airways and improving breathing⁸⁻¹⁰

What should I consider before starting integrative therapy¹¹?

- Any change in your current treatment should be considered a trial to attempt better control/reduce drug usage
- Consider discussing with your doctor or health professional about integrative therapy before you begin
- Discuss with your doctor some methods for self-assessment of improvement in lung function for some weeks before, during and after the trial of integrative therapy. For example, before-and-after comparisons of:
 - night-time waking
 - early morning bronchoconstriction (trouble breathing in the morning)
 - exercise tolerance
 - use of a bronchodilator (inhaler)
 - reduction in preventative medication use (rescue inhaler)
 - number of emergency room visits for breathing issues
 - days missed from school/work/social activities
- Discuss with your doctor the need to formally assess your asthma control before, during and after the trial of integrative therapy by using, for example:
 - quality-of-life symptom scores
 - peak expiratory flow rates (in adults)
 - spirometry

Glen Ellyn Pharmacy offers “A Complementary Therapy Asthma Management Program”, which includes:

- 1-on-1 counseling time with the pharmacist
- Information on incorporating diet and nutrition into asthma management
- Overview of the use of probiotics, vitamin D and magnesium for asthma
- 1 week & 5 week follow-up AND
- 2 month supply of synbiotic therapy

References:

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