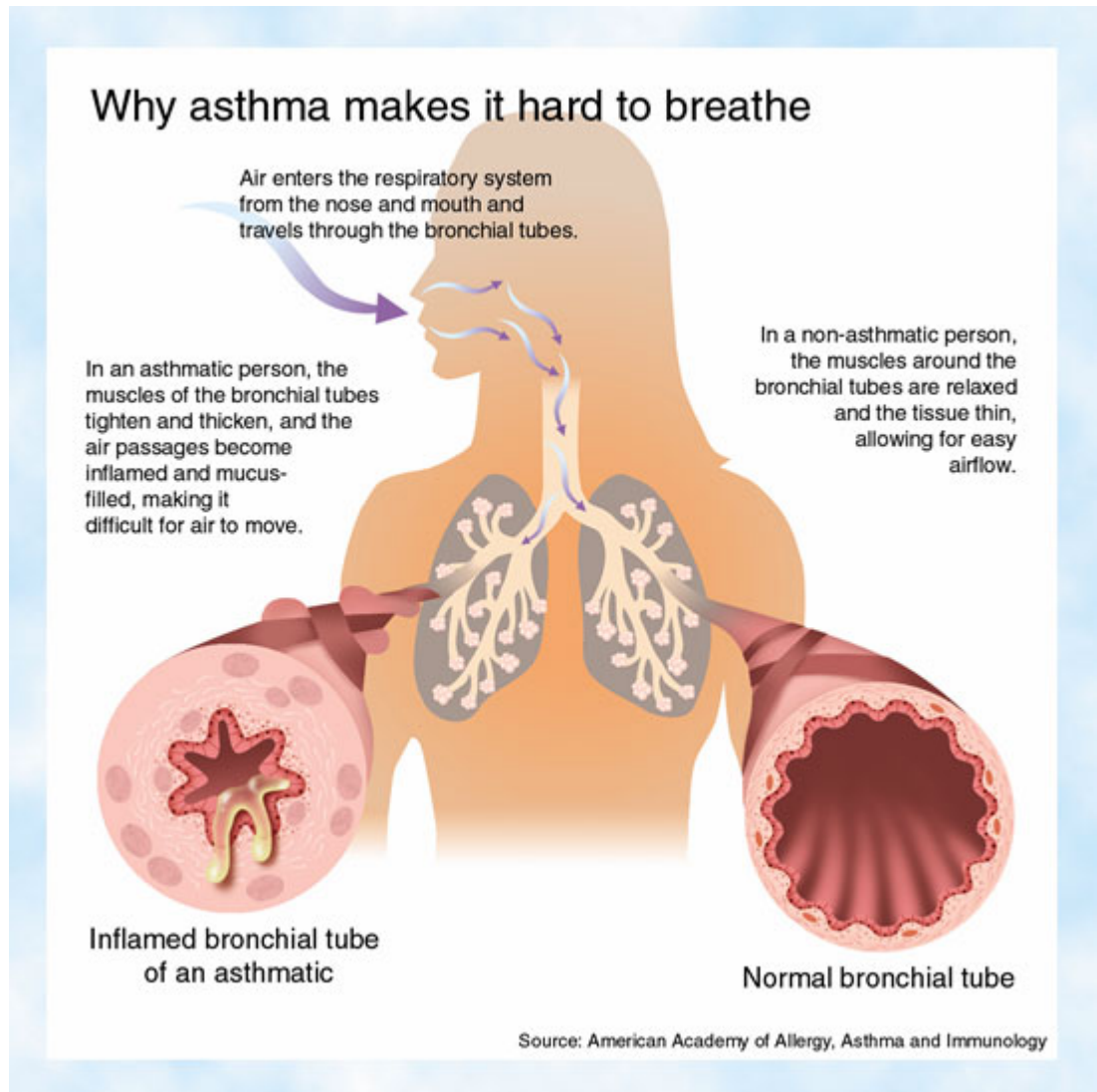


Asthma



Asthma is an ancient Greek word meaning “panting or short- drawn breath.” It is the most troublesome of the respiratory diseases. The asthma patient gets frequent attacks of breathlessness in between which he is completely normal.

Symptoms

Patients suffering from asthma appear to be gasping for breath. Actually, they have more trouble exhaling than inhaling because the air passages of the small bronchi become clogged and constricted with mucus, thus making it difficult for the patient to breathe out. All asthmatics have more difficulty at night, especially during sleep.

Treatment

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Modern medical system has not been able to find a cure for this crippling disease. Drugs and vaccines have only limited value in alleviating symptoms. Most of these are habit forming and the dose has to be increased from time to time to give the same amount of relief. The frequent introduction of drugs in the system, while giving only temporary relief, tends to make asthma chronic and incurable. Allergy - which is the immediate cause of asthma - itself is an indication of lowered resistance and internal disharmony caused by faulty eating and bad habits. This is the root cause and the real cure lies in a return to nature.

The natural way to treat asthma consists of stimulating the functioning of slack excretory organs, adopting appropriate diet patterns to eliminate morbid matter and reconstruct the body, and practicing yogasanas, yogic kriyas and pranayamas to permit proper assimilation of food and to strengthen the lungs, digestive system and circulatory organs.

The patient should be given an enema to clean the colon and prevent auto-intoxication. Mud-packs applied to the abdomen will relieve the fermentation caused by undigested food and will promote intestinal peristalsis. Wet packs should be applied to the chest to relieve the congestion of the lungs and strengthen them. The patient should be made to perspire through steam bath, hot foot bath, hot hip bath and sun bath. This will stimulate the skin and relieve congested lungs.

The patient should fast for a few days on lemon juice with honey and thereafter resort to a fruit juice diet to nourish the system and eliminate the toxins. Gradually, solid foods can be included. The patient should, however, avoid the common dietic errors. Ideally, his diet should contain a limited quantity of carbohydrates, fats and proteins which are acid-forming foods, and a liberal quantity of alkaline foods consisting of fresh fruits, green vegetables and germinated gram. Foods which tend to produce phelgm such as rice, sugar, lentils and curds as also fried and other difficult- to- digest foods should be avoided. Breakfast may consist of prunes, orange or berries or a few black raisins with honey. Lunch and dinner should consist of a salad of raw vegetables such as cucumber, lettuce, tomato, carrot and beets, one or two lightly cooked

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green vegetables and wheat bread. The last meal should preferably be taken before sunset or at least two hours before going to bed. Asthamtics should always eat less than their capacity. They should eat slowly, chewing their food properly. They should drink eight to 10 glasses of water a day, but should avoid taking water or any liquid with meals. Spices, chillies and pickles, too much tea and coffee should also be avoided.

Asthma, particularly when the attack is severe, tends to destroy the appetite. IN such cases, do not force the patient to eat. He should be kept on fast till the attack is over. He should, however, take a cup of warm water every two hours. An enema taken at that time will be very beneficial. Honey is considered highly beneficial in the treatment of asthma. It is said that if a jug of honey is held under the nose of an asthma patient and he inhales the air that comes into contact with the honey, he starts breathing easier and deeper. The effect lasts for about an hour or so. This is because honey contains a mixture of 'higher' alcohols and ethereal oils and the vapors given off by them are soothing and beneficial to the asthma patient. Honey usually brings relief whether the air flowing over it is inhaled or whether it is eaten or taken either in milk or water. It thins out accumulated mucous and helps its elimination from the respiratory passages. It also tones up the pulmonary parenchyma and thereby prevents the production of mucous in future. Some authorities recommend one year old honey for respiratory disease.

Another effective remedy for asthma is garlic. The patient should be given daily garlic cloves boiled in thirty gms of milk as a cure for early stage of asthma. Steaming ginger tea with minced garlic cloves in it, can also help to keep the problem under control and should be taken both in the morning and evening. Turmeric is also regarded as an effective remedy for bronchial asthma. The patient should be given a teaspoonful of turmeric powder with a glass of milk two or three times daily. It acts best when taken on an empty stomach. During the attack, mustard oil mixed with little camphor should be massaged over the back of the chest. This will loosen up phelgm and ease breathing. The patient should

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also inhale steam from the boiling water with caraway seeds, known as ajwain in the vernacular. It will dilate the bronchial passage.

The patient should also follow the other laws of nature. Air sun and water are great healing agents. Regular fasting once a week, an occasional enema, breathing exercises, fresh air, dry climate, light exercises and a correct posture go a long way in treating the disease. The patient should perform yogic kriyas such as jalneti, vamandhouti and yogic asanas such as ekpaduttanasana, yogamudra, sarvangasana, padmasana, bhujangasana, dhanurasana, vakrasana, ardh-matsyendrasana, shalabhasana, paschimottanasana and shavasana. Pranayamas like kapalbhati, anuloma-viloma, ujjayi, surbyabhedana and bhrumari are also highly beneficial.

The patient should avoid dusty places, exposure to cold, foods to which he is sensitive, mental worries and tensions. Asthmatic should be made to feel that they are not sick, and with slight adjustments, can live a full life.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.