

## **Asthma**

by Raymond Francis

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, asthma rates in the U.S. have increased 75% since 1984. In fact, all the industrialized countries have experienced a sharply increasing rate of asthma mortality in the last 10 to 15 years. The CDC now estimates more than 15 million Americans suffer from asthma, and the number of deaths per year has nearly doubled since 1976. While genetic factors are important in asthma, they simply can't explain the increases we have been experiencing.

Asthma is primarily an allergic disorder and it manifests as a reversible obstruction of the airway resulting from inflammation. In each person, unique factors trigger a hyper-responsive state producing both immediate and delayed allergic reactions. Acute episodes of asthma can be triggered by diverse stimuli including air pollution, tobacco smoke, exercise, viral infections, emotional factors, cold air, and a variety of allergens. Usually the allergens are inhaled, but asthma can also be triggered by things we put on our skin as well as by food or food additives.

Current treatment of asthma reflects modern medicine's failed approach to disease: suppressing symptoms with toxic drugs. Current drugs of choice include inhaled corticosteroids, beta-antagonists, and anticholinergics. While these toxic chemicals do reduce inflammation and reverse smooth muscle contractions, they also wreck havoc with the body's chemistry. They disrupt normal cell function and cause problems such as osteoporosis, fluid and electrolyte imbalances, menstrual irregularities, cataracts, tremors, muscle weakness, peptic ulcers, impaired wound healing, headaches, dizziness, glaucoma, hyperglycemia, high blood pressure, and other things.

Is there a more sensible approach? The answer is yes. Almost anything would be more sensible than poisoning people with toxic drugs. Nutritional approaches have shown positive results without the toxic side effects of drugs. First of all, we have to stop causing asthma.

Dr. Francis Pottenger demonstrated back in the 1930's that healthy animals fed processed-food diets similar to ours would become sick in a matter of months with a variety of diseases including allergies and asthma. Their offspring would be even sicker, and their grand-offspring sicker still, with almost all of them developing allergies. Other problems included thyroid malfunction; bone, kidney, liver, bladder, and parasitic infections; and joint and nervous system inflammations. The increase of these problems, including asthma, in our own society is exactly what was predicted from Pottenger's work, given our highly deficient, processed-food diets.

Pottenger noted that since the invention of the roller flour mill after the Civil War, our foods have been progressively depleted of their nutrition. The addition of canning, pasteurizing, homogenizing, hydrogenating, and packaging have further contributed to the decline in our nutritional competence. This is why malnutrition is now our leading cause of disease and death.

To prevent or reverse the asthma epidemic, we need first and foremost to return to good diets of fresh, organic, mostly raw, whole foods. This should include lots of fresh vegetables plus fresh fruit, whole grains, legumes, seeds, sprouts, and nuts. It also means avoiding the bad stuff like processed foods, dairy, sugar, salt, hydrogenated oils, corn, caffeine, tobacco, peanuts, white flour, white rice, and all artificial flavorings, colorings, and preservatives. To reverse our asthma epidemic, we need to start producing children who are not born with these problems as a result of their parent's poor diets.

If you already have asthma, identifying and avoiding allergens is very important. It's hard to get well if you are in a constant state of reaction. Since asthma is an inflammatory disorder of the airways, having adequate antioxidant defenses is critical. Supplementation with vitamin C is known to be beneficial to asthmatics. Basically, the first goal is to avoid those things that are putting stress on the immune system. Secondly, strengthen the immune system with good nutritional supplements such as vitamins C, B6, B12, E, niacinamide, calcium, magnesium, selenium, and manganese, as well as with carotenes, quercetin, and essential fatty acids. These have all proved to be beneficial. Some practitioners report that one tablespoon of olive oil two times per day has also been beneficial. This is not surprising in light of the new findings regarding the anti-inflammatory properties of olive oil, however, only unprocessed oil, such as Beyond Health's Olive Oil will have these properties. A Beyond Health-approved HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter to clean the air would also be helpful.

In childhood asthma, eliminating food allergies and food additives are often all that is needed to eliminate the asthma. The ELISA/ACT test from Serammune Physicians Lab in Reston, Virginia is a useful test to identify food and chemical allergens. The most common allergens are milk, corn, wheat, citrus, peanuts, eggs, chocolate, food colorings, and food additives.

By identifying and eliminating allergens and by rebuilding immune competence with a good plant-based, whole-food diet and high quality supplements, asthma can be reduced in severity and even eliminated. This is a far better approach than using highly toxic allergy drugs which ultimately, like most drugs, cause more problems than they solve.

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