

Natural Asthma Remedies

Are you looking for some natural asthma remedies to relieve your symptoms of asthma? Many people turn to natural remedies when they have a chronic or long-term illness, thinking these treatments might give them relief. Such alternative medicine for asthma might include herbs, dietary supplements, acupuncture, chiropractic and massage therapy, biofeedback, homeopathy, nutrition, and botanicals.

Are There Natural Asthma Remedies? There are many natural asthma remedies touted to relieve asthma symptoms. However, because there have been few or no research studies on most types of alternative medicine for asthma, the effectiveness and safety of many are unknown. Here are some examples of natural asthma remedies:

- Herbs and natural dietary supplements. Many different herbs, plants, and supplements have been used with asthma, including Tylophora (Indian ipecac), butterbur, ephedra (ma huang), katuka, grapeseed, boswellia, and dried ivy. Since none have been definitively shown to help asthma symptoms, they are generally not recommended. Ma huang (ephedra), a very common herb used in dietary supplements, has been used for years as a bronchodilator. Ephedra was recently banned by the FDA. Several studies have looked at using vitamin C supplements and omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) for asthma symptoms. Again, there is not enough evidence to recommend these natural therapies.
 - Yoga. Oftentimes, stress triggers asthma symptoms. But breathing exercises used in yoga have been found to help some people with asthma control breathing and relieve stress, a common asthma trigger.
 - Asthma Diet. Restricting dairy products and sugar has reportedly helped some children with childhood asthma.
 - Acupuncture. This Chinese medicine technique uses needles on pressure points to relieve symptoms. While some people with asthma have found that acupuncture can significantly reduce asthma attacks and improve lung function, studies are not conclusive.
 - Biofeedback. Learning to increase the amount of air inhaled has reduced fear and anxiety during an asthma attack for some people with asthma.
- Is It Safe to Use Natural Asthma Remedies? Most people think of herbs as being natural and therefore safe to take. However, many herbs have not been thoroughly tested, and, as mentioned, the FDA does not regulate them. Some herbs used to treat asthma have been found to interact with other medicines. For example, ginkgo biloba, used to decrease inflammation in the lungs, could cause bleeding problems in people also taking the blood thinner Coumadin. Licorice root, used to soothe the lungs of people with asthma, can increase blood pressure. Ephedra has been used as a bronchodilator but has also been linked to some unexplained deaths. It is very important that you always inform your doctor if you are taking any herbs, dietary supplements, or other so-called natural remedies. Some herbs may worsen your asthma or other medical condition, or they may interfere with prescribed asthma medicines you are taking.
- How Do I Know Which Natural Asthma Remedies Are Safe? Because most natural asthma remedies are not regulated, it is difficult to know what you are getting. Here are some tips to follow when considering using a natural asthma remedy:
- Talk to your doctor about any natural asthma remedy you are considering before trying it. Alternative medicine for asthma should never replace your asthma inhaler or inhaled steroids for asthma.
 - If you experience side effects such as nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat, anxiety, insomnia, diarrhea, or skin rashes, stop taking the herbal product and notify your doctor.
 - Avoid preparations made with more than one herb.
 - Beware of commercial claims of what herbal products can do. Look for scientific-based sources of information.
 - Select brands carefully. Only purchase brands that list the herb's common and scientific name, the name and address of the manufacturer, a batch and lot number, expiration date, dosage guidelines, and potential side effects.
 - Always talk to your asthma doctor before taking any medication or natural dietary supplement.