

A Natural Cure for Asthma?

With all the new findings on alternative medicine and natural remedies, you may wonder if there's a natural cure for asthma. The reality? Presently, there is no cure for asthma. In fact, it's highly advisable to avoid any asthma treatment or product -- natural or otherwise -- that claims to be a "cure" for asthma.

Can Natural Therapies Help to Manage Asthma? Some natural therapies may help to manage symptoms of asthma. For instance, a negative response to emotional stress can cause an asthma attack. Some natural relaxation remedies like deep abdominal breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and biofeedback can help relieve stress. Other findings suggest that diet plays a role in alleviating asthma symptoms. For example, it's thought that omega-3 fatty acids found naturally in high-fat fish such as salmon, mackerel, or cod enable the body to make more products that tend to decrease inflammation. Whether or not this may be of benefit to those with asthma is still unproven. Besides being filled with omega-3s, salmon has protein, calcium, magnesium, some carotenoids, and B vitamins. Vitamin B-6 helps to boost the immune system, which is important in preventing disease. Weigh the Benefits and Risks As you consider the different types of natural asthma remedies available, it's of utmost importance to cautiously balance your desire to breathe easier with the possible dangers of the treatment, which may be unknown. Never use any natural dietary supplement without checking first with your doctor or asthma specialist. Some natural herbal products, such as bee pollen, may trigger an asthma attack if you are allergic to the specific plant. Also, never stop using your asthma medications without your doctor's knowledge. The result of not following your doctor's prescribed medical regimen to treat your asthma can be very serious, even life threatening. If you are uncertain about the claims on a natural dietary supplement product label, call your doctor. A health care professional can assess the product to let you know what it contains. Goals of Managing Asthma Even though there's no natural cure for asthma, your symptoms can be treated and controlled with several asthma medications. Your goal in managing asthma is to:

- Get an accurate asthma diagnosis.
- Work with your doctor to develop an asthma action plan.
- Monitor your peak flow rate daily and take appropriate measures when it drops.
- Keep an asthma diary so you can track all your symptoms and medication use.
- Avoid asthma triggers or causes of asthma, including outdoor irritants such as smog.
- Seek medical advice and treatment for coexisting problems that can worsen asthma symptoms, such as GERD, allergic rhinitis, and sinusitis.
- Exercise daily to maximize your aerobic fitness.
- Prevent exercise-induced asthma by premedicating.
- Eat nutritious foods to maximize your immune defenses against viral and bacterial infections.
- Maintain a normal weight.
- Get plenty of restful sleep.
- Call your doctor at the first sign of asthma symptoms.
- Check in with your doctor regularly for breathing tests to make sure your asthma is managed and your medications are working optimally. You hold the key to living well with asthma. Trust your doctor to give you guidance, and then take daily responsibility for your breathing with proven self-care measures.