



www.kingsacupuncture.com

King's Acupuncture and Wellness Center
5859 Transit Road
East Amherst, New York 14051
716-688-1768

Oriental Medicine for Asthma

By: Vanessa Vogel Batt, L.Ac., MSTOM

Asthma is a chronic disease that causes inflammation in the lungs and, consequently, a narrowing of the bronchial tubes—also known as the air passages. This makes breathing difficult since the airflow is restricted. Tell-tale signs of asthma include wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, and a feeling of tightness in the chest.



The following substances and conditions may cause or worsen the symptoms of asthma:

- Airborne toxins and allergens (i.e. pollen, mold, dust, and animal dander)
- Physical activity
- Cold air
- Smoke
- Some medications (i.e. ibuprofen and aspirin)
- Emotional distress
- Gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD)

There are also certain risk factors to be aware of. These include being overweight, smoking, having a family member diagnosed with asthma, and/or being afflicted with a separate allergic condition. Conventional medical treatment offers a variety of pharmaceutical drugs, which are specific to the patient's triggers and symptoms of asthma. If you suffer from asthma, additional treatment from your acupuncture and Oriental medicine practitioner in addition to conventional medical treatment may prove to be a winning combination.

A study called "Immunomodulatory Effects of Acupuncture in the Treatment of Allergic Asthma: A Randomized Controlled Study", published in 2007 in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, demonstrates the valuable role acupuncture and Oriental medicine can play in the treatment of symptoms of asthma.

Patients suffering from bronchial asthma were divided into two groups: a control group and a study group. The control group received acupuncture treatments that did not specifically treat their condition, while the study group received the appropriate acupuncture treatments. Before and after each treatment, information was collected on all patients regarding their general well-being and blood work samples gathered.

At the end of the study, it was shown that 79 percent of the study group felt an improvement in their general well-being as opposed to only 47 percent of the control group. Significant improvements in the immune system were detected from the blood samples collected by the study group as well. The authors of the study were able to conclude that acupuncture, in conjunction with standard Western medical treatment, provides outstanding improvements to the immune system.

Additionally, there are a few things one can do at home to help lessen the severity of asthma symptoms. According to the theory of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, the environment plays an important role in the health of an individual. For example, if one lives in a cold, damp environment, it may prove to be problematic. Not only may the cold contribute to constriction of the bronchial tubes, but the damp air may foster mold or other airborne pollutants that can irritate the air passages as well.

While it may not be possible to move to another climate, it is possible to focus on removing dust, animal dander, and other pollutants from your home. If your home is damp, consider using a dehumidifier, as this will help in eliminating mold. Sometimes breathing in cold air can cause wheezing and trouble breathing, so covering your mouth and nose in an effort to warm your breath may be helpful.

For soothing relief on a cold day, try a nourishing, warm soup. Keep the ingredients simple, such as vegetables, rice, lean meat, and herbs. The less processed and refined your food is, the easier it is on your digestive system. According to the theory of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, phlegm is produced in the stomach, but stored in the lungs. This is a direct reference to the importance of eating well and avoiding phlegm-producing foods. Consider reducing your intake of dairy products, sugar, and fatty foods.

Maintaining a healthy weight and exercising every day will help strengthen your immune system as well. If you are finding it difficult to lose weight and lack motivation to exercise, this is something your practitioner of acupuncture and Oriental medicine can assist you with. If an addiction to smoking is causing or worsening your symptoms of asthma, there are acupuncture treatment protocols to help reduce cravings for nicotine and other substances.

Please call King's Acupuncture at 716-688-1768 for a free consultation to learn how acupuncture can help manage asthma.