

A Cure? for Asthma

Unfortunately for the asthmatics in the world, orthodox western medicine doesn't really look for the reasons why we suffer, apart from the irritants that can make matters worse. It does however, offer the chemicals that can reduce symptoms and save lives. As therapists and healthcare professionals, we can often make an amazing difference to what clients suffer and the degree or depth of their illness by approaching all disease and illness from a holistic viewpoint.

It is our job to question everything in a client's life that may have a negative influence or be the cause of their illnesses, from food intolerance to stress. The biggest question we need to ask about any condition is "WHY"?

Our skills lay in finding why the client became imbalanced, which led to a cellular change or a dysfunction in one or more of the body's systems leading to pain, asthma or IBS as examples.

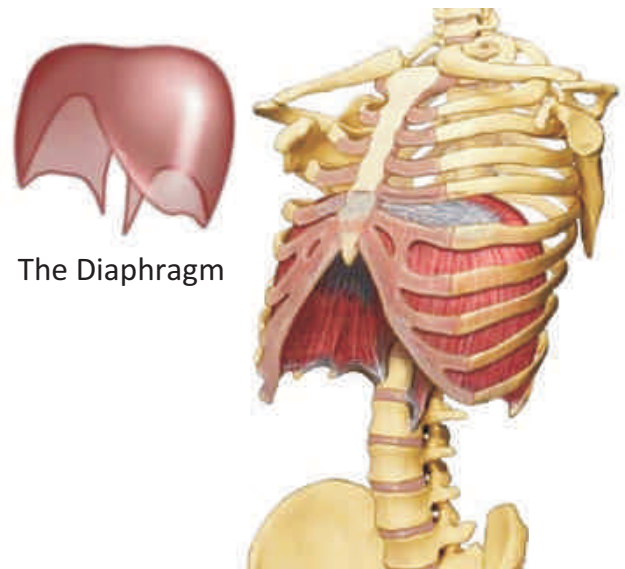
How is it that for 15, 25 or 80 years we can have no symptoms and then the next day we are suffering breathing issues that are diagnosed by the doctor as asthma through peak flow and other tests?

During pregnancy my wife got asthma. After the baby was born she still had asthma. What changed?

To address these questions we need to take a look at some of the functions of the body that could have an impact on the respiratory system, and question whether these can influence breathing difficulties.

1. The Diaphragm - This is a sheet of muscle extending across the bottom of the ribcage. The diaphragm separates the thoracic cavity from the abdominal cavity and performs an important function in respiration. It moves downward to increase the vertical dimension of thoracic cavity which then lowers air pressure in lungs causing air to move into lungs.

Like any muscle in the body its function is very simple 'contraction and relaxation', and the problems it can suffer from are also simple: spasms or weakness. For any muscle in the body to work correctly it needs to have secure attachments, if the attachment is compromised (i.e. some of the tendon has become



The Diaphragm

disconnected from the bone, or the bones aren't in the correct position that the muscle was designed for, it is impossible for the muscle to contract correctly causing a decrease in its full operation. In the case of the Diaphragm this reduction in power will affect the amount of air being breathed in or out (peak flow!)

The Diaphragm can be assessed through muscle testing procedures, by testing the client's ability to hold their breath in and then out. This will indicate if there is a problem in the contraction or relaxation phases of the muscle movement.

2. Inter-costal muscle contraction - elevates the ribs and sternum to increase the front to back dimension of thoracic cavity which helps to lower air pressure in lungs thus causing air to move into fill the lungs. These muscles, like the Diaphragm, have a set design that work correctly if the attachments of the muscle are not compromised by a twist in the rib positions or a restriction in their movement. They will be unable to contract correctly leading to a reduction in their ability to open up or reduce the chest cavity size, thus reducing air capacity (peak flow!)

3. Spinal function - a balanced and flexible spine is essential for correct full capacity breathing. We first need to understand that the nerves that innervate the inter-costal muscles flow from T1 to T11 portions of the spine, and the Diaphragm is innervated from the phrenic nerve that arises from the third, fourth, and fifth cervical (C3-C5). Any misalignment or functional movement difficulties including subluxation or fixation of the vertebrae may have an impinging affect on the nerves causing an imbalance of the normal operation of the muscles, leading to breathing irritation and peak flow issues.



the phrenic nerve when it passes by the 1st rib on the way to the diaphragm, and the fact that it is now nearly impossible for the ribcage to raise correctly to allow proper cavity expansion and breathing. This can be reset by using simple rebalancing techniques on the Sacrum and pelvis.

6. Kidney deficiency - in traditional Chinese medicine often leads to breathing difficulties due to its job of receiving Qi by helping the diaphragm to work. Pulse and tongue diagnosis will confirm this is the root cause or has an influencing factor often confirmed by other symptoms, like lower back pain and fatigue etc. Physical therapy and herbal medicine is directed at reinvigorating the kidney and adrenal area.

7. Stress - and breathing go hand-in-hand, through chemical balance, physical strain and digestive problems.

As can be seen from the above problems, all of them can have an influence on breathing individually or as a percentage factor on the whole problem. The worse the asthma is, the more of the list you find in your client. Consequently therapy has to be directed at resolving these issues if a change is to be made to a client's suffering.

Through muscle testing we can evaluate spinal movement and positional restrictions, along with understanding what vertebrae are slightly out of their natural position (subluxation) and which ones are jammed together (fixation) causing a lack of natural designed flexibility. Gentle treatment is then directed at the tissue strain around the vertebrae and the other causative factors involved.

4. Restricted Lymph Flow - we know the Lymph system has a dramatic effect on our health and wellbeing but our focus is on the muscles that support the breathing process. Because lymph cleanses nearly every cell in your body, symptoms of chronic lymph blockage or restriction are diverse, but can include worsened allergies and food sensitivities (that will affect breathing), frequent colds and flu (that will affect breathing), infections, joint pain, headaches and migraines, menstrual cramps, sinusitis, muscle cramping, tissue swelling, fatigue, skin problems, etc etc.

In asthmatics there are obvious areas of touch sensitivity these are believed to be

areas of lymph flow restriction. This includes down either side of the spine especially between the shoulder blades, the upper trapezium muscles, down the front of the Sternum and in between the ribs on the inter-costal muscles.

These points should be lightly stimulated for just 10 minutes a day to encourage all the body's fluids to flow through and cause relaxation and a reduction of sensitivity to the area.

****Do not over stimulate in the first 2 weeks, or cause the client pain at any time.**

5. Sacro-Illiic strain - causes predictable adaptations and changes in the body to allow us to be able to continue our lives without too much impact (pain and discomfort) until a later date, or until the body can repair the strain. These changes happen on the same side of the strain and include a T6 subluxation, a 1st rib and clavicle jam, and a TMJ imbalance.

The significance of this is often in the strain placed on the tissue surrounding

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