

Acupuncture and Asthma

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects more than 20 million people in the United States. Caring for a chronic condition such as asthma can sometimes be frustrating, but it's important to remember that it can be controlled. Acupuncture can be a powerful ally in the management of asthma, and it works well in conjunction with other types of treatment.

The facts about asthma

Asthma is an inflammatory disease in which the airways become blocked or narrowed, causing symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. Some people have long periods without symptoms, while others may always experience difficulty breathing. Asthma attacks occur when something triggers the inflammation of the respiratory system. Flare ups can be severe—sometimes even life-threatening.

Asthma attacks are generally caused by one or more triggers, including:

- A cold, flu bronchitis, or sinus infection
- Allergens including dust mites, tree and grass pollen, mold, and animal dander
- Irritants that include tobacco smoke, strong fragrances, and air pollution
- Certain food and food additives
- Aspirin and anti-inflammatory drugs
- Strenuous exercise
- Changes in weather
- Strong emotions such as anxiety, stress, grief and anger



Generally, the available approach of asthma treatment is to try and prevent attacks. This is usually done with regular use of anti-inflammatory medications, inhaled steroids and leukotriene inhibitors. Once an asthma attack is underway, quick-acting medications like corticosteroids may be able to relieve it. Most of these medications can cause side effects such as nausea, headaches, muscle tremors, and insomnia. However, many people have found that acupuncture treatment helps reduce asthma attacks, improving lung function, and even lower the amount of medication needed.

An acupuncturist will take a holistic, or whole-body approach in order to determine what areas of the body are affected and out of balance and contributing to the attacks. Since acupuncture takes into account your overall well-being, your practitioner may also address other issues that may be contributing to your asthma, such as exercise, diet, and stress. Acupuncture is a safe, effective, and pain-free approach to many conditions, and you may find that your overall health improves along with your asthma symptoms.

