

Introduction

Asthma is a serious chronic lung disease affecting 21 per cent of children 2 to 15 years of age. Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood. This disorder is typically episodic and remittent in nature. Asthma is characterized by the narrowing of the large and small airways due to a spasm of the smooth muscles of the bronchi, edema, inflammation of the bronchial mucosa and production of tenacious mucus. Asthma can begin at any age, but most people with this condition develop it before the age of five.

Main Symptoms of Asthma

- Shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest
- Coughing
- Wheezing

The frequency and severity of symptoms differs from person to person. There are four types of asthma: allergic, exercise-induced bronchospasm (EIB), reactive airway disease (i.e. asthma that only occurs during colds) and miscellaneous types. Included in the miscellaneous group are heartburn or reflux asthma and stress induced asthma. Children sometimes outgrow their asthma and half of these children will see a lessening of their symptoms as they move into adolescence. Unfortunately, fifty percent of this group will see their asthma return, often when they are in their 30s and 40's.

Does Modern Medicine Treat Pediatric Asthma Effectively?

The majority of children's asthma is NOT under control! Fifty-two percent of children currently receiving treatment from a modern medical doctor have poorly controlled asthma (according to the Asthma in Canada survey – the largest and most comprehensive survey to be done on the status or state of asthma in Canada). Poorly controlled asthma leads to an increase in asthmatic symptoms during the day and night, absenteeism (i.e. school or social engagements), exacerbations (i.e. more frequent acute attacks), an increased need for 'rescue' medication and a lower tolerance for physical activity. Poorly controlled asthma is a burden to the child and their family as well as healthcare systems as these patients are more likely to require urgent care and hospitalization. Although statistics show that more than 50% of these children are suffering with poorly controlled asthma, 88% of parents continue to believe their child's asthma is controlled 'very well'. Moreover, 77% of general physicians and 90% of

specialists surveyed also believe their asthma patients are optimally controlled even though statistics demonstrate otherwise. Ultimately, improperly treated asthma may lead to a lifetime of asthma.

Asthma and TCM

The current TCM approach to the treating asthma was first discussed in great detail by a famous TCM doctor named *Zhu Dan-xi* (approximately 600 years ago). Since this time, the treatment of this disease has been refined and improved upon by many generations of Chinese doctors. Paediatrics is a distinct specialty within Traditional Chinese Medicine. The majority of parents seeking an effective treatment for their child's asthma should see a TCM doctor who specializes in paediatrics. The most important modality utilized in the treatment of paediatric asthma is Chinese Herbal Medicine. The herbal formula is usually a culmination of 10 to 15 ingredients, which are chosen based on the child's clinical presentation. Upon return visits, the herbal formula is adjusted or modified as the patient's condition improves.

Success Stories

Britney

Britney's asthma has improved immensely since receiving acupuncture and herbal medicine. Within the past 8 months my daughter has used her puffers approximately 5 to 6 times. Prior to treatment, Briney was using her puffers 5-6 times per week depending on the weather and her activities. Now she plays soccer outside in the summer and basketball in the winter with no puffers!

Christina

I have been ill alot over the years because of my asthma. I was also often ill with alot of sinus infections and viral infections which would make my asthma worse. When I was ill because of these problems it would cause me to miss alot of school sometimes 30 to 40 days a year. When my mother started taking me to Dr. Helmer, he started me on a action plan on how I could overcome my health problems. Dr. Helmer made me feel

comfortable about taking Chinese herbs and made me feel confident about myself that there was hope for me to feel "normal" and be like others and participate in sports. Although the herbs are not the best tasting, their success in helping me are worth it. I thank Dr. Helmer for believing in me.

Lotta

Prior to seeing Robert Helmer, Lotta often suffered from severe bronchitis (once a month for over a year) and even suffered from pneumonia one time. She was coughing, sneezing and wheezing nearly all the time and her immune system was very weak and eventually she developed asthma. Since treatment with Robert Helmer her immune system has become much more stable. The herbs helped her to stay healthier for a longer period of time and to recover faster when she got sick. Since she was diagnosed with asthma we have been using a combination of TCM and modern medicine and she is doing very well with this approach. Lotta is now full of energy, her appetite is good and she is feeling strong and healthy. She has not been seriously sick for several months now, which was unthinkable before.