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# Breathe Deeply With Magnesium

31 October 2012 - Posted by Ashley under [Allergies](#), [Asthma](#), [Respiratory](#)

How often is it that someone afflicted with asthma walks into their doctor and is told to supplement with magnesium? On an educated guess, I'd say not all too often. Just in my circle of friends and acquaintances, there are several people utilizing either steroid or albuterol medications for their asthma and who, until I mentioned something, had never heard word one of how magnesium may benefit their conditions.



This is both alarming as well as absurd amongst a population that is growing increasingly asthmatic. In 2009, statistics showed that 1 out of every 12 people in the U.S. had asthma, as opposed to 1 out of every 14 in 2001. That is an over 1% rise of asthma cases across our population – that's a 5 million person spike in 8 years! That's huge!

Despite this large chunk of our population fighting to breath, our medical system seems to be ignoring an essential nutrient that could potentially save lives if not provide for indescribably better quality of

life for over 25 million people in the U.S. alone.

## How does magnesium benefit respiratory ailments like asthma?

Magnesium is necessary for proper muscle function. As I've mentioned in past articles, magnesium and calcium are complimentary nutrients and maintain a careful balance within our muscles – calcium being responsible for contraction while magnesium is required for the release. Too much calcium without magnesium results in spasms, twitching, irregular heartbeat, knots, "charlie horses", tics, jaw clenching, and a host of other things including... the constriction of airways as bronchial smooth muscle cells contract<sup>1</sup>.

Also included in magnesium's arsenal for battling respiratory issues is its ability to regulate and suppress histamine production. A large percentage of asthma attacks are triggered by allergens like dust, pollen, pet dander, and perfumes – innocuous substances that we come into contact with on a daily basis. The release of antibodies as our immune system attempts to "protect" us from these perceived invaders often affects the eyes, nose, throat, and lungs – the latter of which obviously is what ultimately leads to the attack.

Of course, anyone with asthma will tell you that there are oodles of other triggers beyond airborne allergens, such as sulfites in wine and foods, stress, cold & flu, or even something that makes you cough deeply. Many of these have two aspects in common in that they lead to immune response and/or inflammation that adversely effects sensitive airways. Magnesium just happens to be adept at tackling both of those issues!

## How is magnesium applied for asthma relief?

Interestingly enough, although mainstream general practitioners seem to be collectively unaware of magnesium's role in healthy respiratory function, many emergency care facilities have begun to implement it in the treatment of acute asthma attacks. Intravenous and nebulized forms of magnesium have seen increased usage in recent years in both hospitals and research studies – often succeeding where drug treatments alone have failed.

Outside of emergency medicine, the average consumer (or patient, in this case) can take advantage of less immediate magnesium intervention by taking the oral supplement route. The downfall of this path is that many of these supplements are comprised of poorly absorbed compounds and additives – add to that the need for optimal gut health in order for nutrient breakdown and absorption to occur, and you have a recipe for failure.

Cut to the shot of Person A throwing their bottle of magnesium oxide pills

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against the wall in frustration (“Curse you! You don’t work! Argh!”)...  
thereby triggering a stress-induced asthmatic episode. \*wheeze\* \*cough\*  
It’s a vicious cycle, really.

That’s a bit dramatic, I suppose, but that’s not to say that there isn’t an underlying truth to it. If you do choose to opt for oral magnesium, there are [numerous compounds](#) from which to choose – some of which are much better absorbed than others. In this case, you do indeed get what you pay for and the amino acid chelates of magnesium, although usually more expensive, are often much better assimilated by the body.

The other choice is, of course, (I know you saw this coming) ...topical magnesium. Compared to oral supplements, topical is as close as you can get to intravenous magnesium without actually puncturing any skin, and far more efficient at delivering magnesium ions directly into your cells. By choosing the topical route, you are skipping over those hurdles that oral magnesium represents, and are even able to apply it directly to areas that you feel may be specifically lacking in magnesium. For example: Want to work on getting magnesium directly to your respiratory system? Rub magnesium oil directly onto your chest, back and throat!

Will I be able to stop using my albuterol inhaler or steroid treatment?

It hurts me to say this, but no.

Let me clarify that a bit before you get too deflated. Magnesium has the ability to decrease frequency and severity of asthmatic episodes, but that doesn’t mean that it can eradicate them entirely for everyone. The qualifier there is “for everyone” since there have been cases of mild asthma sufferers no longer needing any pharmaceutical intervention after they began magnesium supplementation. The role of albuterol inhalers, for the most part, is “emergency medicine” – they act to provide immediately relief when an attack comes on and dilates airways within minutes.

As I mentioned above, both oral and topical magnesium supplements are for maintaining long term quality of life and providing respiratory support. If you are seeking magnesium for acute asthma treatment, intravenous and nebulized forms are the only forms suitable for that purpose.

The steroid treatments for asthma are another topic entirely. Many individuals\* that have been on long term steroid asthma treatments (such as Advair) have seen an increase in dependency, lung sensitivity, and susceptibility to respiratory infection, as well as a worsening of original asthma symptoms upon cessation of the drug. Although supplementation with magnesium will most likely be beneficial for those on steroid inhalers, any sort of weaning off of these drugs needs to be conducted with your doctors knowledge and supervision.

\*This information is from personal experience, health boards, drug forums, blogs, and individuals. There is little if any acknowledgement by medical professionals that these issues stem from this drug class and not some other extraneous source.

Asthma is just one of the many [Uses For Magnesium](#). Want to know more about magnesium and its beneficial role in asthma and allergies? Simply comment below, or [email](#) us directly!

References:

1. de Valk HW, Kok PT, Struyvenberg A, van Rijn HJ, Haalboorn JR, Kreukniet J, & Lammers JW (1993). European Respiratory Journal. *Extracellular and intracellular magnesium concentrations in asthmatic patients*, Vol. 6, No. 8, pp. 1122-1125 [ ]

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Dianne Hansen • a year ago

What about magnesium chloride nebulized for cystic fibrosis?

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Justme • 2 years ago

I have used magnesium drops sublingually for asthma attacks for over 15 years and I have NEVER had to use an emergency inhaler (although I keep on on hand) since I started using the magnesium drops.

1 ☐ | ☐ • Reply • Share ›



Joanne • 2 years ago

I had mild asthma symptoms for years and used both prescription and non-prescription drugs like Bronkaid. I started taking magnesium oxide, about 750 mg a day and am completely off all medications.

1 ☐ | ☐ • Reply • Share ›



Ashley Mod > Joanne • 2 years ago

It's so good to hear that, Joanne. Magnesium really is a necessary nutrient for those with inflammatory conditions such as asthma and allergies. It makes all the difference in the world.

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Pam • 3 years ago

my husband uses symbicort & combivent prn will the use of magnesium oil help control his allergies, thereby helping his asthma?

1 ☐ | ☐ • Reply • Share ›



Ashley Mod > Pam • 3 years ago

Hi Pam,

Magnesium naturally helps decrease inflammation and block histamine response. The issue with taking things like Symbicort is that corticosteroids have been shown to actually increase excretion of magnesium... which is a bit of a Catch-22 since magnesium is an extremely important nutrient - especially with those prone to allergies and asthma. Prolonged usage of corticosteroids also increases

dependence upon them, as they lower the immune system and confuse your body's natural anti-inflammatory responses. For instance, many years ago I was given Advair for my nocturnal asthma that was hindering sleep and I immediately noticed a rise in respiratory infections coupled with an increased need for the drug. I made a personal decision to stop (which, I want to be clear, is not a recommendation), and once I was off of the Advair, my once periodic asthma/allergie issues seemed to multiply ten-fold.

Luckily for me, I was able to slowly repair that damage and I now

---

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Rooaik • 7 months ago

how can I wane myself from the use of seritide to treat asthma ? Is it safe combine the use of seritide and magnesium?

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chrysostomos • a year ago

Magnesium oxide is actually just as readily absorbed by the body as magnesium citrate: <http://doctormurray.com/magnes...>

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hiver • 2 years ago

Hi Branna, Magnesium oil is simplicity itself to make. Take mag.chloride flakes and water, preferably spring or distilled in ratio 1:1 and mix. There are lots of sites on net, some say boil but I find the flakes dissolve easily in the cold water. Since I have no bath, only a shower, I use this daily on hands and lower arms, feet and ankles, wherever the blood runs closest to the skin. It can be drying to the skin and on one site I learned it can be combined with coconut oil or shea butter but I just use diluted neem oil after applying. Hope this helps. Incidentally, Mark Sircus' blogs are an invaluable source of information.

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Branna • 2 years ago

My son is three and has been having severe asthma attacks that require albuterol and a steroid (usually prednisolone) for several days. This has been occurring about once/3-4 weeks for the past two years. For the last several months he's also been on Qvar, which doesn't seem to be helping very much, but perhaps a little. I have started giving him magnesium citrate orally. I'm concerned that he's become dependent on the drugs and I'm trying to find an alternative way. I'm wondering how the drugs he's taken may be interfering with his magnesium/calcium levels and I'm interested in the magnesium rub you mention, as I've never heard of that before. Is this available for little kids?

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Lisanparagon • 3 years ago

I have asthma and try not to use my inhaler. I use to use Adair and now use duclera. I don't use it very often. I would be very intrested in learning more about magnesium and how I can use it to help me with my asthma.

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Ashley Mod > Lisanparagon • 3 years ago

Hello,

Although the use of Dulera may prevent you from seeing the full benefits of magnesium use, since you mentioned not using it very often, that probably wouldn't apply to you necessarily.

If you try not to use your inhaler and do not use the steroid that often, how did you go about decreasing your need for those? Do you currently take a magnesium supplement or something else for lung health? Or are you simply avoiding triggers perhaps?

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Jille Lowrie • 3 years ago

Is it safe to use in my portable nebuliser and if so, in what proportion? I would like to thank you for your blogs, they have been an education.

👍 | 🗨️ • Reply • Share ›



Ashley Mod > Jille Lowrie • 3 years ago

Hi Jille,

I would say that in general, it is safe to use as "approved magnesium"

