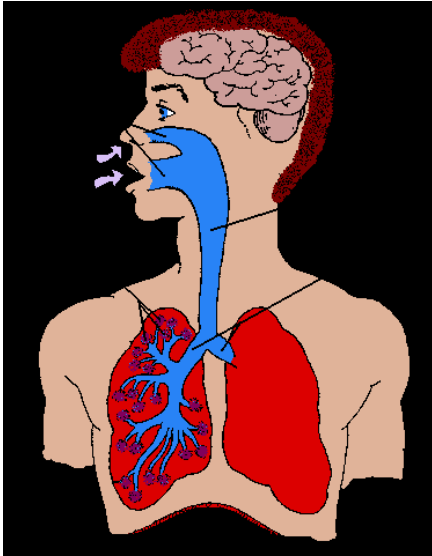


## Allergy and Asthma

from Dr.Madan Kataria's International Website

[www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org)



Scientific studies have proved that respiratory allergies like asthma and bronchitis are caused not only by physical allergens but also by a negative state of mind.

We are subjected to constant (or chronic) stress that results in a wide variety of stress-related illness including respiratory allergies which affect the breathing pattern and can at times lead to severe condition of breathlessness.

Asthma and bronchitis are both common chronic lung conditions that makes breathing difficult when the airways react to certain triggers or inducers causing airways to tighten, swell and fill with mucus. The lungs get less air which can

cause wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and trouble breathing.

Laughter Yoga has a profound positive impact on allergies, with many practitioners reporting complete disappearance of all symptoms of asthma, skin and other allergies. Though not an intervention for countering physical causes of allergies, laughter is a definite tool to remedy stress. It can help in reducing the risk factors by boosting the immune system, encouraging deep breathing and flushing the lungs of stale air and generating a feeling of wellness.

It is a new exercise routine that combines laughter with yogic breathing. It encourages deep diaphragmatic breathing which can have a positive effect on asthma. It also increases the number and activity level of natural killer cells, which attack virus-infected cells and keep allergies at bay.

“According to a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Dr. Hajime Kimata of Unitika Central Hospital, Japan, studied the effects of laughter on patients allergic to dust mites, cedar pollen and cat dander. Skin prick tests using a commercial allergen were performed on 26 patients before and after they viewed the Charlie Chaplin comedy Modern Times. During the same procedure, a control group watched a video featuring weather information.

The results showed that allergic reactions of comedy watchers were reduced for four hours after the screening. In contrast, there was no effect on allergic responses of weather watchers.”

### **Causal factors of asthma – how Laughter Yoga can help**

**Stress:** Living in a constant worry cycle and faced with major stressors, one succumbs easily to the physical symptoms of stress, which can lead to asthmatic conditions and other allergic reactions. Laughter Yoga is an effective method to reduce stress. It improves the prognosis of the disease and helps in lowering the levels of stress-related poisons in the body. It has the ability to reduce or even clear allergic reactions.

Hearty extended laughter is the best exercise for those suffering from asthma and bronchitis. It improves lung capacity and oxygen levels in the blood. It also flushes the lungs, strengthens the diaphragm and promotes healthier diaphragmatic breathing.

**Diaphragm Breathing:** The usual prescription for asthmatic patients is chest physiotherapy to remove mucous (phlegm) from the respiratory passages. Blowing forcefully into an instrument and blowing balloons is one of the common exercises given to asthmatics. Laughter Yoga does the same job, more easily and at no cost.

Many people suffering from asthma and bronchitis who practice Laughter Yoga daily in laughter clubs report marked reductions in the frequency and severity of their attacks. In many cases their symptoms have disappeared completely within months of daily laughter sessions.

**Immune System:** By boosting the immune system, Laughter Yoga increases antibody levels thereby reducing the frequency of chest infections. It also tones up the mucous clearing system of the bronchial tubes.

Frequent belly laughter empties your lungs of more air than it takes in resulting in a cleansing effect similar to deep breathing. This can be especially beneficial for patients who are suffering from emphysema and other respiratory ailments.

### **Other Allergies**

Research has confirmed that negative emotions can trigger allergic skin reactions. Disorders like hay fever and eczema are regulated, in part, by hormones and neuropeptides released into the bloodstream in response to stress.

Laughter Yoga increases the level of positive hormones and neuropeptides in the bloodstream thereby reducing the risk of skin allergies. It helps to increase T

cells (T lymphocytes) and the antibody IgA (immunoglobulin A), which fights upper respiratory tract infections.

### **Teen / Childhood Asthma**

Teens with asthma tend to be more depressed and more likely to use drugs and alcohol. "This high frequency of depression in adolescents with asthma is most likely a consequence of a disease that impedes breathing, interferes with age-level activities, and complicates the adolescent process of developing a self-identity different from family," according to Bruce G. Bender, PhD, National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver, Colorado.

Laughter exercises are ideally suited for young teens as it quickly helps to change the mood state by releasing endorphins, natural opiates that generate feelings of comfort and safety. Laughter Yoga helps one to cope with difficult situations and releases pent up emotions through the process of catharsis.

Though the most common cause of childhood asthma and respiratory allergies is genetic and physical, emotional stress caused by anxiety, anger or frustrations are also childhood asthma triggers. Children to day are faced with numerous stressors and pressures that can negatively alter the breathing pattern resulting in hyperventilation and rapid breathing that can further worsen an asthma attack.

Laughter Yoga is a powerful tool to remedy the immune system and reduce the negative triggers that bring on allergies. It focuses on all the aspects of well being – physical and mental. While the physiological healing power of laughter helps in recovery, the psychological takes care of the mental stress and depression that can reduce the incidence.

It teaches one to breathe correctly using the diaphragm, thereby increasing the net supply of oxygen to the body and the brain and using the lungs to the fullest capacity. It is the best prescription to curb the attacks and is a great preventive.