



AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

FDA: Do not use homeopathic products for asthma

Turning to homeopathic products to treat your child's asthma could do more harm than good.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning people not to use homeopathic asthma products that are sold over the counter.

"These products have not been evaluated by the FDA for safety and effectiveness," the group said.

Asthma is a chronic disease in which the tubes that carry air to the lungs become irritated. More than 5.75 million U.S. children have asthma, most of whom developed symptoms by the age of 4 or 5 years.

At first, asthma may look like respiratory infections that keep coming back. Your child may frequently wheeze, cough, feel tightness in the chest and have shortness of breath.

A doctor can prescribe medications to open the child's airways in the short term and to reduce symptoms on a daily basis.

However, sometimes parents turn to homeopathic products instead, believing they are all natural and cost less, said Todd A. Mahr, M.D., FAAP, a pediatrician and chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Allergy and Immunology Executive Committee.

These products claim to treat symptoms using diluted animal, plant or mineral extracts. Their labels may include active ingredients listed in terms of dilution such as LM1, 6X or 30C.

However, Dr. Mahr said they aren't always natural like they claim, and there isn't proof that such treatments really help asthma.

"You're in the Wild Wild West when it comes to the labels that are on some of these things and you need to be aware that these are not held to the same scrutiny that any FDA (approved) product is," Dr. Mahr said.

If asthma isn't being treated properly, children could land in the hospital with more serious conditions, he said.

Anyone who uses homeopathic products for asthma and has negative side effects should contact the FDA at www.fda.gov/MedWatch/report or 800-332-1088.

— *Melissa Jenco*

RESOURCES

- Asthma symptoms, <http://bit.ly/1FeYv70>
- Asthma triggers, <http://bit.ly/1EsULz0>
- FDA safety alert on homeopathic asthma products, <http://1.usa.gov/1bjlfp8>

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