

The Breath Connection Facts

1. Overbreathing, either by taking larger breaths or more breaths per minute or both leads to low carbon dioxide levels in the lungs.
2. Lowered carbon dioxide levels (less than 5%) lead to spasm of smooth muscles that wrap around airways, blood vessels, bladder and other hollow organs.
3. Lowered carbon dioxide levels lead to the impaired oxygenation of the body as blood holds onto oxygen more strongly not releasing it fully to the tissues. (The Bohr effect)
4. Lowered carbon dioxide levels changes the acid/alkaline balance of the blood thereby impairing the entire chemistry of the body.
5. Chronic long-term over-breathing causes receptors in the brain to accept and maintain lower levels of carbon dioxide in the blood, thereby ensuring the continued state of over-breathing to the detriment of the person's health.
6. The above effects all contribute to the symptoms experienced by people with digestive & bladder problems. For more details of these physiological effects visit our website at:

<www.buteykokent.co.uk>

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How can breath training help?

The digestive tract and bladder have a lot of smooth muscle that is immediately caused to spasm when carbon dioxide levels fall due to over-breathing. Hyperventilation due to the fight/flight response also increases production of histamines that can cause allergic reactions in the gut. Hyperventilation causes the pH of the body to be raised and this may trigger increased clearance of urine to release bicarbonate as a means of returning the pH back to normal. The fight/flight response to stress raises blood pressure and the kidneys may then respond by increased elimination of urine to restore normal blood pressure. The normal peristalsis of the gut is disturbed by the spasm of smooth muscle and the digestive process is shut down as another response to the fight/flight effect. Thus by normalizing breathing it is possible to reduce the adverse effects on bowel, digestion, bladder and kidney function. Normalizing breathing has the effect of minimizing the adverse reactions of the fight/flight reactions. The Buteyko Method addresses this problem as well as other lifestyle factors.

www.ButeykoKent.co.uk



The Breath Connection

Gut & Bladder Problems IBS

Our breath connects everything in our lives: our health, emotions, our whole being and every living thing in the environment, as we all, plants, animals & fellow humans, breathe the same air.

Good breathing means good health.

www.TheBreathConnection.com

IBS & The Buteyko Method

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is the most common intestinal disorder seen by doctors, affecting approximately 22 million people in the USA. It causes 34,000 hospitalisations; 3½ million physician office visits; 2.2 million prescriptions are written for it; and 400,000 people become disabled by it.

The main symptoms of IBS are recurrent colicky stomach pain; abdominal pain and distension; bloating, wind and cramps, rumblings, belching; diarrhoea & constipation sometimes alternating, flatulence and mucous covered stools.

Secondary symptoms can include a feeling of incomplete emptying after going to the toilet, incontinence and bladder problems, nausea, heartburn, indigestion, feeling full, back pain, headaches, lethargy, anxiety and depression.

Many of these symptoms are also found in people who have chronic hidden hyperventilation. There is also a strong relationship between stress and bowel problems, the same is true for stress and hyperventilation. It would seem reasonable therefore that by reducing the impact of stress by normalizing breathing there should be a beneficial effect on digestive disorders.

The automatic reactions to stress are greatly reduced when patients learn to breathe normally, reducing the symptoms of gut & bladder problems.

Bladder Problems & The Buteyko Method

Frequency & urgency of urination are often due to spasm of the smooth muscle around the bladder during periods of over-breathing. It is common for this to be more of a problem at night when we are asleep. With little physical activity there is a reduced production of carbon dioxide and if we are usually over-breathing during the day this will increase the loss of carbon dioxide so causing the spasm of smooth muscle around the bladder. The additional factor may be increased production of urine by the kidneys as the body attempts to restore the blood pH back to normal by eliminating bicarbonate. There is yet another consequence of this arising from loss of magnesium that may cause additional irritation of the nervous system.

How do I know if I am hyperventilating?

Check these associated symptoms:

Respiratory system: Shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, over sensitivity of the airways, excessive sneezing, production of copious mucus, blocked or running sinuses & excessive yawning or sighing.

Nervous system: light headedness, dizziness, unsteadiness, poor concentration, numbness, tingling and coldness especially in the hands and fingers and often in the face. In severe cases, loss of memory or loss of consciousness.

Cardiac: racing, pounding or skipped heart beats.

Psychological: varying degrees of anxiety, tension and apprehension, even panic attacks.

General: mouth dryness, abdominal bloating, belching and flatulence, easily tired, poor sleep patterns, general weakness and chronic exhaustion.

How effective is breath training?

There are many ways to restore breathing back to normal but the Buteyko Method has been shown to be a very effective way of learning how to do this. This is in part because it is a very structured and practical approach but also to the fact that the student can monitor their progress very precisely from day to day.

Additional Lifestyle Factors

The Buteyko Method is not just about breath training but attention is given to other lifestyle factors such as posture, relaxation, physical exercise, diet, food allergies or intolerances and coping with stress.

For instance those with digestive disorders are advised to:

- Eat little and often
- Drink an adequate amount of water
- Take regular physical exercise
- Avoid known irritants
- Ensure eating is in a relaxed atmosphere
- Have a well balanced diet

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