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Hypnosis Can Relieve Symptoms in Children With Respiratory Diseases

— Hypnosis has potential therapeutic value in children with respiratory disorders for alleviating symptoms such as habit cough or unexplained sensations of difficulty breathing and for lessening a child's discomfort during medical procedures. Proper utilization of hypnosis as an adjunct to conventional treatment and its ability to use the mind-body connection to bring about physiological changes are explored in a provocative paper in *Pediatric Asthma, Allergy & Immunology*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

Ran D. Anbar, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at SUNY Upstate Medical University, in Syracuse, NY, recommends hypnosis as a treatment option when a child's respiratory symptoms appear to have a psychological component. In his paper, "Adding Hypnosis to the Therapeutic Toolbox of Pediatric Respiratory Care," Dr. Anbar points to symptoms such as difficulty taking a breath, a disruptive cough, hyperventilation, noise on inspiration such as a gasp or squeak, and difficulty swallowing despite normal lung function as possible indications for the use of hypnosis to supplement medical therapy. Symptoms that are absent during sleep, can be associated with a particular activity or location, or are linked to or triggered by an emotional response may be particularly responsive to hypnosis.

Published data support the benefit of hypnosis in children with respiratory disorders with a large mind-body component such as vocal cord dysfunction and habit cough. Hypnosis can also help lessen sensations of difficulty breathing and anxiety in other respiratory diseases such as cystic fibrosis and asthma. Hypnosis is also a valuable tool for easing a child's anxiety and helping patients control their response to discomfort.

Dr. Anbar cautions that hypnosis should not be attempted or considered for use by someone who is not a health care provider and has not received appropriate training in the technique. "Dr. Anbar has added hypnosis to our therapeutic toolbox. When breathing problems have a large mind-body component, resolution with hypnosis can dramatically reduce the need for expensive testing and medications," says Harold Farber, MD, MSPH, Editor of *Pediatric Asthma, Allergy Immunology*, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Section of Pulmonology, at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX.

Anbar et al. **Adding Hypnosis to the Therapeutic Toolbox of Pediatric Respiratory Care.** *Pediatric Asthma Allergy Immunology*, 2010; 100204180550001 DOI: [10.1089/pai.2009.0025](https://doi.org/10.1089/pai.2009.0025)

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