Bronchitis, Coughing and Congestion

By Penny Keay

You have had a cold, allergy or other irritation that caused you to cough a lot. Now you seem to be feeling it deeper into your chest.

You go to the doctor and he tells you that you have bronchitis. He offers you antibiotics but you decide you will try essential oils.

Having a bout of bronchitis can be a stressful. When your bronchi and muscles surrounding them become narrowed, breathing becomes difficult.

Many things can cause or trigger you to develop bronchitis. Air born allergens, food allergies, chemical sensitivities or even some times exercise will set you off coughing. The situation can be compounded if you also have asthma.

Coughing and wheezing result as you attempt desperately to breathe.

Asthma is or can be a serious medical condition and should never be taken lightly. Please follow your doctors’ instructions especially if you have asthma and bronchitis together.

Bronchitis is inflammation of the bronchi. Again, this can be caused by many of the same triggers for asthma. Thick mucus accumulates as the bronchial walls are irritated and inflamed.

It can be difficult to expel this mucus. Often times, bronchitis will develop at the end of a cold or other upper respiratory infection.

Remember that you should always consult your physician before implementing aromatherapy.

Since the telltale sign of bronchitis is caused by congestion and inflammation of the bronchial passage ways in the lungs, it can make it difficult to breath.

If the mucous is thick and sticky, it becomes very difficult to cough it up and get it out of your chest.

It can be caused by allergens and/or infections. It can be an acute attack - sudden onset, as seen with colds and upper respiratory or it can be chronic - which could be due to a lingering bacterial infection or due to irritations from environmental exposure to dust and other pollutants.

There are several essential oils that can help with bronchitis. There are many essential oils that can help loosen the mucous and make the cough more productive.

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You can use essential oils in a bowl of warm to fairly hot water, drape a towel over your head and breathe deeply in for 10-15 minutes. Or you can use several of the oils in the bath or shower.

In the shower, an easy way to diffuse them is to place several drops on a Terra Cotta Disc, a passive type diffuser and let the warm water hit the diffuser while it sits on the shower stall floor. Of course, be careful not to step on the small disk.

Using the essential oils in a bath or shower will give you some quick relief. You can diffuse the oils in your bedroom all night using a fan diffuser.

Or, you can mix a little with carrier oil and apply to your chest, neck, and the bottom of your feet.

When you apply the oils mixed with a little carrier or massage oil, your body will absorb and be able to use the oils at the cellular level to help heal and repair damage done to the lung tissues.

The essential oils that appear to give the most relief for those suffering from bronchitis include: Eucalyptus globulus, Eucalyptus radiata, Fragonia, Lavender, Peppermint, Ravintsara, Ravensara, and Frankincense are most commonly used to help lung congestion.

Essential oils helpful with bronchitis include: Cedarwood, Cypress, Elemi, Fragonia, Eucalyptus globulus, Frankincense, Helichrysum, Lavender, Lemon, Sweet Marjoram, Peppermint, Pine needle, Myrrh, Myrtle, Niaouli, Orange, Thyme linalool.

It is important that while you are dealing with bronchitis be sure you are getting plenty of rest. There are plenty of essential oils to help you drift off to sleep but first you want to make breathing easier and the cough to lessen.

Aromatherapy can help to open airways and make breathing easier. Essential oils help to clear congestion, reduce inflammation and thin excess mucus so coughing is more productive.

If coughing is spasmodic (comes in bouts where you can’t seem to catch your breath) use Cypress.

Essential oils helpful with asthma include: Clary sage, Cypress, Eucalyptus globulus, Frankincense, Helichrysum, Lavender, Lemon, Sweet Marjoram, Peppermint, Myrrh, Pine needle, Rose Otto, Rosemary, and Tea tree.

When making blends for any health concern - remember the best is to try one or two oils to start with. Try never to blend more than 5-6 oils together at one time but there are exceptions when more oils may be necessary in a blend. Below in the Recipe section is a recipe to try for asthma and bronchitis relief.

Oh, how I wish I had known about essential oils 35 years ago when we were raising our children. And I'm sure Alan's Mom would have welcomed it too over 60 years ago when he was an infant and young boy.
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Al and our sons all had several bouts of bronchitis as infants and young children. Bronchitis was always at the end of every cold or upper respiratory infection especially with two of our sons.

One would develop bronchitis as a result of his allergies. The other whenever he got a cold! Lucky though as none of our children ever had ‘croup’, which is another respiratory ailment centering on inflammation of the larynx.

It was so frustrating, listening to the coughing and congestion. They never really felt that sick, but you hear the coughing. They would of course, be worn down by the lack of rest. And they themselves got tired of it all!

As many people, we always tried natural remedies for treating bronchitis and chest colds.

Back then, we used a lot of a medicated salve that was filled with Eucalyptus, Menthol and camphor in it. It did the trick, but the ointment was so messy and rubbing it on their chests, back and neck was not fun when you had to be careful not to get it into eyes etc.

If we had known about essential oils we could have used them mixed with a little carrier oil or even lotion or cream. It would have been so much easier. Or better yet we could have just diffused it in their bedrooms.

And if we had been using essential oils back then, our children would not have gotten sick as often and if they did it wouldn't have been as severe. Lessons learned too late for us, but hopefully not for this next generation.

**Bronchitis chest rub**

- **Eucalyptus globulus** - 12 drops
- **Fragonia** - 8 drops
- **Peppermint** - 5 drops
- **Thyme** - 5 drops

2 ounce of **Basic Cream or Sorbolene or lotion**

Mix well and gently rub a small amount on your chest and throat several times a day.

**An Inhalation-diffusion blend to use for Bronchitis**

- **Myrtle** - 25 drops
- **Thyme linalool** - 10 drops
- **Eucalyptus radiata** - 10 drops
- **Niaouli** - 10 drops

Blend well and use one of these ways - Put in about 10 drops in a bowl of hot water and let the steam fill the air.

If using this with a child do not cover their head with a towel. Just let them sit NEAR the bowl and inhale.

This blend is great to place several drops on a tissue or use in a **personal inhaler.**

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Or you can put 3-5 drops in small amount carrier oil and massage over the chest and back.

This blend is great for children over 5 years of age. Always use with caution with younger children - diffuse in the room only and only for short periods of time.

Remember that essential oils all have antibacterial and antiviral properties and the essential oils that are used in treating bronchitis symptoms are especially good for treating these families of germs.

**Special note:** If you have chronic bronchitis and you are a smoker, there is probably no essential oil that will help to get rid of your cough or congestion until you stop smoking. You will need to stop smoking so the irritating substances will no longer be present in your airways.

**Breathe a Little Easier Blend**

- **Myrtle** - 15 drops
- **Thyme ct linalool** – 5 drops
- **Eucalyptus radiata** - 5 drops
- **Niaouli** - 5 drops
- **Lavender** – 5 drops

Blend well and use one of these ways -
+ Put in about 10 drops in a bowl of steaming hot water and let the steam fill the air,
+ place several drops on a tissue or use in a **Personal inhaler**.
+ Put 3-5 drops in a small amount of carrier oil and massage over the chest and back.

This blend is great for children. Again, use caution with small children. It is best to use in a **Fan type diffuser** in their bedroom for long term, low concentration diffusing. Use only 2-3 drops in a bedroom.

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