

Asthmatics Find Relief in New Type of Sauna

Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin
Spring 2006
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If your eyes are itching and your nose is running a lot these days, you're not alone. The experts say that 2006 is the worst allergy season in years for Canada and the northern United States.

The problem is a little understood coincidence of pollination in various species. Normally we get various trees blooming and pollinating at different times but this year they are all pollinating at once." The pollen count is so high on some days you can actually see it like snow in the air.

The solution, if you're suffering more than usual, could be to sweat it out. Dr. Jozef Krop of Mississauga conducted sweat therapy experiments in the late 1980s where he sweated severely asthmatic patients until their symptoms disappeared.

It used to be that no one suffering from even mild asthma could enjoy the health benefits of a sauna because the high-heat would trigger an attack. But now many doctors are using saunas to treat asthma - with tremendous success.

"Sauna is excellent for asthma," says Dr. Krop, author of *Healing the Planet – One Patient at a Time*. Dr. Krop is a pioneer in sauna therapy and his published papers about patient success with asthma sparked a movement toward sauna therapy across North America.

Dr. Krop uses a special kind of low-heat ceramic sauna in his world renowned clinic in Mississauga. It was made by SaunaRay which manufactures medical grade saunas at its factory right here in Collingwood. Dr. Krop has many patients suffering from severe allergies and chronic pain due to chemical overload, so he chose SaunaRay because the company makes a guaranteed toxin-free unit that will not release chemicals back into the sauna when heated.

"Basically any sauna is good for you because it makes you sweat," says Dr. Krop. "But this low-heat sauna allows you to put much sicker people inside, or people who are intolerant to the high temperatures."

In addition to Dr. Krop, SaunaRay's Collingwood factory has built ceramic-heat saunas for doctors at Harvard Medical School, The University of Toronto Medical School and Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto.

"We supply all the doctors using sauna therapy because we guarantee there is no plywood or toxic glues that will vapourize poisonous chemicals into the room when you heat it," says Rodney Palmer, President of SaunaRay Inc.

“We imported some of the discount models from China once but we found out they had faulty wiring, used chemical fire retardants and were actually gassed with pesticides by law before leaving port,” says Palmer. “They broke down so much they weren’t worth the discount.”

In Dr. Krop’s most famous sauna study, in the medical journal *Clinical Ecology* (1987/88) he cured a teenage girl of her asthma after years of failed treatment from respiratory specialists, who prescribed steroids. “Her symptoms did not clear with environmental control, immunotherapy or anti-Candida treatment,” says the report. “They cleared after sauna therapy.”

Thanks to a nation-wide public information campaign launched by SaunaRay, many Canadians are now experiencing the fruit of Dr. Krop’s investigations. The saunas built here and shipped all over North America actually allow patients to sweat without overheating the lungs. There are however many cheaper imports, mostly from China, that use toxic materials and consumers should beware.

“It’s all in the heaters,” says Palmer. “We use a particular type of medical grade heater that is not utilized in cheaper imported saunas. And of course no plywood and no toxic glues”

They are known technically as Far Infrared saunas, because the proper ones utilize ceramic heaters which naturally vibrate in the far-infrared wave length. This energy is efficiently absorbed by the human body; we naturally absorb it from the sun. The heat emanating from the ceramic penetrates the body by 1-2 inches, triggering the sweat glands before the core body temperature rises. This allows profuse sweating at lower, more tolerable temperatures so that heart patients and even asthmatics can go inside and sweat without triggering an attack.

This low-heat sauna changed the world for Bonnie Lesky, an advertising executive from Toronto. For years she was shackled to her asthma inhaler and had to use it for relief several times a week. She purchased a SaunaRay unit for her arthritis but was delightfully surprised when, after a few months, her asthma was almost completely gone.

“I never thought it would eradicate asthma, but I barely even use the inhaler anymore,” says Lesky.

She suffered cold-induced asthma that was triggered with the slightest amount of exertion in freezing weather. “Last winter I couldn’t go outside without the inhaler. This year I barely needed it at all.”

Perhaps saunas are one of the best kept secrets in asthma therapy. Dr. Krop explains that they work on asthmatic symptoms because profuse sweating is known to remove toxins from the body’s fat cells.

“We’re not talking about fat on the belly or the buttocks,” says Krop. “We’re talking about the fat cells in the cellular membrane. Every cell membrane contains fat, and my feeling is the smallest parts of the lung – the alveoli – are not flexible when toxins are present in the fat. When you remove the toxins they operate better.”

The bigger problem with this year’s pollen is that it is being blamed on shifting weather patterns. As the northern climates get a little warmer, trees blossom and pollinate sooner, which could mean a new pattern in our lives.

"Clearly, the last few seasons have been more severe," says Dr. Christopher Randolph, an allergist at the Center for Allergy & Immunology in Waterbury, Conn, which has seen an dramatic increase in the number of severe allergy cases.

And unfortunately the worst may be yet to come. "You'll have grasses in June, then weeds in August and September," said Dr. Randolph.

For Bonnie Lesky the sauna has finally allowed her to walk outside in comfort during the long winter months, and enjoy the spring despite the increased pollen count. “Having a SaunaRay unit in my home has definitely been worth it,” says Lesky, literally breathing a sigh of relief.

To learn more about SaunaRay medical grade saunas contact 794-8811.