



**Wellbeing**  
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## Mouth Breathing

“My son, if you would be wise, open first your eyes, your ears next, and last of all, your mouth, that your words may be words of wisdom.”

This ancient Native American proverb says so much about the Native Americans and their ways. And more than instilling a person with wisdom, this practice of keeping the mouth closed paves the way for outstanding health.

When we open our mouth we increase the tendency to mouth breathe. This is especially valid when we sleep. Why is this a problem? There are many negative consequences to mouth breathing. Structurally, our tongue will no longer support the maxilla, our upper jaw, if we mouth breathe. With the removal of this support, the vault, or roof of the mouth behind the maxilla, will rise and cause congestion to the nasal passages above. More pressing, however, is the increase in our saliva’s pH when we mouth breathe. More dental cavities and a tendency for upper respiratory tract infections will follow.

By breathing through the nose we solve the above problems, but most importantly we dramatically increase the body’s oxygenation. This happens because of the production of Nitric Oxide in the nasal passages that we inhale through the nose with each breath. This all-important NO, aside from being a potent vasodilator that opens the arteries and veins, greatly improves the lungs’ capacity to utilize the oxygen in the air we breathe. Oxygen is the body’s most important nutrient, and this is why people with a wonderful diet of nutrient-dense vegetables might still find themselves with health problems—they’re failing to adequately obtain the nutrition of air!

There are other nutrients besides food and oxygen, such as sunlight, grounding to the earth, and human touch that we rarely learn about, however, the need for oxygen is quite unrelenting in our daily lives. To our advantage, with attention we can improve our body’s ability to take these nutrients in.

If we look into the causes of mouth breathing we find that it has a lot to do with an infant’s facial and cranial development during pregnancy. If a child has nutritional shortcomings, then the cranial and facial bones, especially the maxilla (upper jawbone) will likely fail to develop properly. This is important because eighty five percent of the nasal airway is housed by the maxilla.



Should underdevelopment occur, the serious consequence of airway obstruction will force one to breathe more through the mouth and less through the nose.

Many children today, through sub-optimal nutrition, malpositioning in utero and trauma at birth, are born with facial-cranial structures that thwart optimal airway capacity. And beside these airway obstructions many future dental complications such as crowded teeth occur as well.

To this end, parents are becoming increasingly aware of the importance for chiropractic care and outstanding nutrition before and throughout pregnancy and during infancy. Aiding in every way the developing cranium has incredible, far-reaching effects for the child’s wellbeing.

Close the mouth. Increase the body’s oxygen with deep breaths through the nose. Stay well hydrated, be mindful of posture, and you will reap what you sow. Encourage your newborn to do the same. Pioneer, George Catlin, who from 1830 to 1860 observed many Native American mothers with their infants, writes;

“I, who have seen some thousands of Indian women giving the breast to their infants, never saw an Indian mother withdrawing the nipple from the mouth of a young infant, without carefully closing its lips with her fingers.”

- John Marc

## **Breathing Exercise**

### The Three Part Breath

#### Step One:

Through the nose, breathe into your abdomen and allow the air to enter into the depths of the abdomen. The belly should expand outward.

#### Step Two:

Then breathe into the chest, allowing the air to widen the *sides of your chest*. You may feel an expansion in your back which is excellent as well.

#### Step Three:

Finally let the air fill the upper chest to the collar bone.

With relaxation as the fundamental principle, exhale the breath to a natural pause and begin again.

The beauty of this exercise is the downward movement of air into the sole of the abdomen and the lateral push of air against the sides of the lower chest. Such a technique honors the *deep* in deep breathing. There are hundreds of benefits to deep breathing:

Massage of the Organs • Oxygenation • Circulation • Relaxation • Expansion of Lung Capacity • Clears Mucus and Bronchial Obstructions • Assists Posture • Clearer Thinking • Sleep Aid • Enhances Digestion • Releases Tension in the Spine • Grounding • Increased Blood Flow • Reduces Toxic Buildup • Helps Clear Infection • Increased Energy

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