

# ELOISE AND THE SALT CURE

ASK FOR EVIDENCE 

We've all seen health claims that sound too good to be true. Eloise lives with an asthma sufferer and knows first-hand how tough it can be to live with this illness. So when she read about a "salt therapy treatment" promising amazing results, she decided to #AskforEvidence. **Here's her story...**

## WHAT WAS THE CLAIM?

Having lived with someone with asthma for many years, I'm well aware of how deeply it can affect a person's quality of life. So when I came across the claim that salt therapy is an effective treatment for asthma, I wanted to find out the facts myself.

## WHERE DID YOU SEE/HEAR IT?

In a newsletter from The Salt Cave, a chain of UK clinics providing "100% natural, effective, risk-free Salt Therapy treatments", I read the following statement:

*"Prescription drugs and inhalers may bring immediate relief, but Salt Therapy offers a long lasting effect as many visitors have testified. In most patients, after a course of Salt Therapy, airways become normal and symptoms ease. The treatment's efficacy is estimated at 75-98%."*

## WHO DID YOU ASK? WHAT DID YOU ASK?

I wrote to The Salt Cave asking to see the evidence for their claim that salt therapy has an estimated efficacy of 75-98% in most patients.

## WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE?

After a long wait and repeated emails I got a response. But I felt fobbed off, they sent me a link to a page on their website containing a long list of mostly Russian studies: most of which were about other respiratory illnesses, and the few investigating asthma had small sample sizes and/or didn't use control groups. When I asked for research to back up their specific claim they didn't respond.

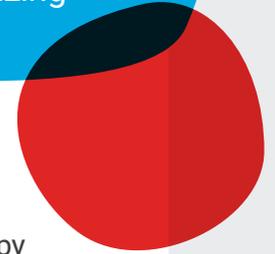
With the help of the team at Sense about Science, I was able to get in touch with Asthma UK, who directed me to their website containing information about complementary therapies for asthma, which includes using salt.

They informed me that it is important to emphasise that these are complementary treatments – not alternative therapies – meaning that they should not be used as alternatives to conventional treatments. This is because complementary therapies have not undergone the same amount of scientific scrutiny as conventional medicines, and therefore there's not very much scientific evidence to show they work or that they are even safe. So back to my original question of whether to add salt or not for treating asthma, Asthma UK gives the following advice:

*"The latest guidelines on the management of asthma don't mention salt pipes or speleotherapy as there isn't any scientific evidence to show that either may help asthma."*

## HAPPY? UNHAPPY?

Asthma is a major health concern for people in the UK. We need more accountability and transparency from companies claiming to have treatments or remedies, so that the proper scientific evidence for asthma treatments is made clear and accessible for people.



"Ask for Evidence"



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