

Salt Therapy Rooms Might Be the Answer to Relieving Your Seasonal Allergies

InStyle



ERIN LUKAS May 24, 2017 @ 1:00 pm

If you've tried every decongestant from Claritin to DayQuil to relieve a stuffy nose from seasonal allergies or a common cold, it turns out that 30-40 minutes in a room full of salt might just be exactly what you need to finally kick the congestion.

Salt therapy (aka Halotherapy) is a spa treatment that uses salt vapor to treat respiratory ailments like asthma, allergies, and cold viruses, along with inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis. The treatment takes place in a salt room that's usually decorated with pink Himalayan salt which helps you relax as you inhale breathable salt that's released into the air, or there's also the option receiving the treatment in a private salt bed, too.

To find out the science behind the therapy and how exactly it works, we turned to Ellen Patrick, co-founder of Breathe Salt Rooms in New York.

RELATED: Dermatologists' Favorite Moisturizers for Sensitive Skin

How Does Salt Therapy Work?

At Breathe Salt Rooms, only pure salt vapor is released into the air. "The natural healing qualities of salt are that it's anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, and anti-fungal," explains Patrick. These qualities are what make salt an effective method of relieving a number of respiratory issues like congestion from eczema or mucus from a cold virus.

People suffering from inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis will also benefit from the treatment, too. "These skin conditions are autoimmune conditions and are inflammatory," says Patrick. "The salt acts as an anti-inflammatory and a very gentle defoliant so it help slough off the dead skin so the new healed skin can come out."

As for the pink Himalayan salt décor you see in many of the rooms? Aside from

making the rooms look Instagrammable, the Himalayan salt helps set the relaxing mood of the treatment, an added bonus of visiting a salt room. “Pink Himalayan salt has more aesthetic uses, but some other salt rooms use it in their vapor,” says Patrick. Of all the different kinds of salt there is, Himalayan salt has the most negative ions which is why Himalayan salt lamps are so popular. Negative ions purify the air. Computers, cell phones, and fluorescent lighting all give off positive ions which tend to agitate. The negative ions are relaxing. The décor in salt rooms tend to be pink Himalayan salt because we want you to relax whereas in an office you won’t find the same lighting.”



What's the Difference Between Group and Private Rooms?

If you opt for a group room, Patrick says she recommends a 30-40 minute treatment. A private salt bed offers the same benefits and results but with more privacy and isn't as time-consuming. "When you're in a salt bed or booth the concentration of the salt is denser, and therefore you don't have to be there as long a period of time," says Patrick. If you opt to go the solo route, only a 10-15 minute treatment is required.

Since salt therapy is a treatment option for skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis, which leaves inflamed patches on the body, a private salt bed might be the way to go depending on where your outbreak is. "Salt beds are a more private experience," explains Patrick. "Aside from a matter of time, it allows for privacy so that if someone wants to take their shirt or pants off so the salt can fall directly on these skin condition patches, they can do so comfortably."

When Will You See Results?

There isn't a universal answer on when you'll start to feel the benefits of salt

therapy treatment. Patrick says that it varies depending on the person, the condition, and the severity of their symptoms.

Patrick notes that when you need treatment will also vary, too. “If someone has seasonal allergies, they may go in the spring or fall whenever they experience symptoms,” she says. “Someone may also go to prevent a winter cold or flu.”

VIDEO: 9 Celebrities Who Struggle with Psoriasis

What Do You Need to Do to Prepare for Treatment?

Perhaps the best part about salt therapy rooms is that they're a safe treatment option for everyone, and there's nothing you need to do to prepare to visit one. Patrick says that halotherapy has no side effects and you can wear your street clothes in the rooms, unless you want to strip down so that the salt vapor directly touches your skin if you suffer from eczema or psoriasis.

Since salt is a drying agent, Patrick suggests drinking water afterwards. She also recommends waiting to shower since rubbing the salt residue on your skin can help soften it and act as an exfoliant.