



ASTHMA

WHAT A
BREATH TAKING
TOPIC!



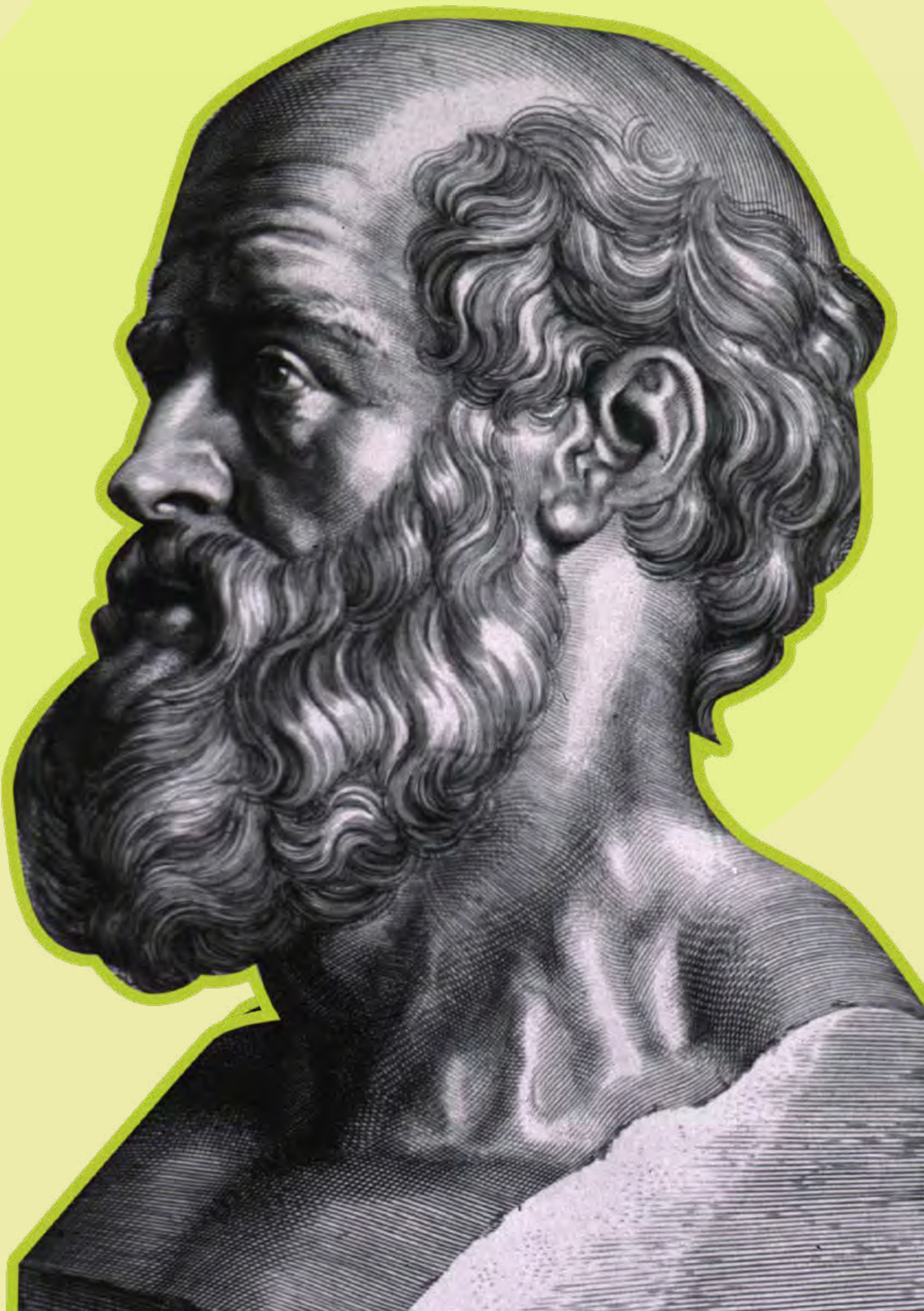
What do the **Ancient Greeks** and your next-door neighbor have in common? If the aforementioned neighbor has frequent trouble breathing, that answer is **asthma**. Asthma is not a new condition; in fact, the first known case dates as far back as **2,600 B.C.**

HISTORY OF ASTHMA

Chinese scriptures and Ancient Egyptians made frequent note of breathlessness and respiratory distress, although there was no term yet which combined those symptoms into one diagnosis. In fact, it wasn't until more than 2,000 years later, when medical classifications began to improve, that Greek physician Hippocrates deemed the symptoms he frequently saw as exclusive to certain triggers related to specific workplaces and the environment. Hippocrates defined asthma, at that point, not as a diagnosis, but as the culmination of environmental symptoms.

In order to truly characterize asthma, medicine still needed to improve to around 100 A.D., when a Greek physician named Aretaeus of Cappadocia finally classified asthma's symptoms into one conclusive condition.

Then, in 1892, Sir. William Osler defined asthma's symptomology based on occurrences of bronchial spasms, airway blockage, extraneous mucus production, coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. The inflammation, for those with environmentally triggered allergies, can be incredibly severe during the allergen's season, but not all asthma manifests following a natural trigger.



ASTHMA TRIGGERS



According to the Mayo Clinic, asthma normally presents in three separate scenarios:

- Environmentally induced allergen asthma, brought on by irritants like pollen, mold spores, skin cells, and pet dander
- Occupational asthma, brought on by workplace triggers like chemical fumes, gases, metalworking debris, soils, paint, and dust particles
- Exercise-induced asthma, flare-ups caused directly by physical exertion
- Though those three are the most prevalent during daily interactions, two more categories may materialize throughout an individual's lifespan.

- Nocturnal asthma, occurs when breathing issues begin between the hours of midnight and 8 a.m. This may happen concurrently to sleep apnea issues. In a 1988 study, published in the American Review of Respiratory Disease, of individuals suffering from concurrent sleep apnea and nocturnal asthma, utilizing a CPAP mask significantly improved both the sleep apnea and the nocturnal asthma simultaneously.
- Adult-onset asthma is more common in women than in men and has been shown to present after age 20. Among those most at risk for this kind of asthma are: women experiencing menopause, people recovering from a cold or flu, dealing with GERD, or living with cats.
- The symptoms all vary in onset strength; for some individuals, asthma is more of a minor inconvenience only presenting during and following exercise. For others, severe asthma attacks end them in the hospital.



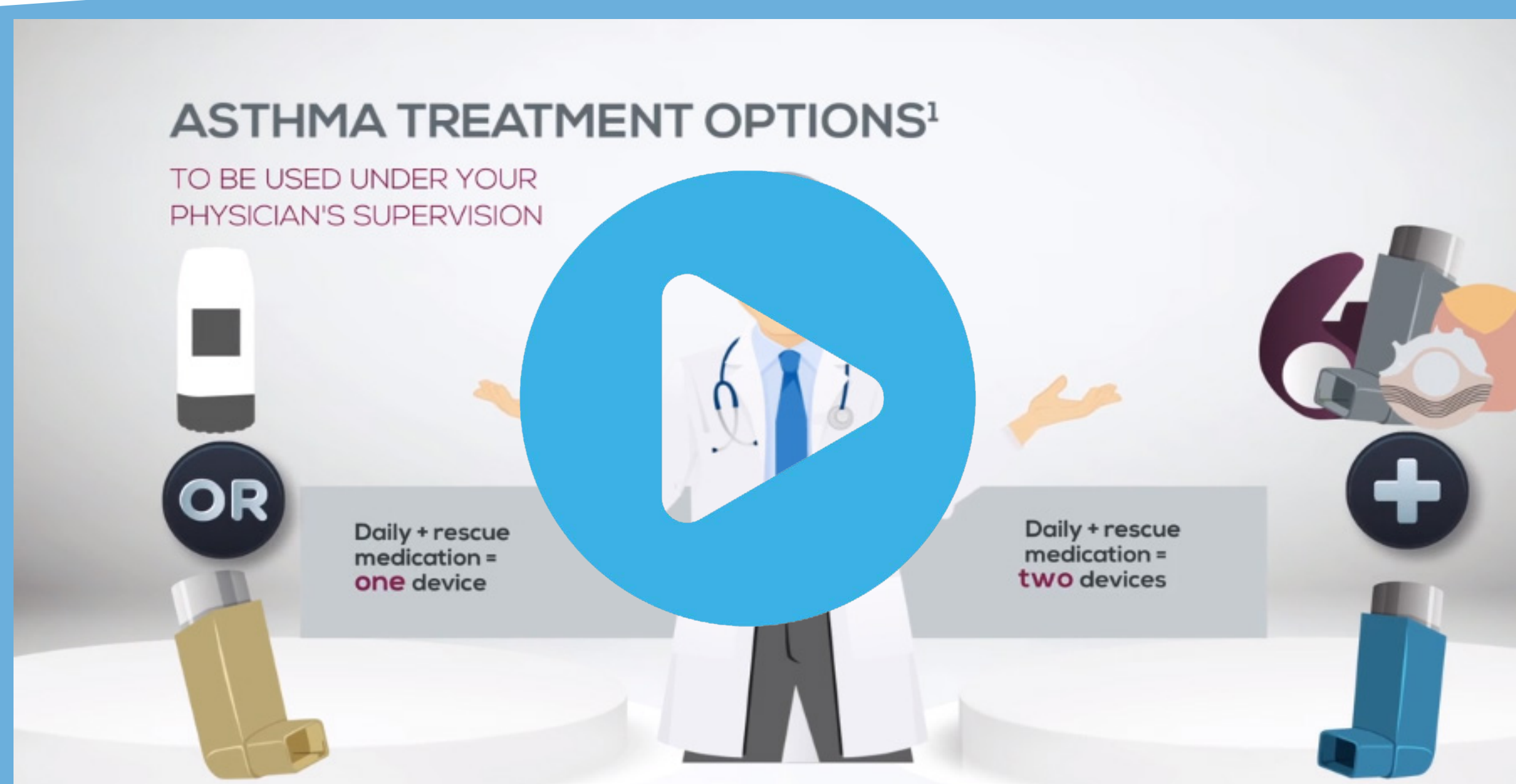
TREATMENT METHODOLOGY

There's currently no cure for even severe asthma, but modern medicine, as well as ancient remedies, have subdued the effects. Those who currently suffer with asthma have the Ancient Greeks and Romans to thank for today's treatment methods.

Though we no longer use owl's blood as an effective treatment for asthma attacks, one of the Romans, a man named Pliny the Elder, first linked pollen to his own asthmatic episodes; he suggested the grandfather of modern epinephrine as one of the first effective treatments for asthma. It should also be noted that prior to epinephrine, the Ancient Chinese smoked opium and the Ancient Greeks breathed the fumes of burning herbs. Noting both of these ancient remedies, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the modern-day solution also exists in mist form.

When it was deduced that asthma resulted in acutely swollen airways, modern medicine came back with a couple of short-term solutions to the chronic issue. First, the inhaler was created. A plethora of vessels, including ceramic pots, were tested as the means to get vapors from an external source to the patient's lungs, though it actually wasn't until the 1950s that a conclusive instrument, the modern-day inhaler, was created to collectively satisfy that need. Born from the technology behind a perfume bottle's spray apparatus, the

inhaler works by producing a compacted mist and forcefully expelling it from the container on command. Now the overwhelming solution, the metered dose inhaler provides accurate dosing in a neat, portable package. This inhaler, also referred to as a puffer, works by relaxing the muscles surrounding the airways. Inhalers are an acute solution, normally working within minutes to produce moderately long-lasting relief, and can be obtained with a physician's prescription.



ASTHMA SEVERITY

Just as there are three types of specific trigger scenarios to induce asthma, there are also four severity levels of asthma attacks. Due to the acute relief that inhalers provide, those with mild intermittent asthma, i.e. individuals who experience asthmatic symptoms up to two days a week, can be treated easily with a sporadic inhaler when the need arises.

For those with mild persistent asthma attacks, symptoms exhibit more than two nights a month and more than twice a week, but not exceeding once per day. This status normally can also be treated and maintained with an inhaler.

For those with moderate persistent or severe persistent symptoms, i.e. every day and continuously throughout the night, looking into a more intense treatment plan will help tamp down those debilitating symptoms.

For those experiencing either moderate persistent or severe persistent symptomatology, treatment plans include a preventer, an inhaled corticosteroid, as opposed to a reliever. Both treatment methods come in inhaler form, but the medication contained in the inhaler differs, as does the frequency of use.

For preventer usage, the goal no longer is to simply relax the muscles. Instead, preventers work to effectively reduce the likelihood of another asthma attack. This treatment plan, prescribed following a consultation with a medical professional, is to be taken every day. Even when the individual isn't feeling asthmatic, the medical professional's written asthma action plan will detail the frequency of these corticosteroids - typically once a day. One of the asthma myths of persistent asthmatics is that when the symptoms wane, the medication frequency wanes as well; this isn't true and is potentially doing more harm than good. Staying firmly adhered to this asthma action plan will act as a constant to produce the effects of the medication. In the event that the asthma worsens, the medical professional will know exactly what the next step is in order to keep you out of the hospital.

Consulting a trusted physician takes all the guess work out of managing asthma. Home remedies have not been shown to work as well as the tried-and-true inhalers and corticosteroids, despite the litany of "quick fix" asthmatic blogs floating around the internet. It's important to distinguish holistic methods from assured, medically recommended, treatment plans.



PROFESSIONALS WHO STRUGGLE WITH ASTHMA

Even professionals and household names struggle with treating persistent asthma. Celebrities live their lives creating world-renowned content and dealing with asthma between takes.

Fellow actress Jessica Alba has also been outspoken about her relationship with asthma. She was even hospitalized as a child as a result of severe asthma attacks. Nevertheless, neither of these household names have scaled back their on-screen successes due to asthma. They've simply found a way to integrate their symptoms and treatment methods into their daily lives.



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Take Priyanka Chopra Jonas for example. The famous actress has been dealing with asthma since she was five years old. She sought treatment through a preventer medication and is candid about the struggles she has faced stemming from her respiration issues. Now she works diligently to raise awareness of daily triggers and how to minimize reactions.

Although Chopra Jonas and Alba have found a way to manage their daily symptoms, there are also three other household names whose asthma diagnoses may be shockers based on their choice of profession.

*Priyanka
Chopra Jonas*



P!nk

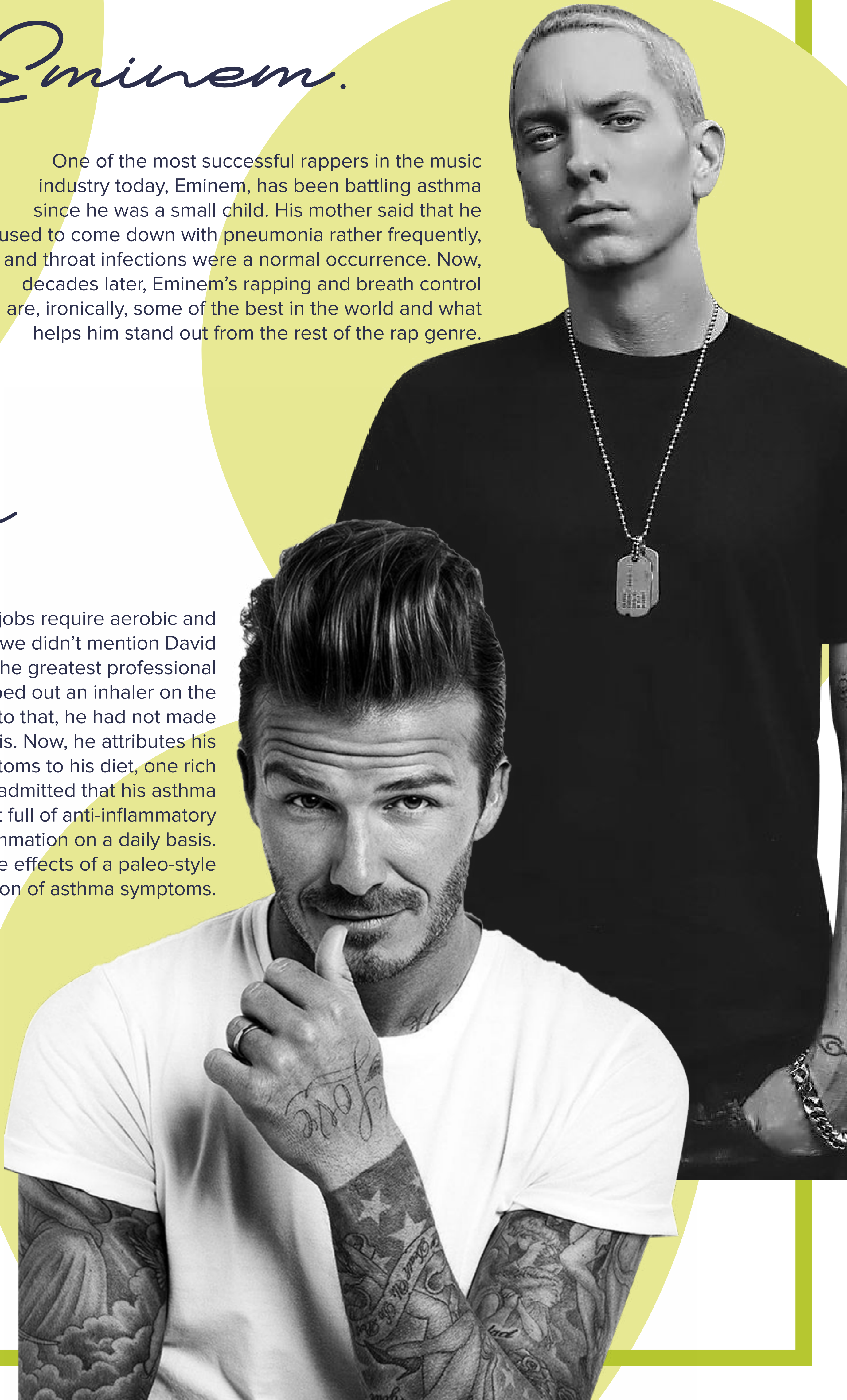
The same goes for singer P!NK, who is known for her acrobatic and silks work mid-performance. While she skies above the crowd and spins her way across the stage, she continues to belt. That kind of stage presence, while also having battled asthma since she was a child, comes from what P!NK describes as a “strict fitness regime and excellent breath control”.

Eminem.

One of the most successful rappers in the music industry today, Eminem, has been battling asthma since he was a small child. His mother said that he used to come down with pneumonia rather frequently, and throat infections were a normal occurrence. Now, decades later, Eminem’s rapping and breath control are, ironically, some of the best in the world and what helps him stand out from the rest of the rap genre.

David Beckham

While we’re referencing those whose jobs require aerobic and anaerobic activity, we’d be remiss if we didn’t mention David Beckham. In 2009, Beckham, one of the greatest professional men’s soccer players ever, whipped out an inhaler on the sideline of an LA Galaxy game. Prior to that, he had not made mention of any battle with the diagnosis. Now, he attributes his lung capacity and reduced asthma symptoms to his diet, one rich in fruits, vegetables, and fiber. He has admitted that his asthma diagnosis is not severe, but his diet full of anti-inflammatory foods helped reduce airway inflammation on a daily basis. Beckham is a fantastic case study on the effects of a paleo-style diet on lung function and the reduction of asthma symptoms.



Check yourself!

The moral of the story is that regardless of your specific age range, lung capacity, environmental triggers, or fame, asthma can be a daily hurdle. Finding ways to work through and around the chronic diagnosis is simple, as long as you can chart your journey and manage the ways in which the symptoms present.

If you suspect you may have asthma, speak with your doctor. If you are in the throws of an asthma attack, seek medical attention immediately. More than 4,000 people die each year from asthma-related conditions which have spiralled quickly out of control; find a treatment plan that works for you before the severity of the diagnosis becomes dangerous to your health or that of your loved ones.

GET TESTED NOW!

