

SALT•Ed

salt therapy education

**Distinguishing Halotherapy and Commercial Halogenerators
There is No Such Thing as Instant Salt Therapy Rooms**

Recently, the Salt Therapy Association has received some interesting inquiries and questions regarding other types of equipment and devices that are making claims regarding the benefits of salt therapy and halotherapy.

To respond and answer these questions, the STA has established several standards regarding what salt therapy/halotherapy is and what it is not.

The first standard that has been established for providing effective dry salt therapy/halotherapy is utilizing a halogenerator with an enclosed environment whereby you can control the air flow and ventilation.

Without a halogenerator, there is no halotherapy.

There are some places and facilities claiming salt therapy benefits such as purifying the air or releasing negative ions simply by having salt décor elements such as Himalayan brick walls or caves or claiming benefits from heating Himalayan salt bricks in saunas, but not only is there no evidence, the science and research proves otherwise. While the majority of today's salt rooms use salt as an architectural and décor element, they all have commercial halogenerators that are providing the health and wellness benefits. Yet, there are still some salt therapy businesses and other people, facilities, spas, and others, that are still falsely promoting and communicating benefits. This could be damaging.

Halotherapy was born from Speleotherapy from the underground salt mines and chambers throughout Europe where the conditions are very different in terms of climate, humidity, salt particle concentrations, etc....

A halogenerator is defined as a device that not only grinds or cuts pure grade sodium chloride into micron-sized particles but can also control and regulate the salt aerosol and concentration levels as well as work in conjunction with the HVAC system...the lungs of the facility.

Another standard is that only pure grade sodium chloride is to be used, preferably 99.99% USP grade. Other types of salt are such as Himalayan, Dead Sea, Rock Salt are not to be used per clinical studies, halogenerator manufacturers and researchers. ([LINK](#)).

There is a wide range of 'halogenerators' on the market ranging from commercial and medical grade halogenerators to what some are calling portable halogenerators, or inhalers or misting machines.

Particle Size—Based on current and past decades of research, the smaller the particles size the better since it is these micron-sized particles that penetrate deep into the lungs and beneath the skin's surface. Most medical grade and many commercial grade halogenerators produce consistent particle sizes as small as 2 microns and some even smaller to under 1 micron to .3 Um.

Concentration levels are also what is to be controlled. There are specific parameters for measuring salt concentration levels as this can impact the duration of salt sessions. The number of salt particles per cubic volume of airspace can be measured and many of the case studies and clinical research show that various concentration levels, as well as the frequency of usage, can impact people differently as well as various conditions. In many European countries, halotherapy is a medical treatment and is covered by their health care and insurance programs.

That is why it is important to understand the particle size and concentration level, as well as the size of the space, to determine the effective amount of time to provide an effective and therapeutic salt session. Some larger salt rooms are 45 minutes, while some smaller rooms that are 150 sq. ft. or less are approximately 25 minutes. Smaller spaces such as salt booths can be as little as 10 minutes.

For the commercial application of Halotherapy, it is important to understand the technical requirements that are involved with designing, building, and installing salt therapy/halotherapy rooms.

Given that you have salt particles smaller than the width of your hair being dispersed throughout a room, what happens to these salt particles. Some are inhaled and some fall onto a person's skin, but basically, you are salting the room and it gets everywhere. Salt particles can get into everything and in fact, a room can become engulfed with salt.

That is why commercial salt rooms establish dedicated rooms for providing salt therapy.

In addition, you need to understand what the impact will be to other aspects of the room where you are dispersing salt aerosol. If you have any electronics or other equipment in the room, salt can be corrosive and cause issues. If you have a sink in the room, there could be an issue with salt particles getting into the system. This is why many salt rooms and facilities have disclaimers and some even placards about bringing items into a salt room such as smartphones, tablets, and other devices.

Likewise, if you do not have full height walls or if you have a drop-down ceiling, these micron-sized salt particles could penetrate and seep into other areas where the salt dust could become corrosive. That is why salt rooms should be viewed as an enclosed space similar to a steam or sauna room. Dry salt and moisture or humidity do not go well together and becomes corrosive and causes rust and other negative effects.

The biggest issue that is often overlooked and not addressed properly, however, is the HVAC system.

A salt room needs to be vented to ensure proper airflow of the salt aerosol as well as to prevent salt particles from getting into the existing HVAC system. All the top leading halogenerator manufacturers design their halogenerators to interact with existing and new HVAC systems to assist in introducing new air mixed with the salt particles that are then dispersed into the salt room. Some salt cabins and booths are designed with the proper ventilation systems as well.

Every major commercial halogenerator is designed to be mounted on an adjacent outer wall of a salt room (or outside of a salt cabin or booth) with the appropriate sleeve/hole coming into the room to disperse the salt aerosol. The halogenerator needs clean air around it since if it was in the salt room itself, it would be sucking salt air into itself which would not mix well with the new salt being introduced into the area, as well as cause damage to the components.

At last year's STA Conference, many facility owners and operators of salt rooms discussed the critical role the HVAC system plays with connecting and working with a halogenerator that provides dry salt aerosol. And, in

specific cases, not having the proper HVAC set-up has caused issues with rental spaces, significant downtime, repair costs, and other system failures.

Where does the salt go that is being dispersed into the room?

Ask any facility that offers salt therapy and they will tell you about salt dusting, and that if you do not properly manage it, it will get all over the place. That is why spas and wellness facilities have dedicated rooms for salt therapy OR they have a multi-purpose room that has a halogenerator, but in an enclosed room with the proper HVAC issues being addressed, as well as removing any equipment that could be a potential risk to salt exposure. Likewise, many facilities are incorporating halogenerators on salt cabins, saunas, and booths, which are self-enclosed spaces that provide effective halotherapy.

Equipment and Devices claiming to offer halotherapy or a dry salt therapy experience

There have been several recent devices appearing in the salt therapy market that promote being a portable type of halogenerator that provides the same efficacy as the top commercial grade halogenerator manufacturers. Some of these devices have a packet of salt that is added to the device, placed on the floor or table and then the device disperses the salt aerosol into the room. Some of these devices have a saline solution that is then misted into an open area. There are some that have a solid piece of rock salt against a fan that supposedly disperses salt into the air. And others have some Himalayan salt crystals in a ceramic holder that you inhale, which causes the salt crystals to slightly break against a screen creating smaller salt dust to inhale.

Some of these devices claim that there is no modification necessary for the HVAC, however, dispersing small micron-sized salt particles in any type of area, especially in a conditioned air space, will have salt dust getting everywhere surrounding that device. Without the proper ventilation, the salt particles can get into the system and cause damage, and, in addition, leave the area salted. That is why there have been some of these devices that emphasize using their device in a shower or in a tent type object.

Some of the devices suggest that you can keep them on all night while they disperse salt in your bedroom to help you sleep. There are no independent studies proving these claims or holding companies accountable for making such a statement of claim, however.

Without containing the salt in an enclosed space, you risk potential damages.

Mixing salt with any type of moisture such as a saline solution is also not dry salt therapy and, therefore, is not considered halotherapy. And, without independent testing, studies or reviews for being able to account for the particle size and concentration levels from these devices, as well as the salt room set-up, the STA cannot consider these so-called devices as halogenerators that provide controlled or measured halotherapy. This is the opinion shared among the top halotherapists and salt therapy enthusiasts and leaders of the industry.

Summary

There has been and continues to be miscommunication and misinformation being promoted about salt therapy. At last year's STA conference, it was abundantly clear about the "myth-information" regarding the benefits of using Himalayan salt as décor and architectural elements or how Himalayan salt provides benefits when you heat it. However, some people and companies are still touting that:

"As the Himalayan salt is heated...negative ions are produced to remove oxidative stress for your clients and therapists, purify the air and promote a sense of well-being."

Some of these same people and companies are now saying you can just, “POOF!”—turn any area into an “instant salt room” with a so-called halogenerator or that it provides the same efficacy as commercial halotherapy equipment made as a medical device. While these may provide some benefit for some application, particularly for a home unit, this is not to be construed as delivering the same efficacy of a properly designed, built and installed halotherapy room or cave.

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