

# Home Nutrition Remedies for Asthma



# **TREATING** ASTHMA

Naturally Through Diet & More

**Dr. Axe**  
FOOD IS MEDICINE



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Roughly 34 million Americans now have asthma, about 7 million to 8 million of which are children. [\(1\) Asthma is behind 12.8 million missed school days and 10.1 million missed work days in the U.S every single year. In addition, asthma costs the U.S. about \\$14.7 billion a year in medical costs, prescription drugs and lost productivity — leading many people to search for home remedies for asthma.](#)

Here's something that might surprise you: Although asthma medications can help control symptoms in the case of an emergency attack, they can actually sometimes make [asthma symptoms](#) *even worse* long term. Most asthma medications also have a host of side effects due to how they affect the endocrine system and the immune system. Research shows some asthma drugs might contribute to problems including mood changes, acne, yeast growth and weight gain — plus over time they might hinder normal immune functions that make allergic and asthmatic reactions more frequent. [\(2\)](#)

What are some effective, holistic ways of treating asthma that can help prevent attacks instead? Home remedies for asthma that don't require taking prescription medications or even using inhalers include limiting irritant exposure, [reducing food allergies](#), [improving gut health](#), [supplementing with vitamin D](#) or [getting more naturally from the sun](#), and [maintaining a healthy weight](#).

## What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition characterized by difficulty breathing and narrowing of the airways leading to the lungs (including the nose, nasal passageways, mouth and larynx). In people who have asthma or allergies, the blocked or inflamed airways that cause asthma symptoms can usually be cleared with help from certain lifestyle changes and treatments.

Asthma is a type of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ([COPD](#)) and is also related to [allergies, whether seasonal/environmental or food-related](#). A characteristic of asthma is that symptoms tend to occur suddenly in response to stimuli that irritate the immune system and air passageways, which is described as having an asthma "attack."

[Click here for a free guide on ways to alleviate your asthma at home!](#)

Following are home remedies for asthma that can help treat this often inhibiting condition.

## Home Remedies for Asthma and Asthma Attacks

### 1. Best Foods for Treating Asthma

Eating a healthy diet supplies asthma sufferers with antioxidants and nutrients to combat environmental toxins, control inflammatory responses and reduce dietary triggers. Eating a wide variety of foods can ensure that you or your child gets all the nutrients needed to support strong immunity. There have been numerous studies that show consuming the right foods can be the one of the best home remedies for asthma.

Some of the most beneficial foods to include in your asthma diet plan are:

- **Brightly colored carotenoid foods:** This compound gives fruit and vegetables their orange or red color and can help reduce asthma attacks. [Carotenoids are the basis of vitamin A, which is involved in the maintenance of healthy mucous membranes that line the air passageways. Severity of asthma correlates with low vitamin A, so increase your intake of things like root veggies, sweet potatoes, carrots, leafy greens and berries. A study of 68,000 women showed that those who ate more tomatoes, carrots and leafy](#)

greens had much lower rates of asthma and that people prone to asthma tended to have low levels of circulating carotenoids in their blood. (3)

- Foods with folate (vitamin B9): Folate reduces allergic reactions and inflammation. It might be capable of lowering wheezing by regulating inflammatory processes as well. (4) **High-folate foods include green leafy vegetables, beans and nuts.**
- Vitamin E and **vitamin C foods: Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant and helps detoxify the body, which is why some research suggests that consuming more vitamin C reduces wheezing and inflammation. Vitamin C is found in leafy greens, citrus fruits, cruciferous veggies and berries. Vitamin E is another powerful antioxidant found in nuts, seeds and healthy plant oils.**
- Foods with magnesium: **Low levels of magnesium are associated with increased risk of developing asthma, and increasing magnesium has been shown to reduce severity of asthma attacks and symptoms like muscle-spasming anxiety.** It's been found that magnesium can induce bronchial smooth muscle relaxation and allow air to get into and out of the lungs more easily. (5) **Sources include greens, nuts,** seeds, beans, cocoa and certain ancient grains.
- Broccoli, broccoli sprouts, Brussels sprouts and other **cruciferous vegetables:** These contain many antioxidants and a key compound called sulforaphane. Researchers from UCLA state, "A major advantage of sulforaphane is that it appears to increase a broad array of antioxidant enzymes, which may help the compound's effectiveness in blocking the harmful effects of air pollution. We found a two-to-three-fold increase in antioxidant enzymes in the nasal airway cells of study participants who had eaten a preparation of broccoli sprouts. This strategy may offer protection against inflammatory processes and could lead to potential treatments for a variety of respiratory conditions." (6)
- Garlic, onions and mustard seeds: All are considered natural antimicrobials. They may help to fight bacterial infections and improve overall immune health. They also contain the antioxidant called **quercetin, which inhibits inflammation.**
- **Raw milk and cultured dairy: Raw dairy seems to protect children from developing asthma and hay fever symptoms.** (7) The healthy probiotics in raw milk strengthen the immune system, and research shows that **probiotic foods improve digestion and help stop allergic reactions that occur as proteins and other allergens pass through the digestive lining.** Mothers can prevent their children from developing asthma if they ingest probiotics while pregnant or breast-feeding.
- **Prebiotics and high-fiber foods: These plant fibers help us eliminate toxins and feed healthy probiotic bacteria. Whole grains, nuts, beans, seeds and raw vegetables are loaded with prebiotic materials and are great sources of fiber.**
- **Omega-3 foods: Omega-3 is mostly found in oily fish, such as mackerel, sardines, orange** roughy, salmon, trout and tuna. Nuts and seeds can also provide a good dose. Omega-3s help lower the incidence of asthma significantly because they reduce airway inflammation and immune system reactivity. (8)
- Foods with vitamin B5 (or pantothenic acid): It's needed in larger quantities by asthmatics because they seem unable to utilize this vitamin correctly. It's also been found that **theophylline, a drug used to treat asthma, causes vitamin B5 deficiency. Pantothenic acid is also involved in adrenal function, and stress plays a large role in asthma.**

## 2. Avoid Foods that Can Make Asthma Attacks Worse

There are many ways in which processed and refined foods contribute to asthma. Lack of fiber reduces probiotic bacteria, depletes stomach acid and hinders proper digestion. The lack of nutrients in these foods stresses the entire body and makes it less able to neutralize toxins. The lack of fresh fruit and vegetables in the Western diet contributes to high levels of inflammation, deficiencies and overall poor nutrition.

Foods to reduce or eliminate from your diet include conventional dairy, added sugar, trans fats or refined oils, gluten, and processed carbohydrates. Here's why avoiding these foods should be utilized along with other home remedies for asthma:

- Children who eat foods fried in refined/processed vegetable oils and consume hydrogenated fats are much more likely to have asthma. These trans fats contribute to the presence of dangerous free radicals in the body.
- Children who are bottle-fed with powdered and pasteurized infant formulas are significantly more at risk of developing asthma and allergies than those who are breast-fed.
- The high sugar content in many processed foods contributes to the overgrowth of yeast or candida albicans. Yeast can be a trigger itself, but worse, it steals valuable nutrients from the digestive tract.
- Hidden food allergies are often triggers for asthma attacks. The most common food allergies are to pasteurized milk products, gluten, soy, eggs and nuts. Wheat gluten and soy are present in a wide variety of foods. They hide on labels as hydrolyzed vegetable protein, lecithin, starch and vegetable oil.
- Food preservatives and food coloring can trigger asthma attacks. Avoid MSG, tartrazine (yellow food dye), sulfites and sulfur dioxide, to name just a few.
- Avoid animal products treated with hormones and antibiotics as well as pasteurized foods and drinks. Farm-raised fish is laden with these chemicals and has high mercury levels that correlate with increased incidence of asthma.

## 3. Supplements for Asthma (Especially Vitamin D)

Another rising star in home remedies for asthma is vitamin D, which seems to slow declining lung function and supports immune health. It also stops lung “remodeling,” the narrowing of breathing passages over time. Calcitriol, the form of vitamin D we make in the body, is a natural anti-inflammatory, yet many people are chronically low in vitamin D due to spending less time outside and eating low-nutrient diets. The daily recommended dose is about 600 international units for adults, which can be obtained through a combination of sun exposure and a healthy diet.

Recently, a study published in the *Cochran Database of Systematic Reviews*, which tested 435 children and 658 adults with mild to moderate asthma, found that those taking vitamin D supplements experienced fewer severe asthma attacks, required less use of oral steroids for treatment and also reduced their risk of needing to be hospitalized for acute asthma attacks. (9)

Other supplements that can help lower attacks and symptoms include:

- **Vitamins C:** Increases immunity and acts like an antioxidant, **reducing free radical damage and inflammation.**
- **B vitamins:** Help support cognitive functions and immune health. Vitamin B3 and **vitamin B12** have been found to be low in asthma patients but are nutrients that lower antihistamine levels and reduce wheezing.
- **Zinc:** Supports adrenal health and aids the body in coping with stress, which has been tied to worsened asthma symptoms.
- **Magnesium:** Can help reduce asthma symptom severity, including pain, anxiety and emotional stress.