

Asthma & Nutrition

We've all, no doubt, seen children and adults with small inhalers and thought to ourselves, "She has asthma." But what is asthma exactly? And is there anything we can do to help ourselves or our loved ones with this affliction?

Overview of Asthma

Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways that makes breathing difficult for the 22 million Americans currently afflicted. With asthma, there is inflammation of the air passages resulting in a temporary narrowing of the airways that carry oxygen to the lungs. Commonly recognized asthma symptoms include: Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness, especially early in the morning and at night.

Asthma in children is on the rise, but with proper treatment for symptoms, kids and adults can live a normal lifestyle.

Let's take a look at natural and nutritional remedies for asthma. Some natural remedies may help to control asthma symptoms. For example, when an asthma attack is induced emotional stress, natural relaxation therapy, like deep abdominal breathing, muscle relaxation, and yoga can help relieve stress.

Other findings suggest that diet plays a role in managing asthma symptoms. It's thought that omega-3 fatty acids, found naturally in heart-healthy, high-fat fish such as salmon, mackerel, or cod, allow the body to naturally decrease inflammation. Besides being filled with omega-3s, salmon has protein, calcium, magnesium, some carotenoids, and B vitamins. Vitamin B-6 helps to boost the immune system, which prevents diseases and flare-ups. These are all antioxidants that can be found in quality seafood, and can help the body prevent cell damage. Service Foods is a great source for omega-3-rich seafood.

A good diet is an important part of your overall asthma treatment plan. The incidence of asthma has risen in the United States during the past three decades, and many researchers believe that our changing diets have something to do with this. As Americans eat fewer and fewer fruits and vegetables and more processed foods, could it be that we're bumping up our risk of developing asthma? One recent study of asthma and diet showed that teens with poor nutrition were more likely to have asthma symptoms. Those who didn't get enough fruits and foods with vitamins C and E and omega-3 fatty acids were the most likely to have poor lung function. Being overweight or obese is associated with more severe asthma.

If you would like to map out a healthy eating plan for your family, Service Foods has registered dietitians, registered nurses, as well as certified fitness experts on staff to help you. Don't hesitate to contact us for your dietary and health-related needs.

So what can we do to help ward off asthma attacks? Many people with asthma feel short of breath when their stomachs are full, due to the fact that the diaphragm cannot work as well. You can satisfy your nutritional needs, keep your stomach comfortable, and help your diaphragm to work better by eating smaller, more frequent meals. Small meals also reduce the chance of reflux, which can also trigger an asthma attack.

Other important points: Do not hold your breath while you are chewing. Stop eating if you need to catch your breath. Relax and sit down at mealtime. Batch cook, by doubling or tripling your favorite recipes and keeping them in your freezer for times when you do not feel like cooking. This way, when you're short on time, you can avoid fast foods that are processed and full of chemicals, which can irritate asthma.

Managing Asthma

Even though asthma cannot be cured, it can be managed through many lifestyle factors:

- Keep an asthma diary, so you can track all your symptoms and medication use.
- Avoid asthma triggers or causes of asthma, including outdoor irritants like smog.
- Seek medical advice and treatment for coexisting problems that can worsen asthma symptoms, such as GERD, allergic rhinitis, and sinusitis.
- Exercise daily to maximize your aerobic fitness. Service Foods fitness experts can help you create a fitness plan. Good resources include our blogs, informative emails and exercise videos.
- Prevent exercise-induced asthma by medicating before exercise.
- Eat all-natural nutritious foods to maximize your immune defenses against viral and bacterial infections.
- Maintain a normal weight.
- Get plenty of restful sleep.

Don't forget that Service Foods health and nutrition experts are standing by to answer your questions. Feel free to call or email us, as well as read our blogs for more health-related information. Yes, nutrition can greatly impact your health! We are here to be your healthier- living partner, providing you with chemical-free, hormone-free, lean foods.

Supplementation

In order to keep asthma flare-ups to a minimum, it is beneficial to supplement a healthy diet (lean protein, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and heart healthy fats) with immune boosting supplements. Below is a list of supplements that have been shown to decrease asthma flare-ups. Make sure they are manufactured by a company with NPA's certification for good manufacturing practices. Additional supplements may be recommended by your doctor.



Omega 3 fatty acids from fish or krill oil
Multivitamin
Vitamin C & E

Super Greens and/or Resveratrol - pure form of antioxidants to ensure that the body is in a state of balance and boost immunity.