

THE
EVERYTHING
HEALTHY
LIVING SERIES

Food
Remedies:
Asthma

*The most important information
you need to improve your health*



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The Everything® Healthy Living Series
Food Remedies: Asthma

*The most important information you need to
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Introduction

For more than 10 years, millions of readers have trusted the bestselling Everything® series for expert advice and important information on health topics ranging from pregnancy and postpartum care to heart health, anxiety, and diabetes. Packed with the most recent, up-to-date data, Everything® health guides help you get the right diagnosis, choose the best doctor, and find the treatment options that work for you.

The Everything® Healthy Living Series books are concise guides, focusing on only the essential information you need. Whether you're looking for an overview of traditional and alternative migraine treatments, advice on starting a heart-healthy lifestyle, or suggestions for finding the right medical team, there's an Everything® Healthy Living book for you.

The Healing Power of Food

The healing power of food has been well documented throughout history. Cultures throughout the world have used foods — fruits, vegetables, herbs, and animal products — to ward off disease and prevent ailments, aches, and pains. Now we live in a time when advances in technology allow us to take a closer look at food and discover why and how it heals. As a consumer, you have the ability to take this valuable knowledge and use it to guide your eating while reaping the benefits of improved health and wellness.

Food as Medicine

Think back to a time when there were no medicines, no pharmaceutical companies, and very little of the hard science you are familiar with today. Having difficulty? That's not surprising, because you have likely not lived during such an era. However, there was a time in history when food was the only medicine.

The history of the healing power of food dates back more than 4,000 years. References regarding food and herbs for healing can be found in the Bible. Greek and Chinese cultures have a long history of utilizing food and its nutrients as cures and relief for ailments and disease. It was the people of these times who saw the effects that food can have on healing the body even if they didn't know exactly why or how it happened.

Many of the reputed benefits of food from the past are now strongly supported by scientific evidence. The well-known Nurses' Health Studies are considered some of the largest and longest-running research studies evaluating factors that influence women's health. Through these studies scientists have learned things such as eating cruciferous and green leafy vegetables can help maintain cognitive function as you age, and the consumption of nuts and whole grains reduces risk for coronary heart disease. Other scientific research has shown that strawberries may contain nutrients that damage or kill leukemia cells, antioxidants have the potential to inhibit enzymes that cause inflammation, and mushrooms have antimicrobial powers to fight off infection.

The Positive Side of Nutrition Research

As time has passed and technology has advanced, nutritional researchers have not forgotten the powers of food. What has changed, however, is that now the tools exist to evaluate exactly what makes food such a healing force. Not only are new powers of foods being discovered, but now the active components of these foods are being identified, giving people the ability to eat well and reduce disease.

For example, growing and eating garlic for its medicinal properties dates back several thousand years. Today's researchers have been able to determine that the sulfur-containing compounds of garlic, as well as its vitamin and mineral content, produce valuable health benefits. Research has linked garlic to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and some

cancers, and it carries the potential to reduce the pain and inflammation of arthritis.

Similarly, fruits and vegetables have long been recommended as part of a healthy diet, and for good reason. Not only do they provide fiber linked to gastrointestinal health, but the skin and flesh of these fresh foods contain incredible substances called phytochemicals (plant chemicals) that can reduce disease. It is evident that the color of a fruit or vegetable and its species of plant origin influence exactly what ailment or condition the food will benefit.

Nutrients Versus Real Food

Today, the terms “nutraceutical,” meaning a nutrient-rich food or food component, and “functional food,” describing a food that has nutrients added to it to increase health benefit, are used widely in the food and nutrition industry. As research continues to identify the specific components of foods responsible for health, the drive increases to isolate these nutrients, add them to other commonly eaten, less-nutritious packaged foods (thus making functional foods), and create supplements and pills. This often results in a marketing campaign promising a miracle cure for what ails you.

The problem is that an isolated nutrient is often less effective than a nutrient that comes from real food. There are issues with an isolated nutrient being absorbed after digestion, dangers of toxicity when high doses of a vitamin or mineral are consumed, and risks of unhealthy interactions with high doses of other nutrients. These risks of overconsumption are not often an issue when obtaining nutrients through whole, complex foods. Healthy foods give you a balanced supply of nutrients when you eat a varied diet.

Nutritional science continues to uncover links between nutrients and health, but there seems to be little or no benefit when the nutrient is in the form of a supplement. For example, recent research has linked adequate

vitamin D levels to brain health and reducing risk of dementia. Yet researchers did not find the same outcome in a group that used vitamin D supplements instead of food, and recommended that people increase their intake of food rich in vitamin D rather than add supplements to their diet.

While vitamins and minerals are known to protect against disease, they are best consumed in their natural form — in food. Food is the original source of healing nutrients. So if it is known that vitamins and minerals protect against disease, yet supplements aren't the answer, what is the answer? Food. Food is the original source of healing nutrients.

If you'd like to learn more about food remedies, check out *The Everything® Guide to Food Remedies*, available in print (978-1-4405-1100-4 and eBook (978-1-4405-1157-8) formats.

What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition that affects the passages that carry air into and out of the lungs. These bronchial tubes, or airways, are sensitive to external substances that enter during breathing. The airways get inflamed and swollen; when they react to these particles the muscles tighten, which narrows the passage for air flow. As a result, less air moves into and out of the lungs, causing coughing and wheezing.

Fact

Several environmental risk factors have been linked to asthma in children, including poor air quality caused by pollutants such as vehicle exhaust, secondhand tobacco smoke, and high ozone levels. Psychological stress, viral infections, and antibiotic use early in life are also thought to increase children's risk of developing asthma.

The symptoms of asthma such as coughing, wheezing, tightness in the chest, and shortness of breath vary from person to person in frequency and severity. For some, these symptoms may simply be bothersome; for others they may interfere with normal daily activities. Severe symptoms can be life threatening so it is important to treat symptoms as soon as they occur. In addition, controlling environmental factors that cause asthmatic symptoms, such as reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, and eating foods that can reduce inflammation and airway stress, are beneficial for those with asthma.

More than 300 million people worldwide are afflicted with asthma. Asthma has long been associated with heredity and the environment, but more recent research is showing that the foods you eat can alleviate symptoms of the condition. Some foods contain nutrients that reduce

inflammation and stress to the airways, which can result in fewer asthmatic symptoms.

Nutrients That Alleviate the Symptoms of Asthma

There are three main vitamins that act as antioxidants and reduce the inflammation in the lungs that is often brought on by free radicals from air pollutants. These are the same free radicals linked to asthma and its symptoms. The vitamins are beta carotene, a provitamin that is converted to vitamin A in the body; vitamin C; and vitamin E. Phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables also act as antioxidants.

Research has also shown that the omega-3 fatty acids reduce the production of cytokines, which are associated with sensitive lung tissue and inflamed airways. Omega-6 fatty acids, such as those found in refined oils and packaged snack foods, are linked to increased cytokine production.

Alert

Studies suggest that sulfites can trigger asthma symptoms in some individuals. Foods that contain sulfites include wine, beer, grape juice, some dried fruits, pickles, fresh and frozen shrimp, and vinegar. Monitor your intake of sulfites to determine if they are a trigger for your asthma. Sulfites may also be sprayed on some prepared foods in restaurants before serving to prevent browning.

Foods That Contain These Nutrients

For beta carotene and vitamin A, choose sweet potatoes, kale, carrots, and cantaloupe. When seasoning your foods, use fresh thyme, which is a source of vitamin A. If you prefer dried herbs, dried parsley and dried basil provide vitamin A.

Vitamin C can be found in fruits including guavas, red bell peppers, and kiwis. You will also get a good dose by eating green bell peppers and strawberries. Vitamin E is an active antioxidant that is present in many oils, but you can boost your intake of it and other nutrients such as protein and healthy fat by choosing sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, turnip greens, and avocados.

Tips for Incorporating These Foods

The easiest way to ensure that you get plenty of the active vitamins from fruits and vegetables is to eat by color. Each week, include a variety of dark green, orange, and red fruits and vegetables in your diet. Choose sweet potatoes or a dark green salad topped with red pepper strips and diced avocado as your side dish for meals. Mix kiwi and strawberries in a yogurt parfait or a smoothie. Eat a small handful of unsalted almonds, hazelnuts, and walnuts for a snack.

Question

Should I eliminate omega-6 fatty acids from my diet?

No, omega-6 fatty acids are essential for health. It is the overconsumption that is a problem. Aim to create a balance between omega-6 fatty acid and omega-3 fatty acid intake. Get your omega-6s from natural sources such as nuts and seeds instead of refined oils and snack foods. Eat more wild salmon and other oily cold-water fish, as well as walnuts and flaxseed, to boost omega-3s.

Set a goal to step outside of your comfort zone with food. Many of the greens offering vitamins that alleviate asthma symptoms are not always common on the dinner table. Kale and turnip greens are delicious sautéed in olive oil and sprinkled with a little sea salt and black pepper. Sometimes you just have to take the first step and try them to learn that you enjoy the flavor.

Recipes

"Orange" Juice

This recipe offers more than your standard orange juice. It combines a variety of fruits and vegetables that are rich in beta carotene and vitamin C to reduce the lung inflammation caused by free radicals. You will need an electric juicer to make this recipe.

Serves 1



Ingredients

2 oranges, peeled

1 cup cantaloupe chunks

1 carrot, peeled

1. Set up your juicer according to instructions. Place your glass at the bottom of the spout on the machine. Break or chop the produce into pieces small enough to fit through the mouth of the juicer.
2. Turn on the machine and use the stopper to push through the oranges, cantaloupe, and carrot. Collect the juice in your glass, stir, and drink immediately. Add ice if desired.

Per Serving

Calories: 169

Fat: 1g

Sodium: 27mg

Carbohydrates: 40g

Fiber: 1g

Protein: 3g

Add Some Greens

Collard greens and kale make a delicious addition and blend well with the flavors of sweet juice. They also add even more beta carotene. Add two

leaves of collard greens or kale in between larger produce to help push the leaves through the processor.

Sweet and Spicy Fresh Fruit Salsa

This recipe combines a variety of colorful produce that is full of vitamin C. The jalapeño is optional, so you can make it mild or spicy according to your preferences. Try it with your favorite grilled fish for a light and nutritious meal.

Serves 4



Ingredients

1 cup strawberries, diced
1/2 cup kiwi, diced
1/4 cup red bell pepper, diced
1/4 cup onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 fresh jalapeño (optional)
3 tablespoons lime juice
Salt and black pepper, to taste

1. Place all of the fruits, bell pepper, onion, and garlic in a bowl. If you are using jalapeño, slice and chop it. If you want less heat, remove the veins and the seeds before chopping. Add the jalapeño to the salsa.
2. Pour the lime juice over the salsa and toss to coat. Taste and add salt and pepper according to your preferences. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Per Serving

Calories: 38

Fat: 0g

Sodium: 2mg

Carbohydrates: 9g

Fiber: 2g
Protein: 1g

Avocado Banana Salad

In the United States, vitamin E-rich avocado is most often eaten as a savory, such as in guacamole or on deli sandwiches. In Brazil and other countries, however, it is eaten as a sweet with bananas or sugar as presented in this recipe.

Serves 2



Ingredients

1 avocado

2 small bananas

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon demerara sugar

1. Peel the avocado and bananas. Chop into bite-size pieces and place in a medium-size bowl.
2. Add the lime juice and sugar, and toss to coat. Serve at room temperature.

Per Serving

Calories: 260

Fat: 15g

Sodium: 9mg

Carbohydrates: 34g

Fiber: 9g

Protein: 3g

Choose Fresh

Sulfites are commonly associated with avocados, bananas, and lime juice. However, sulfites are a preservative used in packaged or bottled foods, and as a spray for prepared foods to prevent browning. If you use fresh fruit and

juice, and make this recipe yourself, there should be no concern for the presence of this preservative.

Sautéed Greens Pizza

Greens are often overlooked as a pizza topping. When gently sautéed with olive oil and garlic, they add a wonderful, complex flavor that needs little to accompany it other than a sprinkle of a quality cheese.

Serves 4



Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup onion, chopped
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
1 cup fresh collard greens, chopped
1 cup fresh mustard greens, chopped
1 cup fresh turnip greens, chopped
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
1 (14-inch) pizza crust
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup aged goat cheese, crumbled

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Heat a large skillet and add the olive oil, garlic, and onion. Cook about 3 minutes on medium-high heat.
2. Add all of the greens and turn to coat in the oil. Cook about 5 minutes more, just until the greens are wilted. Add the paprika, salt, and pepper.

3. Use tongs to evenly spread the cooked greens and onion over the pizza crust. Sprinkle with the crumbled goat cheese.
4. Bake for about 10 to 12 minutes or until the crust begins to brown and toppings are heated through. Remove from oven, slice, and serve hot.

Per Serving

Calories: 466

Fat: 20g

Sodium: 1284mg

Carbohydrates: 54g

Fiber: 4g

Protein: 17g

Quality Cheese Is Worth the Cost

The higher quality cheese you use, the better the flavor. Artisanal cheeses are pricier, but the rich flavors allow you to use much less. Shop at a local specialty shop and seek out local producers if possible. This pizza is delicious with aged goat cheese, but also try Gorgonzola or smoked Cheddar.

Roasted Potatoes and Carrots with Thyme and Rosemary

Roasting vegetables brings out a wonderful flavor, and fresh thyme and rosemary are the ideal herbs to complement it. Using some red or white potatoes in this recipe helps to balance the sweetness of the sweet potatoes and carrots.

Serves 4



Ingredients

2 large sweet potatoes

2 large white potatoes

4 carrots

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped

1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Scrub the potatoes and carrots with a vegetable brush under running water to remove any dirt. Peel the carrots, and then chop the potatoes and carrots into bite-size pieces.
2. Lay the vegetables in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle with the olive oil and sprinkle on the herbs, salt, and pepper. Turn to coat everything evenly.
3. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and slightly browned. Cooking time may vary depending on the size of

your pieces. Remove from the oven; sprinkle with additional salt if desired and serve hot.

Per Serving

Calories: 270

Fat: 7g

Sodium: 671mg

Carbohydrates: 51g

Fiber: 8g

Protein: 5g

Cooking with Fresh Herbs

When cooking herbs that have woody stems, such as thyme and rosemary, use only the leaves. Take your thumb and finger and slide them across the stem to release the leaves. Finally, chop the leaves before adding them to the recipe to release the aromatic flavors.

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