

November 2014

# HomeCures

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## For Asthma

4 Root Causes  
of Asthma

How to Treat  
Asthma Naturally

Staying Fit  
with Asthma

The ABCs of  
Reducing Stress

A Surprising  
Connection:  
Food and Asthma



# HomeCures *That Work*

## Asthma

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## 4 Root Causes of Asthma

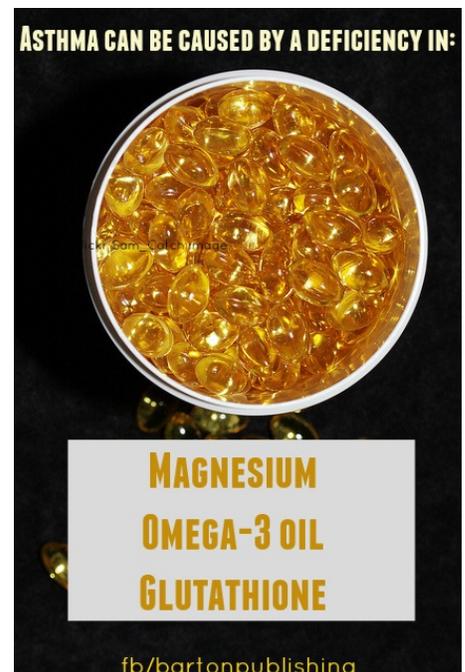
by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

Marilyn had asthma since she was a young adult. There seemed to be no pattern to her attacks – sometimes it would happen frequently, and other times she would go for years without an attack.

Later, she noticed that before an asthma attack she would have an intense itch right in the middle of her back, where she couldn't reach. If someone scratched it hard, the attack would not come. However, if nobody was around to scratch that itch, she would get severely short of breath. Interestingly, after divorcing her husband she stopped getting asthma attacks altogether.

Asthma is not a disease, but rather a syndrome where the airways in the lungs close down, not allowing air to get to the alveoli, or air sacs to give the body oxygen. As with most “diagnoses” in the medical world, asthma is not a single entity. It is a collection of symptoms of many different causes.

- Allergies
  - Pollen
  - Dust
  - Food
- Deficiencies
  - Magnesium
  - Omega-3 oil
  - Glutathione
- Chronic infections
  - Molds/fungi
  - Virus
  - Bacteria
- Inflammation
  - Autoimmune disease
- Neurological
  - Autonomic Nervous System instability
  - Anxiety
- Hypocapnea (low carbon dioxide levels)



Supplements that may help with asthma are varied, depending on the type of asthma. Those with inflammation will need different supplements than those with allergies, for example. The following is a list to work from.

## Supplements For Everyone with Asthma

- **Choline** is a B-vitamin that can help if given in high enough doses. We use about 6 grams (6,000 mg) per day.
- **Magnesium** can relieve asthma as fast as an inhaler, when given intravenously.[1] Oral magnesium has also been shown to decrease asthma exacerbations in children.[2] The dose is about 400 mg per day.
- **N-acetyl cysteine (NAC)** is the precursor of glutathione, the primary anti-oxidant in the lungs. About 1,000 mg per day is sufficient.
- **Omega-3 oils** including fish, flax, hemp, and evening primrose oils help to decrease inflammation. It is also important at the same time to lower your intake of corn, soy, and vegetable oils, which produce inflammation.
- **Vitamin D** is essential for proper calcium and magnesium balance. It is also a powerful immune system modulator – meaning it helps the immune system work where it needs to, and not where it doesn't. The optimal dose seems to be about 50,000 IU per WEEK.
- **Coenzyme Q 10 (CoQ10)** is often low in people with asthma. The dose is about 300 mg per day.
- **Lycopene and beta-carotene** should be a large part of the diet of any person with asthma. Green, red and yellow fruits and vegetables are the best sources.

## Those with Allergic Asthma Should Try:

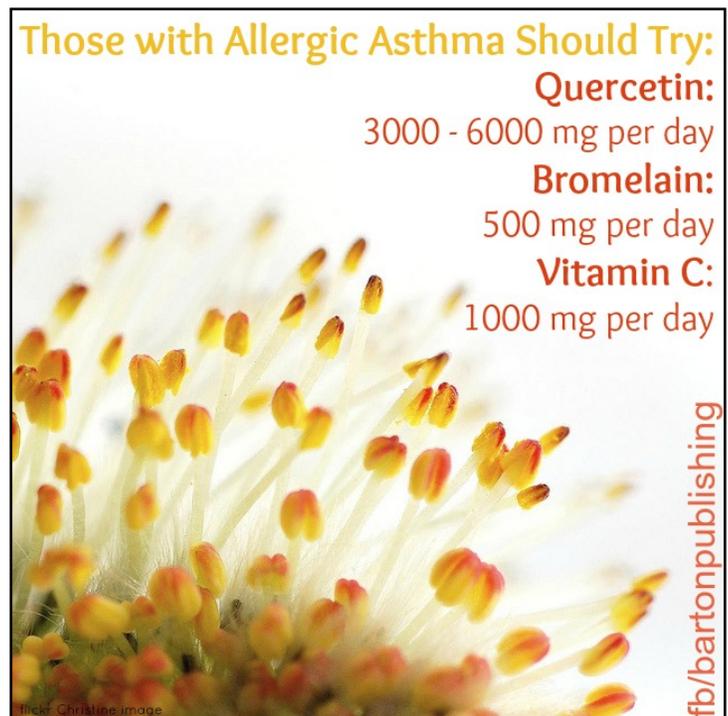
### Supplements

- Quercetin is a bioflavonoid that can completely relieve allergic asthma. The dose is anywhere from 3000 mg per day to as high as 6000 mg per day.
- It should be taken with bromelain, 500 mg per day.
- And vitamin C, 1000 mg per day.

### Herbs

There are many different herbs that have been used for centuries to treat asthma. These should be used individually on a trial basis to assess the benefits.

- **Boswellia** (*Boswellia serrata*) is a traditional East Indian herb that is excellent for inflammatory conditions. The dose is 3 mg three times per day.
- **Coleus forskohlii** (forskolin) is another herb used in Ayurvedic



**Those with Allergic Asthma Should Try:**

- Quercetin:** 3000 - 6000 mg per day
- Bromelain:** 500 mg per day
- Vitamin C:** 1000 mg per day

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medicine to treat asthma. The dose is 250 mg per day.

- **Tylophora** (*Tylophora indica*) has also been used historically to treat asthma. The dose is 250 mg, one to three times per day.
- **Pycnogenol** is a standardized extract from French maritime pine bark that is a powerful antioxidant, and has been shown to improve lung function and decrease the need for asthma medications. The dose is 200 mg per day.
- **Saiboku-to** is a traditional Japanese herbal mixture containing several herbs, including Asian ginseng (*Panax ginseng*), Chinese skullcap (*Baikal scutellaria*), licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), and ginger (*Zingiber officinale*).

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is excellent for people who have asthma due to blocked chi. Many people who have a hard time sleeping at night find a great benefit, allowing them to breathe better at night.

### Homeopathy

Before prescribing a remedy, homeopaths take into account a person's constitutional type, physical, emotional, and psychological makeup, finding the most appropriate treatment for each individual.

Some people may find their symptoms get worse for a short time when starting on a homeopathic remedy. Because of this, be sure to work with a knowledgeable homeopath.

- ***Arsenicum album*** -- for asthma that generally worsens between midnight and 2 am and is accompanied by restlessness, anxiety, chills, and thirst.
- ***Ipecacuanha*** -- for those with asthma, particularly children, who have significant tightness in the chest, a chronic cough with lots of phlegm that may lead to vomiting, and worsening of symptoms in hot, humid weather.
- ***Pulsatilla*** -- for asthma with yellow or greenish phlegm that gets worse in the evening, in warm, stuffy rooms, or after consuming rich, fatty foods; this remedy is most appropriate for adults or children who are tearful and clingy or sweet and affectionate.
- ***Sambucus*** -- for asthma that awakens a person at night with a sensation of suffocation; symptoms worsen when the person is lying down.

### When Asthma is Emotional

Stress is not a cause of asthma, but it can make it worse. Consider the case of Marilyn, above, she had asthma attacks primarily related to her emotions. Many believe there is a large emotional component to asthma.

Multiple studies have been done on the effects of emotions on asthma. There is clearly a connection, but there is no consensus as to how much. Most agree that emotional and psychological trauma or stress can at least trigger an attack.<sup>[3]</sup> Some believe this is due to hyperventilation, which we will discuss later on.

- Hypnosis may be especially useful for children, who can easily learn the technique.
- Yoga may improve lung function and provide stress relief.
- Journaling -- A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* documented the positive effect of daily journaling on people with asthma.<sup>[4]</sup>

Several studies over recent decades have shown that children who grow up in more “primitive” environments, with more dirt and infections seem to have less allergies and asthma.[5] There have been many theories put forth as to why this happens; however, the difference appears to be the bacteria in the intestines. Our immune system is trained in the gut, where it learns to distinguish between self, and non-self. When we have good bacteria, they actually suppress inflammation, allergies, and autoimmune disease, whereas the bad bacteria *promote* these things.

## Recommendations for Emotional Asthma

### Diet

Believe it or not, if you want to permanently relieve your asthma, you have to stop thinking about your lungs. You have to turn your attention to an unlikely place. The road to controlling asthma begins in your stomach, not in your lungs.

Fresh produce is high in many nutrients that help the lungs, including B-vitamins, magnesiums, vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium, and beta-carotene. Fruits and vegetables also contain plenty of bioflavonoids, which can help to reduce free radicals in the body. Quercetin, which is found in high quantities in yellow onions, apples, and tea, has been shown to be especially good at combating free radicals to reduce asthma attacks.

How about a hot, juicy, pink salmon to go with those vegetables? Studies have shown a strong link between eating fish and lower rates of asthma [6]. In Australia, children who ate just two servings of fish, including tuna, sardines, and salmon, per week had less than one third the risk of developing asthma than children who did not. Fish are an especially important source of omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce inflammation in the lungs.

Switching your diet from one high in refined foods loaded with salt and artificial preservatives and additives to a Mediterranean-style diet high in nutrient-rich, fresh, organic produce, cold water or



**200 MG PER DAY**

**CAN**

**PYCNOGENOL**

**HELP ASTHMA?**

Pycnogenol is a powerful antioxidant from French maritime pine bark. It has been shown to improve lung function and decrease the need for asthma medications.

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oily fish, pure olive oil, and zesty spices may go a long way towards helping restore the normal function of the lungs and keeping air passages open.

### Probiotics

Asthmatics can also benefit from probiotics, because these digestive aids not only reduce the incidence of food reactions, but also help to regulate the immune system. Take a product that contains four billion organisms of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidus*.

In experiments conducted in mice, treatment with the *Bifidobacterium longum* reduced the quantity of mucous in the lungs and the presence of inflammatory markers typically affecting airways.[7] Additionally, probiotics decrease smooth muscle contraction in the airways typically associated with asthma.

This dietary guidelines will have you saying goodbye to your inhaler for good.

### Death from Asthma

Five years ago it was reported in the local newspaper that a woman died of an asthma attack while driving to the hospital. She had used her inhaler multiple times, but it stopped working, and before she realized she was in danger – she didn't make it. The number of people in the United States with asthma is about 25 million, which is increasing every year. Of those, there were about 4,000 deaths in 2012 in the U.S.[8]

People die from asthma mostly for one reason: breathing too much. Now, you may think this is strange, that one with asthma could be so short of breath and be breathing too much, how can that happen?

The lungs are not passive bags of air that exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide, they are intelligent and able to control the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood. Interestingly, our need for air does not come from the amount of oxygen, but rather from the amount of carbon dioxide. For example, as every fan of Agatha Christie knows, if you were in a room filled with nothing but nitrogen you wouldn't even notice that you were dying of hypoxia, you would just get more tired, fall asleep, and then die.

On the other hand, the CO<sub>2</sub> is continuously controlled in two ways.

- 1 The way you breathe: rapid, shallow breathing and panting, causes depletion of carbon dioxide, without increasing oxygen. But if you breathe deeply and slowly, then you will hold on to CO<sub>2</sub>.
- 2 When the carbon dioxide level drops, the lungs close off some of the airways so CO<sub>2</sub> doesn't get too low. But as it goes up, the airways are opened allowing more flow.

When people die of asthma, they feel like they need more air so they start panting. (The word "asthma" is from the Greek word that means "to pant.") Panting causes their carbon dioxide levels to drop, so the lungs begin to close off the airways to prevent further loss. Inhaled medications that open the airways cause a rapid drop in CO<sub>2</sub> and only add to the problem. Then lungs close down even more, and become resistant to the inhaled medications, which make the person feel even more short of breath. This cycle continues to worsen as the oxygen drops, until the patient completely loses oxygen and dies.

## The CO2 connection

One way to break this cycle is to breath slowly and deeply. There are various ways of doing this. The old-fashioned way is to use a paper bag to capture the carbon dioxide and breathe it back into the lungs, increasing CO2 levels. Since this is unpredictable, and may decrease oxygen, today we use tubes. Breathing through a 12-inch tube will allow you to hold on to more CO2.

Breathing exercises also increase CO2. Breathing though your nose is very important as is slowing down the breathing and taking deep breaths into your abdomen and not in the chest. The abdomen should go out when you breathe in and in when you breathe out.

Those who have chronic asthma can improve their lung function dramatically just by learning to breath properly. Those with asthma tend to breathe 2-3 times as much air at rest than normal. This causes the carbon dioxide to drop and constricts the lungs as they try to hold on to it. Slow and deep breathing allows for more normal carbon dioxide levels, preventing airway constriction.

As you can see, asthma is not simple, but rather a complex combination of factors and symptoms. It can be managed, and even reversed if you know the reason for it and remove the cause, whether it be physical (such as allergies) or emotional. No matter what the cause, learning how to breathe properly is a good start to preventing asthma attacks and decreasing the risk of death.

***If you have asthma, then we recommended that you have a plan developed between you and your healthcare provider that gives specific instructions for reversing asthma symptoms. What is your plan to reverse asthma?***



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# A Surprising Connection: Food and Asthma

*By Amanda Box, N.D*

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Nearly everyone has been in this situation. You're crunched for time and your kids are starving, so you pull into the nearest drive-thru. As you hand those "Happy Meals" to your kids, you sigh in relief as they slurp their sodas and stuff French fries into their mouth. You know it isn't the healthiest meal, but at least they're fed. Right?

What if I told you that every time you gave your children fast food you were increasing their risk of acquiring asthma? Would you still do it? Most people equate unhealthy fast food with obesity. However, the toxin-filled processed ingredients found in fast food cause far more than just weight gain. A recent study showed that just three fast food meals a week increased the risk of asthma in teens by 39% and younger children by 27%! [1]

Even though adults weren't tested in the study, I would assume that fast food also increases asthma risk in adults. Fast food is full of chemicals, artificial ingredients, and allergy-inducing substances that compromise the immune system. What you breathe into your lungs may seem to be the obvious contributor to asthma and its dreaded attacks. However, the food you put into your mouth can truly be your ally or your enemy. The choice is up to you.

## Immunity and Asthma

Healthy immunity is essential in the prevention of all diseases, including asthma. One of the easiest and most efficient ways to maintain a strong immune system is through healthy eating. Research demonstrates that the link between food and asthma couldn't be clearer. Truly, the foods that you put into your body directly impact your health and the severity of your asthma symptoms!

Eating a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits is extremely important. The antioxidants and vitamins contained in fruits and veggies help to lower inflammation, boost the immune system, and rejuvenate lung tissue. Studies have even shown that children who eat fruits and vegetables regularly have a decreased risk of asthma![2]

Increasing the amounts of fruits and vegetables will help protect against asthma. But there are certain foods that contain “anti-asthma” properties. They are well-suited for preventing and alleviating symptoms such as shortness of breath, wheezing and chest tightness in asthma sufferers. Enjoy these common foods with wonderful asthma healing properties.

### Avocado

Avocados contain high levels of the powerful antioxidant glutathione. Glutathione is often referred to as the “master antioxidant”. Its distinguishing quality is that it is the only antioxidant that resides inside the human cell. Glutathione’s job is to act as a security guard and protect each cell. It also roams the body neutralizing free radicals to lower inflammation. Reducing inflammation is crucial for preventing and reducing asthma symptoms.

I prefer to eat my avocados with a little salt, a sprinkle of herbs, and a dash of balsamic vinegar. However, avocados can be made into everything from guacamole to chocolate pudding!

### Garlic

This pungent spice is packed full of medicinal attributes. Garlic is:

- Anti-viral
- Anti-fungal
- And antibacterial

This makes garlic highly beneficial for preventing lung infections like pneumonia. It also contains mucus-thinning properties, which alleviate congestion from the lungs. But, that’s not all! Garlic is also anti-inflammatory, helping to extinguish swelling in the bronchial airways. Garlic truly has a trifecta effect against asthma! Garlic can be added to nearly every dish, from veggies to main course meats!

### Spinach

Spinach is high in magnesium, a mineral that has a profound effect on asthma. Magnesium is essential for the relaxation of lung tissue. Its relaxation properties help prevent the severity and frequency of asthma attacks by minimizing the constriction of airways.

Researchers think that magnesium works by calming asthma’s characteristic spasms in the smooth muscles of the upper respiratory tract and it also appears to have a mild antihistamine effect.



Magnesium has become so favorable in the treatment of asthma that it is often prescribed in the form of a pill, intravenous therapy, or nebulized for immediate contact with the lungs.

Improve your asthma symptoms with spinach! Also, spinach is high in B vitamins and may help reduce stress-related asthma attacks. Spinach is great in salads and soups and can also be added to smoothies.

### **Pumpkin**

Pumpkin contains high levels of beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A, which is an essential vitamin for the respiratory system. Vitamin A lowers inflammation in the lung tissue and prevents respiratory infections.

Pumpkins are one of the foods least likely to cause allergic reactions, which is great news if your asthma is linked to allergies. Try pumpkin soup, pumpkin bread, or the recipe below for ginger pumpkin cookies for your fall pumpkin fix and beta-carotene boost! Also, indulge in some pumpkin seeds for another magnesium rich food!

### **Ginger**

Ginger is a very powerful spice in combating asthma symptoms. It contains all-natural, anti-inflammatory properties that mimic NSAIDs in the body. Ginger also enhances bronchodilation, or opening restricted airways. Furthermore, ginger heightens the effects of bronchodilator medications in certain studies.[3]

Its ability to inhibit airway constriction and reduce airway inflammation makes it a perfect remedy for asthma sufferers. Ginger is a great addition to curries and baked goods. Try the recipe below for gingersnap pumpkin cookies!

### **Low-Mucus Foods**

Controlling mucus levels is a crucial part of preventing asthma attacks. People with asthma should avoid milk and other dairy products because they promote mucus production in the lungs, which trigger asthma attacks.

Dairy alternatives are more popular than ever before. There are many fabulous milk alternatives on the market today. Coconut milk, almond milk, and hemp milk are just a few of the hundreds of dairy-free alternatives. I have personally tasted dairy-free cheeses, whipped cream, coffee creamer, and yogurt and have found them all to be delicious and comparable to the dairy-based originals. These products are easily found at your local natural grocery or health food store.

Drinking enough water is also essential in thinning mucus secretions. One theory is the lack of water causes the airways to constrict. Another researcher believes dehydration causes mucus to thicken, which can lead to asthma attacks.[4]

Interestingly enough, folk remedies for asthma and allergies bear out the water theory as well. Home cures include drinking hot water and inhaling steam from a bowl or kettle to get quick relief. Drinking around eight cups of water a day should provide enough hydration to keep mucus secretions thin and lubricated.



## Asthma Prevention Recipes

I love it when the weather allows me to incorporate warm and nourishing soups back into our meal plans. Cream-based soups are some of my favorite, but with the cream comes dairy...and therefore mucus! Luckily, adding coconut milk can add the same creaminess without the mucus-producing dairy! This recipe for creamy ham and sweet potato soup is a great dairy-free cream soup alternative![5]

### Creamy Ham and Sweet Potato Soup

#### Ingredients:

- 
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup chopped celery
- 2 cups chopped, cooked ham
- 1 giant sweet potato or 2-3 medium sweet potatoes (4-5 cups chopped into 1/2" cubes)
- 2 1/2 cups chicken stock (preferably homemade)
- 2 cups water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1/4 cup butter\*

#### Directions:

- 1 Combine onion, celery, ham, sweet potatoes, chicken stock, water, salt & pepper in a large pot.
- 2 Bring to a boil and turn down heat to low or medium/low to keep soup at a low simmer. Cook until the sweet potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork.
- 3 Add the coconut milk to the soup (after the sweet potatoes are tender) and stir until well incorporated.

This recipe for gingerbread snaps with pumpkin butter incorporates the asthma reducing power of both pumpkin and ginger. Not to mention that these cookies are absolutely delicious! An added bonus is that these cookies are also gluten and dairy-free![6]

## Gingerbread Snap Pumpkin Butter Cookies

### Cookie ingredients:

- 2½ cups almond flour, plus more for the work surface
- ¼ cup coconut flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1½ tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted
- 4 tablespoons coconut sugar or sucanat
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, whisked

### Pumpkin butter ingredients:

- 2 cups raw pecans
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin puree
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- ½ cup dark chocolate chips (for the topping)

### Instructions:

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- 2 Combine the almond flour, coconut flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Whisk together to evenly distribute the ingredients. Add the coconut oil, sugar, vanilla, and eggs and beat or mix until dough has formed.
- 3 Dust work surface with almond flour and lay the dough out, pressing it down until it is about ½ inch thick.
- 4 Using a cookie cutter or lid from a spice jar or small Mason jar, cut the dough into circles. This should create around 40 small cookies.
- 5 Place about 20 of the cookies on the prepared baking sheet, about ½ inch apart and bake for 5 minutes. Immediately remove the cookies and place on a rack to cool. Repeat with another batch of 20 cookies.
- 6 While the cookies cool, make the pumpkin butter. Place the pecans in a food processor and puree until smooth. Then add pumpkin puree and maple syrup and puree until well combined.
- 7 Melt the chocolate in a double boiler over medium-low heat.
- 8 Assemble the sandwiches: Spread about 1 tablespoon of the pumpkin butter onto a cookie and top it off with another cookie. Then use a spoon to drizzle a bit of chocolate over each cookie sandwich. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. These will keep for about 3 to 4 days.

Making a conscious effort to eat a healthy and nourishing diet greatly reduces your asthma symptoms. Incorporating asthma reducing foods, avoiding dairy products, and staying hydrated are lifestyle choices that can change your asthma for the better. Make a commitment to yourself and to your kids to no longer hit up the drive-thru for fast food. What you eat can make all difference in the severity and frequency of your asthma symptoms.





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## Treat Asthma Naturally

*By Amanda Box, N.D.*

I can't think of anything more frightening than not being able to breathe. Yet for millions of Americans, the nightmare of gasping for breath is their reality.

Asthma is a thief. It steals the air from the lungs of innocent people. It robs many of the ability to enjoy the outdoors or exercise. Worst of all, asthma can kill. I just recently witnessed my friends lose their precious little boy to this dreadful disease. I can attest first-hand that asthma not only devastates lungs, but breaks hearts.

Asthma has grown to epidemic proportions. Today, 1 in 12 people suffer with asthma and the numbers continue to grow each year.[1] Why, in a time of increased technology and improved medical practices would a disease be far more prevalent than it was 100 years ago? Though no one knows the exact answer, I suspect that some of our technological advances hurt, rather than help, the human body. Chemicals and fumes that didn't exist hundreds of years ago now saturate the air we breathe. Our internal balance becomes compromised when we venture too far from nature.. Sadly, the result of imbalance is often disease. And for millions, that disease is asthma.

### What is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition, in which inflammation narrows the airways in the lungs. This inflammation causes coughing, wheezing, excess mucus, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.

Asthma can occur at any age. Just because you didn't have asthma as a child, doesn't mean you won't contract it as an adult. In fact, adult onset asthma is on the rise.[2] Many people in their 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond are finding themselves in the doctor's office complaining of breathing difficulties. Adult onset asthma is often associated with a faster decline of lung function and more severe symptoms than child onset asthma. If you find yourself experiencing any of these symptoms, I recommend seeing a physician about the possibility of asthma.

- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness, pressure, or pain
- Trouble sleeping caused by shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing
- A whistling or wheezing sound when exhaling
- Coughing or wheezing attacks that are worsened by a respiratory virus, such as a cold or flu
- Dry cough at night or when exposed to particular triggers
- Colds that are respiratory in nature and last longer than 10 days
- Shortness of breath after exercise or exposure to cold air

Before the onset of puberty, more males are diagnosed with asthma than females. Conversely, females are more often diagnosed with asthma as adults. This results from fluctuations in female hormones that can play a significant role in adult onset asthma. Researchers believe it is specifically due to drops in the hormone progesterone.

Some of the most common contributors to adult onset asthma include:

- Pregnancy and menopause
- Hormone replacement therapy and birth control pills
- Exposure to viruses and bacteria, especially those that affect the respiratory tract
- Allergies, both food and environmental
- Exposure to dust, mold, and chemical scents like perfumes
- Obesity
- Smoking

However, even with the growing rate of adult onset asthma, 80% of those with asthma experienced their first attack before 6 years of age.[3] Some people show great improvements with their asthma symptoms as they mature into adulthood. For others, symptoms disappear for years, only to see them return in later adulthood. But for others, asthma begins in early childhood and remains a thorn in their side their entire life.

Child onset asthma is often caused by:

- Genetic predispositions
- Exposure to mold (black mold specifically)
- Secondhand smoke exposure
- Viral and bacterial respiratory infections



Research concludes that there may be another possible cause of asthma: antibiotics. Antibiotics are frequently prescribed to infants and toddlers for everything from ear infections to strep throat. In some cases, like strep throat, antibiotics are necessary and help heal and prevent the spread of these harmful bacteria. However, antibiotics have been over-prescribed and often used when unnecessary. This has contributed to a rise in antibiotic resistant superbugs, which are extremely hard to treat.

Superbugs aren't the only result of overuse of antibiotics. One of the most recent studies observing the connection between antibiotic use and asthma analyzed data from 62,576 children ages 7 years and younger. It included 26,693 who had taken at least one round of antibiotics before the age of 1. By 3 years of age, 18% had developed wheezing or asthma!<sup>[4]</sup>

Unnecessary use of antibiotics lowers immunity by disturbing the natural bacterial balance in the body. It wasn't until recently that mainstream medicine began to back off from over-prescribing antibiotics. Many times when parents take their children into the doctor, they expect to walk out with a prescription, whether the illness is bacterial or not. I was one of those kids and was on round after round of antibiotics most of my toddler years. I have suffered extreme gut issues because of the damage that antibiotics caused. Luckily, I didn't develop asthma, but millions of children do every year. It is always best to use antibiotics only when absolutely necessary and to always follow every round with a month's worth of probiotic supplements to replenish healthy bacteria stores.

## Reducing Asthma Attacks

Avoiding asthmatic triggers is the best way to avoid asthma attacks. Although this is always easier said than done. Environmental allergy triggers can't always be avoided. You can't always choose the air you breath. Something as minor as someone's perfume may send you into an asthma attack.

Try to always be aware of your surroundings and don't be afraid to voice your concerns. Let your friends and family know what triggers your asthma so they can make the appropriate accommodations. There is no shame in being honest and open with others about what triggers your asthma! They'll be relieved that you told them as no one wants to cause harm to someone they care about!

One of the largest contributors to asthma attacks is stress. Anxiety and stress can increase the frequency of asthma attacks. The stress and asthma connection is very cyclical. Asthma attacks cause anxiety; anxiety causes more asthma attacks, and so on. The key here is taking control of your thoughts and feelings. Taking the time to calm your mind and reduce your stress levels can do wonders for asthma.

Avoid stress-induced asthma:

- Split up the workload. Don't even try to carry the entire load yourself. Involve your significant other and your kids. Also, be okay with life being a little out of order. Don't sweat the small stuff!
- Exercise lowers stress. Use exercise appropriately as it can sometimes induce asthma.
- Sleep at least 8 hours at night and go to bed before midnight. Proper sleep lowers your stress hormone levels and lifts your mood.
- Practice relaxation techniques like prayer, meditation, and deep breathing.

- Find time to relax. Even if everything isn't done, the house is a mess, and you have projects to do, be sure and take time for yourself each week. Get away, go shopping, or read a book. Do whatever helps you relax and rejuvenate!
- Take stress-relieving supplements if necessary. L-tryptophan, L-theanine, holy basil, reloro, and ashwagandha are all excellent supplements to help take the edge off. I recommend a product called [L-Theanine Serene by Source Naturals](#).

## Supplements for Asthma

### Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a critical nutrient for your immune system. It is no surprise that studies have found a direct correlation between this essential vitamin and asthma. People who are deficient in vitamin D are more prone to asthma attacks due to increased airway reactivity and lowered lung function. Vitamin D can help by decreasing inflammation, which leads to fewer asthma attacks and better breathing.[5]

If you have asthma, then have a vitamin D blood test performed. This will tell you whether or not your levels need to be boosted. Aim for a level of 60-80 ng/ml. Supplementing with around 35 IU of vitamin D per pound of body weight is a great dose to maintain healthy levels in your body.

Even better, go outside and soak up the free vitamin D available from the sun! Just 20 minutes in the sun can give you 25,000 IU of vitamin D! I promise, 20 minutes a day won't cause cancer; it will prevent it! Vitamin D boosts your killer cell activity and reduces inflammation in the body; therefore, lowering the chance of disease! Vitamin D is an inexpensive and effective treatment for asthma.

### Butterbur

In my education of becoming a Traditional Naturopath, I learned many effective uses of natural herbs, vitamins, and supplements. These natural remedies, though effective, are often not recognized by mainstream science or the medical field. Because of this, I'm always thrilled when studies prove and recognize the efficiency of natural supplements. This was the case when I read a study that demonstrated that butterbur was an effective treatment for asthma![6]

I first saw butterbur come on the market around 10 years ago. It was initially recommended for migraines, but later also showed an ability to decrease allergy symptoms. Then, it was noted that it decreased asthma symptoms. [Butterbur](#) contains both anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic properties.

Butterbur dosage for asthma is around 50-75 mg twice daily.

### Boswellia

Boswellia is another natural herb that has shown to be effective in treating asthma in clinical trials. [7] It works by inhibiting leukotrienes, which are inflammation-inducing compounds, in the body. When leukotrienes are released in the lungs, airways are narrowed and an asthma attack is often the result. [Boswellia's](#) ability to decrease inflammation is a wonderful way to treat asthma naturally.

Take 300 mg three times a day of Boswellia to treat asthma.

## Natural Homemade Inhaler

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could inhale something all natural, without side effects to improve your asthma symptoms! Inhalers, though at times life saving, contain steroids, which cause many side effects like acne and lowered immunity. Although a natural inhaler may not be a substitute for a steroid inhaler, it may decrease the use of steroids.

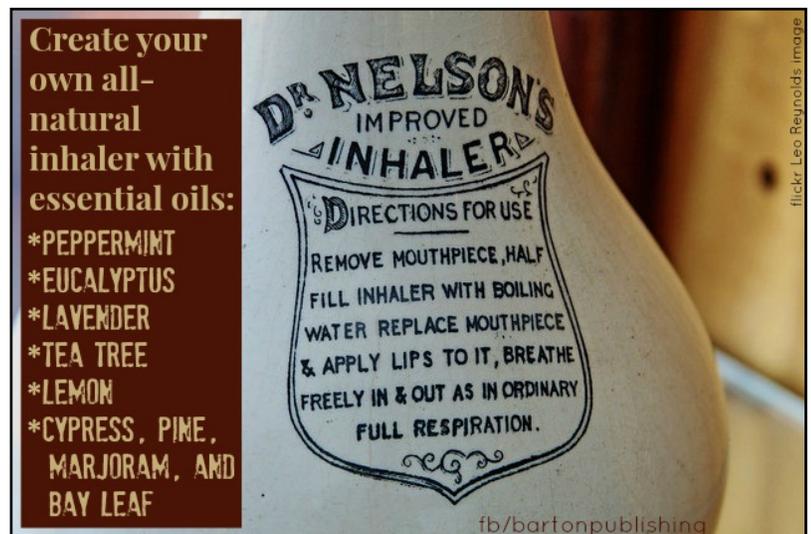
Inhaling essential oils is a wonderful, all-natural way to open up air passages in the lungs and decrease inflammation. You can purchase essential oil diffusers, which allow the oils to be diffused into the air, allowing you to breathe them in and experience their benefits.

However, when you're not at home, a diffuser is not a practical travel option. Instead, you can create your own all-natural inhaler to use whenever your lungs feel compromised.

There are many beneficial oils used for treating asthma. However, the most commonly recommended oils include:

- Peppermint
- Eucalyptus
- Lavender
- Tea Tree (melaleuca)
- Lemon
- Cypress, pine, marjoram, and bay leaf are also great oils to incorporate.

If you want to make your own inhaler, purchase the oils of your choice and a refillable inhaler available [by clicking HERE](#).



Once you have your selected oils and inhaler, assemble your inhaler and drop around 15 drops of combined oils onto the wick provided. The oils should last several days and the inhaler is easily transported in your pocket or purse to use when needed.

If you aren't up for making your own inhaler, Olbas makes an all-natural inhaler you can [purchase here](#).

There is also a product called [Herbal Breathing by Baar](#) and *Inspiral by Heritage*. These products use essential oils combined with other traditional folk remedies, which are inhaled and expired by the lungs. These formulas were used long before corticosteroids were available to bring relief to those with asthma and other lung issues.

Lowering your stress using natural supplements and essential oil therapies can effectively and safely treat asthma. Don't allow asthma to rob you of your life! Take steps towards health and healing by including holistic, all natural therapies into your treatment plan. Take a deep breath and breathe in a new and revived healthy life!



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# Staying Fit with Asthma

*By Rob Fischer*

Years ago in one of his comedy routines, Steve Allen explained, “Asthma doesn't seem to bother me any more unless I'm around cigars or dogs. The thing that would bother me most would be a dog smoking a cigar!”

While a dog smoking a cigar is a humorous image, if you have asthma, you know that asthma is no laughing matter. As many as 20 million Americans suffer with the disease.<sup>[1]</sup>

When I was a kid, asthma didn't seem to be as prevalent as it is today, but I remember one boy in grade school who was excused from many sports activities because of his asthma. In fact, for years we thought that exercise was bad for people with asthma. But as with so many other medical conditions, we understand a whole lot more about asthma today than we did back then.

There are two basic types of asthma: chronic asthma and exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB). Exercise can bring on asthmatic symptoms with either type. Those symptoms include:<sup>[2]</sup>

- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Tight chest

But with the right preparation and the right activities there is no reason you can't enjoy engaging in physical fitness like anyone else. And there are plenty of good reasons why you should do so.

## Reasons to Stay Fit with Asthma

- 1 Maintaining physical fitness is good for asthma, whereas poor health exacerbates it.<sup>[3]</sup>
- 2 By staying fit, you can improve your control of asthma.<sup>[4]</sup>

- 3 Staying fit also increases breath control and can help you reduce your asthma medication.[5]
- 4 Keeping in shape with asthma improves heart and lung health.[6]
- 5 Being fit with asthma will enhance your quality of life on many levels![7]

## Recognize Asthma “Triggers”

A number of factors can trigger an asthmatic attack. Being aware of these factors can help you choose activities that are right for you and help you identify the cause of an attack to avoid future occurrences. These triggers include:

- Deep, rapid breathing especially through the mouth
- Dry air
- Cold air
- Pollen or pollution in the air
- Dehydration
- Excessive chlorine in a swimming pool
- Exercising when you’re sick

With the above triggers in mind, let’s consider some of the best exercises for people suffering with asthma.



## Best Exercises for Asthma

Generally, the best exercises for someone suffering with asthma are those that require only short, intermittent bursts of exertion. Also, if you are unaccustomed to regular exercise, please speak with your doctor to choose an exercise an intensity most suited for you. Activities in this category are: [8] [9]

- Volleyball
- Gymnastics
- Baseball & softball
- Wrestling
- Tennis
- Golf
- Downhill skiing
- Moderate bicycling
- Walking
- Yoga
- Tai Chi

An exception to the above is swimming. When swimming you’re usually breathing in moist, warm air, so even though you may be breathing more rapidly, swimming is considered one of the best healthy choices for someone with asthma.[10]

## Exercises More Likely to Induce an Asthma Attack

Based on the above asthma triggers, some of the activities that are more likely to cause an asthma attack include any sports that involve long periods of exertion (5 to 6 minutes or longer):[\[11\]](#)

- Soccer
- Distance running
- Basketball
- Field and ice hockey
- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing

Even though these activities are more likely to bring on an asthmatic attack, many people with asthma continue to enjoy these sports and even compete in them. About five percent of Olympic athletes take medication for asthma.[\[12\]](#) The key to participating in these or any physical activity is being aware of your body and following some practical tips.

## Practical Tips for Controlling Asthma During Exercise

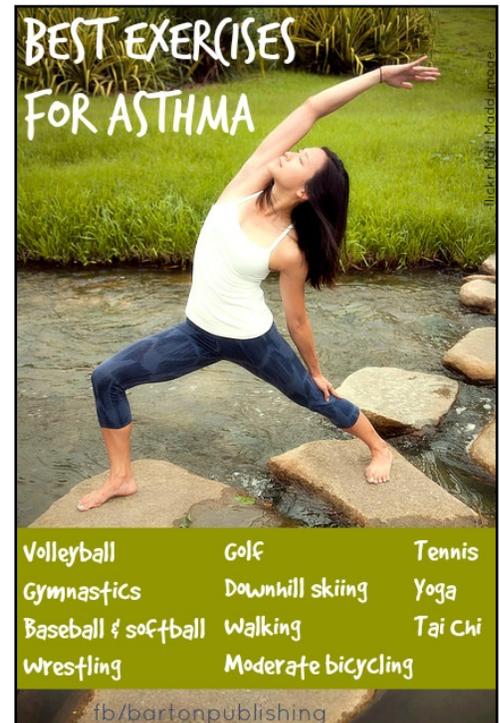
- Use an inhaler about 15 minutes prior to exercising.
- If it's particularly cold outside, or the pollen count or pollution is high, then exercise indoors.
- Spend about 5 minutes warming up prior to exercising.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Avoid exercising if you are sick or not feeling well.
- Know your limits and don't overdo it.
- Always carry an inhaler in case you need it.
- Keep hydrated.
- Include a cool-down routine after the activity. [\[13\]](#)

Warm-up and cool-down routines usually consist of stretching your muscles. The warm-up slowly brings your breathing and heart rate to the level required by the activity. The cool-down routine brings these back to their resting or normal rates.

If you have an asthmatic attack while exercising, stop the activity and follow the instructions your doctor provided in your asthma action plan.[\[14\]](#)

Regular exercise and staying fit is important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Set a goal to work out for at least 30 minutes, four or five days per week. "Avoiding exercise when you have asthma is an old way of thinking," according to Rachel Taliercio, DO, a lung and allergy specialist at the Cleveland Clinic.[\[15\]](#)

Find an exercise you enjoy and include a friend for optimum pleasure.



## What is your healthy asthma and exercise combination?



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master's degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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## The ABCs of Reducing Stress

*By Rob Fischer*

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**A**sthma is a respiratory condition usually triggered by a stimulus that inflames and narrows the airways, making it difficult to breathe. As a result, one may feel out of breath, tightness in the chest, or fall into bouts of coughing or wheezing. Asthma is a threat to our physical health and well-being.

When we think of triggers that induce an asthmatic reaction, we most readily think of things like:

- Prolonged, heavy exercise.
- Cool, dry air; air pollution or pollen.
- But *stress* is also a common trigger for asthma.[\[1\]](#)

Unfortunately, when stress triggers an asthma attack, stress and anxiety multiply, because an asthmatic reaction brings on additional stress and even fear or panic. This stress works against us, intensifying the constriction of airways and making it more difficult to breathe.

Thank God that we have inhalers under such circumstances to help us get our breathing back to normal. But wouldn't it be wonderful to avoid more of the stress and anxiety altogether and eliminate those stress-induced asthmatic episodes?

So much of what stresses us seems to be the little things that accumulate over time. Things like: financial pressures, the neighbor's dog that barks incessantly, a lingering cold, a broken garage door opener, and rush-hour traffic all mount to generate stress, anxiety and frustration. Then often, all it takes to break the dam is something like a flat tire or a minor spat with a co-worker. Suddenly, we find ourselves under major stress triggering a nasty asthma attack.

So, how do we maintain more of an even keel and weather the storms and stresses of life? We cannot live stress-free, but we can learn to control the effects of stress in our lives. Our Creator has given us a very simple approach to reducing stress. In fact, it's so simple that I call it the ABCs of stress reduction.

## ABCs of Stress Reduction

### 1. Acknowledge that God loves you unconditionally and that He is in control.

In perhaps the most well-known verse of the Bible, John 3:16, we read, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”[2]

God loves you more than you can possibly imagine or fathom. That fact alone is extremely comforting, quieting, and de-stressing, but there’s more. Not only are you precious to Him, but He is in sovereign control of the universe.

If you have children, think back when your child was a helpless baby. You protected and provided for that child. In fact, you probably fashioned your life around that child for its safety, growth and well-being. Acknowledge that God is in control. Because He loves you, nothing can come into your life without His say-so. That’s comforting!

### 2. Believe that He cares for you and will meet your needs.

The Bible instructs us: “So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.”[3]

Jesus also encourages us with the words, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”[4]

Obviously, the Lord expects us to work hard and to seek to provide for our family. But when we’ve done all we can, we need to *believe* that He will take care of us. *Trust* Him that He will provide.

Years ago, my wife and I experienced God’s provision in a remarkable way that has helped bolster our trust in Him. At the time, I was a full-time student and working two part-time jobs. We were married with two small children. In spite of my efforts to provide for my family, I came home from work one evening and my wife shared with me that we had nothing in the house for supper.

Payday wasn’t for another day, and we had no credit card. We were out of money and out of food. I went outside to pray, mindlessly walking around our garden as I did. I was really having a struggle with God about our situation. I was trying very hard to provide for our little family and we lived very frugally. It wouldn’t have hurt me to go without a meal, but I didn’t want to subject my wife and children to that.

It was still early spring and only a few radishes had come up. So as I continued my conversation with God, I pulled a small handful of radishes. In my prayer, I rehearsed the Scriptures I knew that talk about God’s provision for us and I was encouraged. I didn’t know how yet, but I was convinced that God would provide supper for us that evening.

Suddenly, I looked at the small bunch of radishes in my hand and asked out loud, “What can you do with radishes?” And immediately the thought entered my head, “Make cream of radish soup.” I knew that God had just answered our prayers for supper.

I excitedly ran inside and told my wife, “Honey, we’re going to have cream of radish soup for supper tonight.” She looked at me funny and said, “I’ve never heard of cream of radish soup.” To which I responded, “I haven’t either, but it might be good!”

I set about washing and slicing the radishes, making a broth from a couple bouillon cubes and adding some dried parsley, milk and flour. I can honestly say that the soup was quite delicious and the whole family enjoyed it. Most of all, however, we were amazed and grateful for God’s gracious provision!

### 3. Cast all your cares on Him.

There’s a beautiful verse in 1 Peter 5:7: “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”<sup>[5]</sup> I once had a man tell me that it was arrogant to think that God would be concerned for the petty issues of our lives.

But he was wrong! The context of that verse is all about humbling ourselves before God and reminds us that He is opposed to the proud. Then God explains that one of the ways we demonstrate humility toward Him is by casting our cares on Him, because He cares for us! (See 1 Peter 5:5-7.)

Finally, let the Apostle Paul’s words in Philippians 4:6-7 encourage you, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”<sup>[6]</sup>

*Acknowledge* that God loves you unconditionally and that He is in control.

*Believe* that He cares for you and will meet your needs.

And *cast* all your cares on Him.

Those are the simple ABCs of stress reduction and reducing your stress can improve your asthma!

From time to time, as a reminder of God’s goodness and provision, we still serve cream of radish soup. I’d like to share that recipe with you here (with a few minor modifications since that night long ago). I hope you enjoy it and I pray it serves as a reminder to you of God’s love and care for you just as it has for us.

## Cream of Radish Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 bunch (12) red radishes
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups organic milk



- 1/4 cup flour or 1/4 cup corn starch
- Tablespoon butter
- dash salt
- dash pepper
- dash dried basil

### Directions

- Clean and slice radishes into disks about 1/16” to 1/8” thick.
- Bring chicken broth to a boil in a sauce pan and add sliced radishes, salt, pepper and basil. Then simmer.
- In a shaker, combine cold milk and flour and shake until well blended. Set milk and flour aside.
- Test radishes for doneness. They should be firmly soft, not mushy.
- When radishes are done, pour milk and flour mix into the pan, and add butter, stirring frequently. Turn the heat down to prevent it from boiling. When the broth begins to thicken the soup is done.

*Guten Appetit!*



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, workshops, and books. Rob has written for numerous churches, for Burlington Northern Railroad, Kaiser Aluminum, and Barton Publishing. He has also trained managers in effective business writing. Rob holds two Master’s degrees, both focused heavily on writing. Rob has published eleven books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.

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