



# Here's To Your Health!

A Phoenix Fire Department Health Center Publication

[www.phoenix.gov/fire/wellness.html](http://www.phoenix.gov/fire/wellness.html)



## Tasty Treatments for Diabetics

An estimated seven percent of the U.S. population has diabetes, which in recent years has been linked to diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, due to insulin resistance in the brain. While there's no cure for diabetes yet, doctors say maintaining a proper diet is one key to controlling the condition. Taking advantage of natural compounds in foods is an alternative to prescription drugs, says Richard A. Anderson, lead scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Beltsville, M.D. "We shouldn't be relying on drugs if we can alleviate or prevent diabetes simply by changing our eating habits."

### Food Fixes

Add these sugar-stompers to your shopping list:

**Tea:** Chemicals known as polyphenols found in black, green, and oolong teas boost insulin activity.

**Cinnamon:** Less than half a teaspoon daily increases sugar metabolism in fat cells.

**Buckwheat:** Traditionally used to make soba noodles, buckwheat contains chemical compounds that reduce blood sugar levels.

**Cherries:** Contain chemicals called anthocyanins that increase insulin production.

**Guava:** Extracts from apple guavas lower blood-sugar levels.

**Cocoa:** Decreases insulin resistance.

Source: PsychologyTody.com

### Golf Squat

Stand holding a 10-pound dumbbell down in front of you with a hand-over-hand grip. Your feet should be more than shoulder-width apart. This is the starting position.

1. Lower to a squat.
2. Rise, turning to the right while bending your elbows and raising the weight over your right shoulder. Your hips should face right, with your weight over your right foot and your left heel off the floor. Return to the starting position and repeat to the opposite side.

### Attention golfers, here are some golf-specific exercises that are sure to add yards to your drive!

#### Dumbbell Row with Rotation

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold a 10-pound dumbbell in each hand. Bend forward at the waist, flex your knees, and let the dumbbells hang in front of your thighs, palms facing each other.

1. Pull your right arm toward your rib cage while rotating your torso as far as you can to the right.
2. Pause, then lower your right arm while pulling up your left arm and rotating left. Perform two to four sets of eight reps.

### Golf Twist

1. Stand in a golf-address position with your feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart, weight on the inside of each heel. Use both hands to hold a 5-pound medicine ball or dumbbell at the center of your chest, with your elbows extended out to your sides.

2. Keeping your head still and feet flat, bring the ball up and to the left, as in a backswing, until your right shoulder is underneath your chin. Return to the starting position and repeat to the right.



People with allergies and asthma often go to extravagant lengths to control their environment. They rip up their carpeting, encase their pillows and mattresses, and install expensive air-filtration systems. Some even pull up stakes and move to a different climate in a desperate and often futile attempt to "run away" from their allergies. They can become so obsessed with controlling their environment that they forget about living their lives.

A simpler strategy may be to make some dietary changes. "Diet is easier to work with, and it can influence immune reactivity profoundly," notes Andrew Weil, MD, director of the Program in Integrative Medicine and clinical professor of medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson. A nutritious diet can alleviate or prevent allergies and asthma in four ways:

- 1) It can help control underlying inflammation of air passages.
- 2) It can dilate air passages.
- 3) It can thin mucus in the lungs.
- 4) It can prevent food-allergy reactions that trigger asthma attacks.

Here are the foods you should eat to get some natural allergy relief:

### **The Right Fats**

Omega-3 essential fatty acids are natural anti-inflammatory agents. They contain eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), which counters the formation of inflammatory chemicals. Good natural sources include flaxseed oil, salmon, haddock, and cod. Another beneficial essential fatty acid, gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), also has anti-inflammatory properties. Good natural sources include evening primrose oil, borage oil, and black currant seed oil.

If possible, you should include more of both of these fatty acids in your diet. Robert Rountree, MD, a holistic physician in Boulder, CO, and coauthor of *Immunotics*, says that you can add a tablespoon of flaxseed oil or walnut oil, for example, to your cereal in the morning or take a supplement of fish oil to get your omega-3s. He recommends a dose of 500 to 1,500 mg daily of EPA. As for GLA, he suggests taking 300 to 600 mg daily. "Many nutritionists and herbalists find that the combination of omega-3 essential fatty acids along with GLA creates a more potent effect for decreasing inflammation," he says.

### **Juices**

Fruit juice also can be a rich source of antioxidants, but no one juice is better than another.

Even if the label reads "Grape Juice" in big letters, the product may contain precious little grape. If you look at the fine print, you might find wording such as "Contains a mixture of juice." On closer inspection, you might discover that the product contains 10 percent corn syrup.

### **High-Fiber Foods**

If you have allergies or asthma, good fats and antioxidant foods are only part of the dietary equation. To prevent leaky-gut syndrome (food-allergy-induced irritation of the gastrointestinal tract that can also sensitize the immune system), you also need to consume colon-friendly substances. First and foremost, ensure that your diet contains plenty of fiber, especially the unrefined variety. High-fiber foods produce contractions called peristalsis. And an active colon is a healthy colon. Since so much of the immune system resides in the gastrointestinal tract, a healthy colon is important to your overall health. On the other hand, low-fiber foods produce a lazy colon that's more susceptible to cancer and other diseases.

The best sources of fiber are whole grains, nuts, and seeds. The outer bran layer of whole grains and seeds offers a unique benefit to your gastrointestinal system: It's rich in fibers that encourage the growth of healthy bacteria such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bifidobacteria*. Brown rice and flax meal are especially likely to foster the growth of these "good" bugs. When you have the right balance of good bugs, your gut stays healthy and digests food properly. By creating an acidic environment, good bugs drive out such "bad" bugs as *salmonella*, *shigella*, and *Escherichia coli*. Too often, though, good bugs are in short supply. As a consequence of the Western lifestyle, we've shifted the balance toward bad bugs that inflame the gastrointestinal tract, increasing our susceptibility to everything from diarrhea to colon cancer.

### **Yogurt**

Assuming that you don't have a milk allergy, the best way to restore the balance between good and bad bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract is to load up on yogurt. When University of California researchers fed patients 18 to 24 ounces of yogurt a day, their allergic symptoms declined by 90 percent.

Granted, that's a lot of yogurt. A typical serving contains only 8 ounces. But researchers concluded that the more yogurt you eat, the better. Since the good bacteria in your gut need to be constantly renewed, you need to eat yogurt regularly in order to get the benefits.

**Control  
Your  
Allergies**



## ***Allergies*** continued

Yogurt or at least the active cultures it contains is not only good for your gut, but it can also help skin allergies, according to a Finnish study. When Finnish researchers gave probiotic supplements of those cultures to children with severe eczema, they helped clear up their skin. Not all so-called yogurt products are beneficial, however. Unlike the yogurts found in the dairy case, frozen yogurt has no beneficial effect on allergies and asthma; in fact, your allergies could get worse, thanks to the large amount of sugar it contains. Check the container for the words "live active cultures" to be assured of a bacterial boost.

### **Allergy-Fighting Superfoods**

In addition to the types of foods listed above, here are specific foods and nutrients that are allergy-fighting powerhouses:

#### **Apples**

A British study of 2,512 middle-aged men showed that those who ate five apples a week had significantly higher lung function than those who ate no apples. Experts believe apples contain healthy compounds, including antioxidants that improve lung health.

#### **Borage oil, black currant seed oil, and evening primrose oil**

These three oils are all rich sources of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), which has anti-inflammatory properties. In fact, borage oil is the subject of ongoing research at the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Research in Asthma at the University of California, Davis.

#### **Canola oil**

Canola oil is a source of allergy-fighting omega-3 fatty acids. Other sources include soybean oil, flaxseed oil, walnuts, and wheat germ.

#### **Cold-water fish**

The following fish are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids: mackerel, anchovies, herring, salmon, sardines, lake trout, Atlantic sturgeon, and tuna. To get the most benefit, either bake or poach the fish. Eat two or three servings per week.

#### **Magnesium-rich foods**

Some studies have demonstrated that people with asthma are magnesium deficient. Magnesium-rich foods include spinach, navy beans, pinto beans, sunflower seeds, tofu, halibut, cashews, artichokes, and black-eyed peas.

#### **Olive oil**

Since it's monounsaturated, consider using extra virgin olive oil as your main source of fat.

#### **Spices**

Eat ginger and turmeric regularly for their anti-inflammatory effects.

#### **Zinc-rich foods**

Some studies have demonstrated that people with asthma are zinc-deficient. Zinc-rich foods include plain yogurt, tofu, lean ground beef, lean ham, oysters, crab, and the dark meat of turkey and chicken.

### **Allergy-Provoking Nutrients**

Just as some things in your diet can help to alleviate your allergy or asthma symptoms, others might be linked to worsened symptoms. Try to decrease your consumption of the following foods that can promote inflammation:

**Milk and cheese** - Milk protein is a common irritant of the immune system.

**Omega-6 fatty acids** - Although you need some of these acids for good health, they can intensify inflammation and other immune responses. Foods that are high in omega-6s include cottonseed, corn, and sunflower oils and processed foods such as mayonnaise and salad dressings.

**Protein** - It should account for no more than 10 percent of your daily caloric intake. Observe the recommended daily allowance of no more than 50 g.

**Saturated fats** - Whether they come from plant or animal sources, they trigger the release of inflammatory chemicals.

**Trans fats** - Rates of asthma and allergies in teens are highest in countries where people eat the most trans fats. Avoid products that contain partially hydrogenated oil.



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