

[IMAGE]

# **Natural Relief from Asthma and the Allergens that Can Cause it**

By Ellen Cutler, DC

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Asthma is a respiratory condition that affects more than 10 million Americans and is one of the leading causes of school and work absences.

In severe cases, asthma can be life-threatening for both children and adults. In the past decade, the incidence of asthma in preschool children has reached epidemic levels - new cases are increasing at more than twice the rate of adults.

Research suggests allergies may be a major contributor to the development of asthma. People who suffer from chronic asthma are usually imbalanced in their digestive tract, experience an overreactive immune response to the presence of allergens, and have abnormal reactions to foods, environmental stressors or pathogens. And because they are so reactive, their immune system becomes overloaded simply by fighting off everyday sensitivities.

The result is that these individuals have little immune support to fend off real threats from bacterial, viral or parasitic infections. Their system becomes chaotic and weakened. Chronic disease or chronic symptoms can set in.

## **Asthma: Primary Causes and Potential Solutions**

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Food Allergies***

In my 20-plus years of practice, I have found that a major contributor to asthma symptoms is specific food allergies to the following foods: cow's milk, various nuts, corn, seeds, soy and soy products, wheat, citrus fruits, chocolate, coffee, caffeine, most grains, spices, yeast products, alcohol, baking powder, baking soda, gum mix, tomatoes, onions, peppers, potatoes, and eggplant. Plants that contain gluten, such as wheat, rye, oats, malt, and barley, can also contribute to asthma symptoms.

### ***Solution***

Taking a full-spectrum vegetarian digestive enzyme can help relieve or reduce most food allergies by helping your body better digest some of these foods.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Food Additives***

Food additives such as sulfites are also big contributors to asthma symptoms. Sulfites are used as a preservative in foods such as wine, beer, fruit drinks, cider, certain baked products, gelatin, starches, beet sugar, and dried fruits, and to prevent discoloration in fresh shrimp, raw vegetables, and salads. Sulfites are also commonly used in the manufacturing of many drugs, including asthma aerosols. Therefore, some of the medications people use daily can actually contribute to the severity of asthma. Be sure to inquire with your doctor about possible sensitivity to it. Food additives and food dyes are also linked to asthma.

### ***Solution***

Eating fresh organic fruits, foods and vegetables, and buying foods with less packaging and processing, can help alleviate the onslaught of sulfites and food additives.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Animal Allergens***

I have never met an asthmatic who was not allergic to animals, especially cats. If your child wants a pet, I strongly recommend getting a hypoallergenic dog. (I suggest that you call your local pet store and find out which breeds are best and worst.)

### ***Solution***

If a cat is the pet of choice, avoid letting it lick you or your child, since cat saliva causes the greatest allergic reaction.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Pollutants***

Insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, fumigants, and other harmful chemicals can leak into the public water supply. I suggest to all my clients that they and their children drink either bottled spring water or filtered water as opposed to tap water. I personally feel that purchasing a water filter is one of the most important things you can do for your family. If you or your child is asthmatic, I highly advise a shower filter as well.

Remember that whatever touches the skin is immediately diffused into the bloodstream and can trigger an asthma attack.

### ***Solution***

Merely rinsing fruits and vegetables is not an effective way to get rid of the pesticide residue, so consider scrubbing them with natural products such as grapefruit extract or borax. Some health food stores sell fruit and vegetable washing solution. Since pesticides permeate the skins of fruits and vegetables, buy organic when possible.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Environmental Causes***

There are many substances found in the air of your home that can cause asthmatic reactions. These include pollens, molds, "out-gassing" in new furniture or carpets, carpet shampoos, floor polishes, furniture glues, paint fumes, cleaning solvents, aerosol sprays, tobacco, and wood smoke.

### ***Solution***

One of the best ways to control the air quality in your home is to buy a good-quality air filter. And when working with noxious solvents such as paint, be sure to wear an air-filter mask.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Toiletries***

Asthma attacks can also be caused by chemicals found in certain types of creams, sunscreens and soaps. There are 8,000 known chemicals found in common toiletries, many of which have not been tested by the FDA. Perfumes and cosmetics derived from petroleum and coal tar can be as bad as cigarette smoke for asthmatics.

### ***Solution***

Using natural soaps and skin care products - as well as natural house-cleaning products - can make a huge and immediate difference in respiratory health and allergy symptoms.

## **Enzyme Support for Asthma**

One of the best ways you can cut down on inflammation and support metabolism, nutrient absorption and the integrity of the immune system is to make sure you and your child take a wide-spectrum, vegetarian

digestive enzyme before meals. Protease enzymes are especially effective at combating inflammation. In fact, these enzymes are one of the mainstays of my recommendations for asthmatics in general.

Asthma can be a frightening and debilitating condition, but in my more than 20 years of treating allergies, I have found that the lifestyle changes suggested in this article can go a long way to reducing and alleviating symptoms. Ask your doctor about natural ways to treat allergies and asthma, and take the first steps toward achieving a long-term solution.

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