

# WELLNESS MINUTE

May 2024



**UNDERSTANDING ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA: MANAGING YOUR HEALTH**  
**FOOD ALLERGIES: NAVIGATING DIETARY CHOICES**  
**RECIPE OF THE MONTH**  
**BREATHING EXERCISES FOR ASTHMA MANAGEMENT**

# UNDERSTANDING ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA: MANAGING YOUR HEALTH

May is Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month, dedicated to raising awareness about these common respiratory conditions. In this month's Wellness Minute, we explore allergies and asthma, providing valuable information on how to manage your health and well-being.

## **ALLERGIES:**

Allergies are your body's response to substances that it perceives as harmful, even though they may not be. Common allergens include pollen, dust mites, pet dander, and certain foods. Allergic reactions can manifest in various ways, from sneezing and itchy eyes to more severe symptoms like anaphylaxis.

## **ASTHMA:**

Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition characterized by airway inflammation and narrowing, leading to breathing difficulties. Common triggers include allergens, respiratory infections, and irritants such as smoke or strong odors. Asthma symptoms can range from mild wheezing to severe attacks that require immediate medical attention.

## **MANAGING ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA:**

Effective management is key to living well with allergies and asthma. Here are some strategies:

- **Identify Triggers:** Work with a healthcare professional to identify

specific allergens or asthma triggers and develop a personalized management plan.

- **Medications:** Use prescribed medications as directed to control symptoms and prevent exacerbations.
- **Avoidance:** Minimize exposure to allergens by keeping your living space clean, using air purifiers, and avoiding known triggers.
- **Emergency Plan:** Ensure you have an emergency plan in place, including quick-relief medication for asthma and an anaphylaxis action plan for severe allergies.

This May, let's focus on raising awareness, promoting proper management, and supporting individuals with allergies and asthma. With the right knowledge and strategies, you can take control of your health and enjoy a better quality of life.

### Sources:

1. American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology - Allergies (<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies>)
2. American Lung Association - Asthma (<https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma>)



# FOOD ALLERGIES: NAVIGATING DIETARY CHOICES

For individuals with food allergies, making safe dietary choices is crucial. Here are some tips for navigating food allergies:

- **Read Labels:** Always read ingredient labels carefully to identify potential allergens in packaged foods.
- **Inform Others:** When dining out or attending social events, inform others about your food allergies so they can accommodate your needs.
- **Safe Cooking:** If you have food allergies, consider preparing your meals at home to ensure safety and control over ingredients.
- **Emergency Plan:** Carry your prescribed epinephrine auto-injector if you have severe food allergies and educate those around you on its use.

- **Cross-Contamination:** Be aware of cross-contamination risks in restaurants and kitchens. Ask about their food preparation practices.
- **Alternative Ingredients:** Explore alternative ingredients and recipes to enjoy a wide variety of foods safely.

With careful planning and awareness, you can manage food allergies while still enjoying delicious and safe meals.

Sources:

1. Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) (<https://www.foodallergy.org/>)



# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY SMOOTHIE FOR RESPIRATORY HEALTH

Promote respiratory health with a nutritious and asthma-friendly smoothie. This recipe is packed with ingredients that can benefit lung function and reduce inflammation.

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup spinach (rich in antioxidants and vitamins)
- 1/2 banana (potassium for lung function)
- 1/2 cup blueberries (anti-inflammatory properties)
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt (probiotics for gut health)
- 1 tablespoon honey (anti-inflammatory)
- 1/2 cup almond milk (or your preferred milk)

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Add all the ingredients to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Pour into a glass and enjoy your asthma-friendly smoothie!

This delicious and nutrient-packed smoothie not only supports respiratory health but also satisfies your taste buds.

### Sources:

1. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America - Asthma-Friendly Recipes (<https://www.aafa.org/asthma-friendly-recipes/>)



# BREATHING EXERCISES FOR ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Asthma management goes beyond medications. Breathing exercises can be a valuable addition to your asthma management plan. Here are some effective breathing exercises:

- **DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING:** Also known as abdominal or belly breathing, this exercise involves taking slow, deep breaths by expanding your diaphragm. It helps improve lung function and reduces the use of accessory muscles for breathing.
- **PURSED-LIP BREATHING:** Inhale through your nose and exhale through pursed lips, as if you were blowing out a candle. This technique helps prolong exhalation, keeping airways open longer and reducing shortness of breath.
- **BUTEYKO BREATHING:** This method involves shallow breathing through the nose, aiming to increase carbon dioxide levels in the body, which can help prevent asthma symptoms.

- **YOGA BREATHING (PRANAYAMA):** Yoga offers various breathing techniques that promote relaxation and improved lung function. Techniques like "Alternate Nostril Breathing" and "Bhramari Pranayama" can be particularly helpful for asthma management.

Regular practice of these breathing exercises can enhance lung capacity, reduce the frequency of asthma attacks, and improve overall respiratory health.

#### Sources:

1. American Lung Association - Breathing Exercises (<https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/wellness/breathing-exercises>)



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