



Good Neighbor Script

INSPIRATION FOR LIVING WELL FROM GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY | MARCH 2026

The Connection Between Allergies and Asthma

Asthma is a chronic lung condition that causes your airways to become inflamed and swollen in response to certain triggers, making it hard to breathe. Allergies, on the other hand, are an immune condition in which the immune system overreacts to harmless substances, such as pollen, pet dander, or certain foods. While allergies primarily affect the immune system, they can also trigger asthma symptoms.

Many people with asthma also have allergies, and exposure to allergens is one of the most common triggers for an asthma attack. This is known as “allergic asthma.”

Symptoms of allergic asthma

The symptoms of allergic asthma are the same as the symptoms of other types of asthma.

- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Tightness or pain in the chest

What sets allergic asthma apart is the presence of allergy symptoms during an asthma flare-up. These include:

- Itchy or red eyes
- Congestion or stuffy nose
- Sneezing

If your asthma symptoms worsen when exposed to specific allergens — like pollen, pet dander, or mold — it’s a strong indication that you may have allergic asthma.

How to treat allergic asthma

If you suspect you have allergic asthma, here’s what you need to do:

1. Get your asthma under control. Asthma can be fatal if not controlled. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), roughly 3,000 people in the U.S. die each year from asthma. Work with your provider to create an asthma action plan so that you know what to do if you start having asthma symptoms — and when to seek help.

2. Identify your allergens. Allergy testing is essential for determining what triggers your asthma. An allergist can perform tests to confirm specific allergens, such as dust mites, pet dander, mold, or pollen. You may have a sense of what you’re allergic to, but allergy testing will help you confirm it.

3. Manage your allergies effectively.

- **Avoid known allergens.** For example, if you’re allergic to pollen, visit pollen.com/map to learn when pollen counts are high in your area — and then keep your windows closed, move exercise indoors, and take a shower and wash your clothes after being outside. For pet allergies, consider keeping pets out of bedrooms and using air purifiers to reduce dander.
- **Explore over-the-counter (OTC) allergy medications.** These medications are not going to help you once you’re having asthma symptoms. For those, consult your asthma action plan. But proactively using OTC allergy treatments — such as steroidal nasal sprays, oral antihistamines, and saline nasal rinses — can help manage your allergies and may help reduce the frequency or severity of allergic asthma symptoms.
- **Ask about prescription allergy medications.** Sometimes OTC medications aren’t enough. Ask your doctor if there are prescription medications that may be more effective.
- **Consider allergy immunotherapy.** This involves shots (or sometimes sublingual tablets) that expose your body to low doses of the allergens you’re reacting to. Over time, your allergist will slowly increase the dose. Over a few years, your body can build a tolerance to the allergen, though maintenance doses may be required. Allergy immunotherapy works for many people, but it is not effective for everyone. That said, if you’ve exhausted your other options, it’s worth a try.

HEALTH & FITNESS

How to Lower Cortisol Naturally: 3 Effective Strategies

Cortisol is a hormone your body produces to help you wake up, regulate metabolism, maintain blood pressure and blood sugar, sharpen focus, and respond to stress. It rises naturally in the morning and falls at night.

But when you’re under stress, cortisol can become chronically elevated or dysregulated. This can lead to unwanted weight gain, high blood sugar and blood pressure, a weakened immune system, mental health concerns, and fatigue.

Here are three ways to lower your cortisol naturally:

Get enough exercise. To lower cortisol, Stanford Lifestyle Medicine recommends consistent moderate cardio exercise, like brisk walking, slow jogging, biking, or swimming. Aim for about 30 minutes most days. You can also try mind-body exercises (like yoga, Pilates, or tai chi) or modest strength training. Avoid intense workouts, as they can actually spike your cortisol levels.

Feed your microbiome. *The Neurobiology of Stress* found that nourishing your microbiome (the beneficial bacteria in your gut) can help reduce cortisol levels and the perception of stress. To support your microbiome, eat foods that contain probiotics (like yogurt, kimchi, and sauerkraut), get enough fiber (which acts as a prebiotic that feeds beneficial bacteria), and consider taking a probiotic supplement.

Find positive ways to manage stress.

Elevated cortisol can cause stress, but stress can also dysregulate cortisol levels. Healthy ways to manage stress include exercise, getting outside in nature, gardening, watching movies, reading, and spending time with friends and family.



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MARCH RECIPE

Spring Minestrone Soup

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Serves
15 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes	6

With eight different vegetables, plus beans and pasta in every bite, minestrone is a delicious, high-fiber soup packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This easy recipe is freezer-friendly and adaptable, so you can include whichever vegetables you have on hand.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 medium onion, diced
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 medium celery stalks, diced
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 4-5 baby potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken stock
- 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup fresh, trimmed, or frozen cut green beans
- 3/4 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup chopped kale (packed) or other cooking greens, such as Swiss chard, collard greens, or spinach. Remove any tough stems if desired.
- 15-ounce can small white beans (navy or Great Northern), drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup small shell pasta
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
- Other optional vegetables to add or substitute: parsnips, sweet potato, zucchini, lima beans, cauliflower florets

KIDS CAN!

- Measure the ingredients
- Rinse the beans
- Stir the soup

Tools

- Chef's knife and cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Soup pot

Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in the soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrots, and celery, and sauté for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables soften and turn light golden.
2. Add the garlic and potatoes to the pot, then stir for about one minute.
3. Add the stock and canned tomatoes and bring the soup to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat to medium-low, and let it simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Add the vegetables, white beans, and pasta. Turn up the heat to bring the soup to a boil. Stir well, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for another 15 minutes, or until the pasta is cooked al dente. Tender green vegetables like spinach can be added just before serving. Hearty greens like kale can be added 5 to 10 minutes after you reduce the heat.
5. Add the salt, oregano, and chopped fresh basil. Taste and adjust the seasonings as needed.



For more recipes, scan this QR code or visit www.mygnp.com/recipes.

SPRING ALLERGIES

Six Surprising Facts You Might Not Know



| 01

Pollen travels hundreds of miles.



| 02

Stress can make your allergy symptoms worse.



| 03

Allergy symptoms spike during PMS and pregnancy.



| 04

Thunderstorms don't help.



| 05

Ladybug allergies are real.



| 06

Allergies decline as you grow older.



Looking for more inspiration for living well?

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Product Spotlight



Breathe easier this allergy season. Find relief with *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* brand products designed to tackle sneezes, sniffles, and itchy eyes. Stop by and stock up today.