

# Asthma and Nutrition

*Asthma in children is related to:*

- More ER visits
- More hospitalizations
- More missed days at school



## Know your asthma medications

### **Preventers:**

These are meant to control inflammation in the airways.

Ex. Pulmicort, Flovent

### **Rescuers:**

These give quick relief by relaxing the muscles of the airways.

Ex. Albuterol, Proventil



Asthma affects 7 million children under the age of 18. It affects around 13% of non-Hispanic Blacks and 19% of Puerto Rican children in the United States.

Kids with asthma could have persistent cough, wheezing, heavy breathing, and interrupted speech (because they have to catch their breath.) Breathing treatments, inhaled medications, and oral steroids are often used to treat asthma.



Some of examples of triggers are:

- pollen
- dust mites
- cigarette smoke
- mold
- changes in weather
- perfume

*The goal of asthma care is to prevent the symptoms!*

Work with your child's healthcare provider to find out what triggers your child's asthma. Triggers are different for every person.

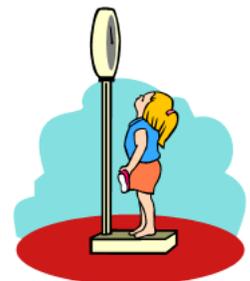
If your child needs breathing treatments (or nebulizer treatments) at least once a week, his/her asthma is not under control! Talk to your child's healthcare provider as soon as possible.

## Nutrition is important because . . .

Your child might have a hard time eating during an asthma flair-up because:

- He's tired because of excessive coughing and interrupted sleep.
- His throat is sore, making it hard to swallow foods.
- Food taste bad with all that mucus in throat and nose.

Unless your child has food allergies, there is no reason to limit or exclude foods during an asthma episode. Be sure your child gets enough fluids and offer nutrient-rich snacks. Poor eating and excessive coughing can cause weight loss. Good nutrition can help prevent it.



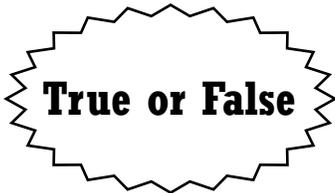
It's helpful to have a plan for sick days so that your child has some nourishment while sick. You can use the following list as a guide for choosing snack foods from every food group. Your child might be able to handle small amounts of these foods and you can offer them often throughout the day.

# ~Snacks for Sick Days~



Place an (X) next to the ideas that would work for you:

- Oatmeal made with milk
- Cheese grits
- Applesauce, fruit cup, fresh fruits
- Bean dip with melted cheese and crackers
- Peanut or almond butter on bananas or toast
- Peanut butter added to cooked oatmeal
- Egg salad or tuna salad mini sandwiches
- Yogurt or slices of cheese
- Smoothies made with milk, yogurt, frozen fruits and a spoonful of peanut butter
- Deviled eggs
- Trail mix prepared with WIC cereals, nuts, dried fruits (for children over 4 years old; choking risk for younger kids)
- Calorie boosters like Carnation Instant Breakfast® added to milk



“Milk causes mucus.”

The idea that milk causes mucus has been around for generations. Milk can create a feeling in your mouth similar to mucus, but studies have found that milk does not cause more mucus or make mucus thicker.

Limiting milk when sick means we may not get enough calcium, vitamins, and protein. So don't shy away from milk when sick!



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## Resources

### After reading about asthma

What is your next step in caring for your child with asthma?

Write it here:




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**Take Action!**

For more information on asthma visit:

- UF Pediatric Pulmonary** <http://www.peds.ufl.edu/divisions/pulmonary/>
- American Lung Association** <http://lungusa.org>
- American Academy of Pediatrics** <http://www.aap.org>
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology** <http://www.aaaai.org>
- Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics** <http://www.aanma.org>