

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

## Spring into action with these asthma and allergies tips

Spring is in the air, and along with the flowers blooming comes allergy season. For people with asthma and seasonal allergies, this can be a tough time of year.

Asthma makes it hard to breathe, causing symptoms like coughing and wheezing, while allergies can make you sneeze, itch, or swell up. The triggers can be all around us, from the air we breathe to the choices we make, and even our family history. But there's good news: with the right strategies, you can take control of your allergies and asthma.

### Here are 7 tips to help you breathe easier and feel better:

**Avoid your triggers.** Find out what makes your allergies or asthma worse and try to avoid those things. Common triggers include dust mites, pet dander, mold, pollen, tobacco smoke, strong smells, and being sick.

**Make your home a safe space.** Keep your home free of triggers. Use air purifiers, keep windows closed when pollen is high, and avoid strong scents or perfumes. Clean and dust regularly and



wash your bedding in hot water every week to reduce allergens.

**Take your medicine.** Take your allergy or asthma medication as prescribed to help manage your symptoms and prevent problems. Always have your rescue medications with you.

**Make healthy choices.** Eat a balanced diet with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats to stay well and strong. Exercise regularly to help your lungs work better.

**Stay away from tobacco smoke.** Tobacco smoke can increase your risk of getting asthma and other health problems. It can also trigger symptoms and make them worse.

**Manage stress.** High stress and strong emotions can make your symptoms worse. Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to help manage stress.

**Visit your doctor regularly.** Regular check-ups with your doctor can help manage your symptoms and keep you healthy. Living with asthma and allergies can be challenging, but with the right strategies, you can take control and live a healthier, more comfortable life.

To learn more, [join us](#) for our Living with Asthma webinar at 1 p.m. ET Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Resources: [AAAAI.org](https://www.aaaai.org); [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

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# Health literacy 101: Understanding your care

Imagine you're at the doctor's office, and your health care provider is explaining a new diagnosis or treatment plan. But as they're speaking, you feel lost in a sea of unfamiliar words and complicated concepts. You nod along, pretending to understand, but inside, you're worried and unsure. This is a common experience for many people, and it's often due to a lack of health literacy.

Health literacy is the ability to understand and use health information to make informed decisions about your care. It's not just about reading and writing. It's also about understanding the complex health care system, knowing which questions to ask, and making sense of the information you receive.

**Resource:** [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov); [WHO.int](https://www.who.int)

**Here are a few ways to improve your health literacy so you are an informed patient.**

- **Listen and ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your health care provider to explain things in simpler terms. Repeat back what you've understood to make sure you're on the same page. If you don't understand something your provider said after your visit, don't hesitate to contact them with your concerns.
- **Bring a buddy.** Having a friend or family member with you during appointments can help you remember important information and ask questions you might not think of.
- **Take notes.** Write down all important information, such as



medication instructions and follow-up appointments, to help you remember.

- **Use online resources.** Websites like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer reliable and easy-to-understand health information.

By taking these steps, you can become more empowered to take control of your health. Remember, it's OK to ask questions and seek help when you need it.

## Vegan Superfood Grain Bowls (Serves 4)

### Ingredients:

- 1 (8 ounce) pouch microwavable quinoa
- ½ cup hummus
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 (5 ounce) package baby kale
- 1 (8 ounce) package refrigerated cooked whole baby beets, sliced (or 2 cups from salad bar)
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1 medium avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup unsalted toasted sunflower seeds

### Directions:

Prepare quinoa according to package directions; set aside to cool.

Combine hummus and lemon juice in a small bowl. Thin with water to desired dressing consistency. Divide the dressing among 4 small condiment containers with lids and refrigerate. Divide baby kale among 4 single-serving containers with lids. Top each with 1/2 cup of the quinoa, 1/2 cup beets, 1/4 cup edamame



and 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds. When ready to eat, top with 1/4 avocado and the hummus dressing.

Recipe courtesy of [Eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com); for nutritional information click [here](#).

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