

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH ASTHMA

### Know your flow

**A** peak flow meter is a useful tool for checking your asthma. You blow air into this handheld device in one fast blast, which measures how well you blow air out of your lungs. Peak flow readings may reveal that your asthma symptoms are worsening, even if you don't feel it. And that intel may prompt your doctor to fine-tune your medications.

Your doctor may ask you to use the device daily for several days in a row. You can measure your peak flow in the mornings or the evenings, or before or after your medications. Whatever routine you



settle on, try to stick with it. The more consistent you are, the easier it is for your health care team to spot trends and understand your true scores.

Each time you use a peak flow meter, repeat the test three times. Then record the highest of your three readings. Peak flow scores are typically put into three zones:

**Green zone:** This is 80% to 100% of your usual or "normal" peak flow rate. If you're in this zone, you're

doing well. (Ask your doctor what's normal for you.)

**Yellow zone:** This is 50% to 80% of your usual peak flow rate. This zone may signal that your airways are narrowing. Make a plan with your doctor for when your peak flow rates are in the yellow zone.

**Red zone:** This is less than 50% of your usual peak flow rate. If you're in the red zone, take your rescue medications right away. Then contact your doctor for next steps.

Ask the Asthma Doctor

**Q** How might a cold/flu/COVID-19 affect my child's asthma?

**A** Getting sick is no picnic for anyone — but it can be downright dangerous for kids with asthma. One recent study showed that children with chronic lung diseases are at double the risk of being hospitalized for the flu, compared with kids with other chronic conditions.

"Any respiratory virus, including COVID, can make asthma symptoms worse," says Theresa Guilbert, M.D. She's the director of the asthma center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics "It's the most common trigger for an asthma attack."



Kids with asthma already have inflamed airways and lungs. And the fevers and coughs that come with respiratory illnesses put even more stress on those airways. While other kids may shake it off more easily, kids with asthma are more likely to have serious problems, like pneumonia.

When it comes to protecting kids with asthma, an ounce of prevention is

worth a pound of cure. Try these tips:

- Get your child vaccinated against flu and COVID-19.
- Help your child avoid catching a virus by teaching them to wash their hands often and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Make sure your child follows their daily maintenance plan. The best way to avoid potential complications is to help them keep their asthma under control.

Care Advocate Spotlight

**Diana Hall** has been with AvMed for 17 years, 15 years as a Member Engagement Representative, and 2 years as a Care Advocate.



"My favorite thing about being a Care Advocate is helping members with their health care needs and making a difference in their lives."

To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735



## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.



### Healthy holiday swaps

**W**hile “special occasion” treats can certainly be part of a healthy diet, the holiday season ushers in a lot of “special occasions” that can make it harder to stick to a healthy eating plan at this time of year. But these small changes can help.

#### Swap in non-starchy vegetables.

They're lower in carbs and higher in fiber. For example, try mixing mashed potatoes with cauliflower. Other non-

starchy vegetables include mushrooms, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, leafy greens, and eggplant.

#### Go for brothy soups instead of creamy soups.

They're less calorie dense, but just as comforting. Examples: chicken noodle, french onion, ramen, minestrone and more.

#### Keep sides simple.

Instead of rich, creamy casseroles, opt for simple roasted vegetables made with olive oil and herbs.

#### Choose lighter dips.

Hummus, guacamole and salsa have less saturated fat than creamy dips.

#### Use oils instead of butter and cream.

Oils are lower in saturated fat and provide heart-healthy unsaturated fats.

#### Use lower-fat dairy.

For example, use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. It has more protein and less saturated fat.

#### Choose snacks wisely.

Instead of chips and cheese, go for low-calorie options like raw veggies, popcorn, and fresh fruit.

#### Cut the sugar in half.

You can almost always get away with less sugar in dessert recipes. Add extra spices for more flavor.

#### Unencrypted email makes it easier to communicate with your case manager!

To opt in, scan the QR code with your phone. Log in or register to the Member portal and select “Set My Preferences.”



## Recipe



# Dark Chocolate Bark with Hazelnuts and Cranberries

Serves 12 | Prep time: 15 minutes

This dessert looks impressive, but it's also a breeze to make. Experiment with different nuts and dried fruits.

### Ingredients

12 ounces dark chocolate,  
finely chopped  
¼ cup chopped hazelnuts  
¼ cup dried cranberries

### Directions

1. Line a rimmed baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Bring 1 inch of water to a simmer in a saucepan, then reduce heat to low. Place a heatproof bowl on top of the saucepan that fits snugly but doesn't

touch the water. Add the chocolate to the bowl and stir until just melted.

3. Pour the melted chocolate onto the baking sheet, then sprinkle with the hazelnuts and cranberries. Refrigerate for 1 hour, then break into large pieces.

### Nutrition Info

Calories 190 | Fat 12g (Sat Fat 6g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 0mg | Carbs 18g | Fiber 3g | Sugar 13g (inc. 11g Added Sugar) | Protein 2g Vit D 0µg | Calcium 20mg | Iron 2mg | Potassium 179mg