

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH ASTHMA

Break the mold! 3 ways to conquer your mold allergies.

There's a common allergen that may be causing you trouble, and it's everywhere: mold. "Even if you're not allergic, mold may still irritate your lungs," says Melanie Carver, chief mission officer of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. With asthma, mold can be an even bigger problem. It can cause serious symptoms like coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

Mold is hard to outrun. It grows pretty much everywhere, even in your home. Here are three tips to keep it in check.



TIP 1 **Reduce mold indoors**

Mold thrives in moist environments. Bathrooms, kitchens, and basements may be problem areas, says Jill Poole, M.D., chief of the division of Allergy and Immunology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. Run bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans and use mold filtration on your air conditioning system.

The AAFA recommends a Certified Asthma and Allergy Friendly® filter to capture mold spores. Check with an HVAC professional to make sure your system can handle it.

Lower indoor humidity is important too — keep it below 45%. Try a dehumidifier, but be sure to clean the fluid reservoir twice weekly to prevent mold growth. *(Continued)*

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TIP 2

Play it safe outdoors

Watch out for fallen leaves, mulch and rotting logs. These are places where mold thrives. For extra protection, you can wear an N-95 mask. When you come back inside, take a shower and change your clothes to prevent tracking mold spores into the house. Dr. Poole also recommends irrigating your nose and sinuses to remove lingering spores.

TIP 3

Focus on fixing leaks

"Prevent moisture buildup inside your house by fixing leaks on your roof or in your plumbing," Carver advises. Other ways to prevent moisture buildup? Make sure ground water drains away from the foundation and keep your gutters clean. If you have visible mold inside your house, it's best to have it professionally cleaned. "If you need to do it yourself, wear a mask, gloves, and goggles to keep mold spores from your airways and eyes," says Carver.

Ask the Asthma Doctor

Q My child isn't getting the hang of his inhaler. Why is it so difficult?

A That little inhaler is a big deal: It's one of the keys to managing asthma. Your child may have two kinds: an everyday medicine to prevent attacks and a rescue inhaler for flare-ups. But research shows that only about half of all kids who are prescribed asthma control medicines take them regularly.

Problem is, learning to use the inhaler can be hard. "There are so many steps involved, and each device is different," says



Theresa Guilbert, M.D., director of the asthma center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital & Medical Center and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The first step is to read the instructions that come with your medication. "If you're still struggling, your best resource is your doctor or nurse," says Dr. Guilbert. Another resource: your neighborhood pharmacist.

We're here for you

Your Case Manager can connect you to the resources you need. Just 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.

Stay on track this holiday season

The holidays are all about enjoying friends, family ... and delicious food! But if you're managing a health condition or have dietary restrictions, the buffet table may feel more like a minefield. Still, you can indulge in seasonal favorites without sacrificing your health. Here are a few tips.

Avoid mindless grazing

People tend to gather around the food at parties. But when you're chatting, you may not even realize how much you're eating. Cut down on mindless eating by moving conversations away from the snacks.

Be smart about sweets

Sweets aren't off the table,

but be mindful of how much you have. If there are several things you want to try, have just one or two bites of a few



different things (maybe find a friend to split portions with). Or, if you have your eye on something special, have a whole portion of just that.

Bring your own dish

If you have specific dietary restrictions, bring your own dish that meets your

needs. The host and the rest of the party will appreciate an extra dish, and you know there will be at least one thing there that you can eat without worry. (Looking for ideas? Try the recipe on the next page. It's a lighter version of a sweet potato casserole.)

Go easy on the drinks

Alcoholic (or non-alcoholic) drinks can be loaded with calories and sugar, on top of all the other treats

you're enjoying. Choose low-calorie options like light beer or wine or use sugar-free mixers like seltzer or diet soda. And stick to just one or two drinks.

Don't come hungry

It's tempting to "save your calories" by skipping meals or eating light before going to a party. But if you're overly hungry when you get to the party, you're more likely to overeat. And it will be harder to resist cravings for salt, sugar, and fat.

Recipe



Roasted Sweet Potato with cinnamon almond butter sauce

Serves: 4 | Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

2 large sweet potatoes, cut into small cubes
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
½ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. natural creamy almond butter
1 Tbsp. warm water
1 tsp. cinnamon powder

Nutrition facts (per serving):

Calories: 190 calories | Fat: 11 g (saturated fat: 1 g) |
Cholesterol: 0 mg | Sodium: 180 mg | Carbs: 20 g | Fiber: 4 g |
Sugar: 6 g (added sugar: 0 g) | Protein: 4 g

Directions

Preheat oven to 425° F.
Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the sweet potatoes and toss with olive oil, garlic powder, and salt. Bake for 15 minutes, stir, and return to the oven for 15 minutes.

While the potatoes are roasting, make the sauce: Add the almond butter and water to a small bowl and microwave for 10-15 seconds. Mix in the cinnamon powder. If needed, add more warm water a teaspoon at a time until it's thin enough to drizzle. Drizzle sauce over roasted sweet potatoes and serve.