

# Healthy workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter



## Asthma and Allergies

Imagine spring without allergies or asthma ...

Ahhhhh

Allergies can cause a wide range of symptoms, including a runny nose, itching, swelling, sneezing and rashes.

When someone with allergies has contact with a trigger, their immune system goes into high alert. That's why some folks can be allergic to foods like nuts, seafood or dairy, and others can eat them without a problem.

Allergies are pretty common – one out of every five Americans has at least one. And we often inherit allergies from our parents. Besides food allergies, many people have reactions to pollens, molds, dust, pets, insect stings, even makeup and perfume. Whatever causes the problem is called an “allergen.”

When an allergen comes on the scene, your body's immune system sends white blood cells in to take care of business. The blood cells react by producing fighters called “antibodies.” Antibodies send in their own warriors to fight, releasing a substance called “histamine.” All this activity is your body's way of getting rid of what it perceives as a threat. That inner battle is what causes an exaggerated physical response...and your misery.

## Allergy Strategies

Controlling allergies is really about keeping a watchful eye and staying in control. Show your allergies whose boss with some of the following tips and tricks:

1. **Make your home your castle** – Consider removing wall-to-wall carpeting and replacing it with hardwood, tile or other flooring. It's easier to clean than carpet which means allergens can't get a foothold. Keep drapes, upholstery
2. **Keep it clean** – but don't sweep which can send allergens into the air. Instead, use a damp mop and a vacuum with a HEPA filter to trap allergens. Use HEPA filters for the air ducts in your central heating and air conditioning and change them regularly.
3. **Control critters** – dust mites have a field day on uncovered mattresses and pillows. End the party by using allergy covers with zippers for both. If you've already had your mattress and pillows for several years and they haven't been covered, consider replacing them and covering the new ones right away.
4. **Leave allergies at the door** - keep outdoor clothes out of your bedroom. Take them off and wash them as soon as possible. It's also a good idea to wash your hair as soon as you can – but at least before you go to bed – if you've spent time outside. Both will help prevent pollen and other allergens from spending the night with you.
5. **Go for glamour** – and protection from blowing pollen – by putting on a pair of big sunglasses whenever the pollen count is high or the wind is blowing. Not only will they give you star-power, they can keep your eyes bright instead of bleary.
6. **Pamper your pets** – bathe and brush them regularly to keep dander at bay. Or have someone else do it for you if your allergies are bad. Give pets their own special place to hang out and keep them out of bedrooms and off of

upholstered furniture. Wipe their feet and fur before letting them inside to prevent allergens from being carried in on their paws and coats.

7. **Keep at it** - It's not easy to keep allergies under control, but don't give up. These tips and tricks only work if you do all you can – all the time. If your allergies don't seem to be controlled by avoiding triggers or by using over-the-counter medicines, it could be time to call in the pros. Talk with your doctor about allergy testing and allergy shots.

## Asthma

Have you experienced wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, or tightness of the chest? If you have, then you know what it's like to have an asthma attack. Some people describe it as trying to breathe through a long thin straw. Asthma is a common chronic lung disease affecting more than 25 million people of all ages in the United States, with about 7 million being children. If you have asthma, your airways are always inflamed which can make you more sensitive to things like infections, allergens, and exercise. During an asthma attack your airways narrow, the muscles around your airway tighten and your airways start to swell and make mucous.

You want to start managing your asthma by making a personalized action plan with your doctor to keep your asthma under control. Make a plan for normal days and an emergency plan for when asthma attacks occur. Your doctor can help you find what triggers your attacks and decide whether you need a quick relief inhaler for when you have attacks or a long term control medicine. Triggers that can initiate an asthma attack include having a cold or infections, breathing in tobacco smoke or polluted air, dust mites, mold, pollen, weather changes, physical activity and stress.

If you have asthma attacks more often or they're getting worse, see your doctor to change your treatment plan. Other signs that your asthma is not well controlled are:

- You are losing sleep
- You are missing school or work
- Your peak flow meter shows a low number, or the number changes a lot from day to day
- You have to use your quick-relief inhaler more often; more than twice a week is too often
- Your medicines don't seem to work well anymore
- You have to go to your doctor or the emergency room because of an attack
- You have to stay in the hospital because of your asthma



## Asthma and Nutrition

Can your diet affect asthma? Several research studies suggest there's evidence that people who eat diets higher in vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, flavonoids, magnesium, selenium and omega-3 fatty acids have lower rates of asthma. This may be due to the antioxidant properties that these nutrients hold which may protect cells from damage. One study conducted in 2010 showed that children who grew up eating a Mediterranean diet that is high in nuts, vegetables and fruits like grapes, apples, and tomatoes, provided some protection against wheezing and asthma in children.

The bottom line is that there are studies that show a possible correlation between diet and asthma, however further research is needed. Regardless of the specific link between asthma and diet, good nutrition is important for anyone, especially people with chronic diseases. Make it a priority to consume a diet rich in whole foods, fresh fruits and vegetable, whole grains, lean protein, and eliminate processed foods full of sodium, excess fat and sugar. Your body may be more susceptible to illness in general if it is not getting the right nutrients and have a harder time fighting the respiratory viruses that can often trigger an asthma attack.

Source: [David G. Weinmayr G. Kleiner A. Garcia-Mercos L. Strachan DP. ISAAC Phase Two Study Group](#) Effect of diet on asthma and allergic sensitisation in the International Study on Allergies and Asthma in Childhood (ISAAC) Phase Two. 2010 Jun;65(6):516-22. doi: 10.1136/thx.2009.128256

Even though asthma may be a part of your life it doesn't have to dominate it. Here are some tips to stay active and control your asthma.

- Take it easy. Start exercising slowly and finish with a cool-down
- Stay away from things that trigger asthma
- Take breaks to catch your breath, and drink lots of water
- Mix it up; try different activities like skating or a long walk in the park

- Check air quality first; go online or watch the weather report on TV; exercise outside only when the air is clean
- Eat a healthy diet

**Anthem's Condition Care program for asthma can help you and your covered family members keep asthma under control. Anthem's nurse care managers are trained to work with kids and adults who have asthma.**

**Get help managing your asthma by calling 866-596-9812**

## May is Celiac Awareness Month!



Celiac Awareness Month is held throughout the United States each May and is supported by the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (and other relevant organizations). Celiac Awareness Month also raises awareness about sensitivity to gluten. Treatment for celiac disease and gluten intolerance is straight forward; avoid foods which contain gluten. For those with celiac disease, gluten intolerance is not just an inconvenience — it can be debilitating. In such cases, you must not eat any foods containing gluten.

### Gluten Free Foods:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Beans
- Seed
- Legumes
- Nuts
- Potatoes
- Eggs
- Chicken
- Dairy products

- Corn
- Rice
- Fish
- Lean beef

### Other GlutenFree Grains and Foods:

- Arrowroot
- Amaranth
- Buckwheat
- Cassava
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Sorghum
- Soy
- Tapioca

### Unsafe Foods with Gluten

- Barley
- Bran
- Bleached Flour
- Bulgar
- Couscous
- Dextrin
- Durum Einkorn
- Farina
- Fu
- Graham
- Hydrolyzed Wheat
- Rye
- Kamut
- Mache
- Malt, Malt Vinegar
- Matzo
- Miran
- Spelt
- Semolina
- Tabbouleh
- Udon
- Wheat
- Wheat Berry
- Wheat Bran



## Symptoms of Celiac Disease

According to the Celiac Disease Foundation, celiac disease can be difficult to diagnose because it affects people differently. There are about 300 known symptoms which may occur in the digestive system or other parts of the body. Different people will experience the disease in different ways, because the symptoms vary greatly from one person to the next. However, all people with celiac disease are still at risk for long-term complications, whether or not they display any symptoms.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CELIAC DISEASE?**  
HAVE THESE SYMPTOMS? DON'T WAIT. GET TESTED.

**ORAL**

- BAD BREATH
- GUM DISEASE
- MOUTH SORES
- MOUTH ULCERS
- SWOLLEN GUMS
- TONGUE SORES
- TOOTH BRUSH BRUISING

**BEHAVIORAL**

- ADD
- ANXIETY
- BRAIN FOG
- DEPRESSION
- IRRITABILITY
- IRRATIONAL ANGER
- ISOLATION/ISOLATION
- LOSS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES
- MEMORY LOSS
- MOOD SWINGS
- NIGHT TERRORS
- PANIC ATTACKS
- WACHT THERAPY
- SUICIDAL

**FEMALE-SPECIFIC**

- BREAST TENDERNESS
- EARLY MENORAUSE
- IRREGULAR MENSTRUATION
- HORMONAL LEVEL SWINGS
- HEAVY, PAINFUL PERIODS
- INFERTILITY
- SWOLLEN BLADDER/CERVIX

**INTESTINAL**

- ACID REFLUX
- BLOATING
- CONSTIPATION
- DIARRHEA
- GAS THAT WOULD CLEAR A ROOM
- LOSS OF APPETITE
- NAUSEA
- STOMACH PAIN

**SKIN**

- ACNE
- BRITTLE NAILS
- BURNING
- BURNING SCALP
- DAKTRIFF
- DARK CIRCLES UNDER THE EYES
- ECCZEMA
- FLAKY SKIN AROUND THE EYES
- HEVES
- PALLID SKIN
- SKIN CANCER
- SKIN RASHES

**JOINT/MUSCLE**

- ATAXIA
- BACK PAIN
- BURNING SENSATION IN THE JOINTS
- JOINT PAIN/STIFFNESS/SWELLING
- LEG CRAMPS
- MUSCLE SPASMS
- SWELLING IN HANDS AND FEET

**VITAMIN DEFICIENCIES**

- ANEMIA (LOW BLOOD)
- LOW CALCIUM
- LOW VITAMIN B12
- LOW VITAMIN D

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- ASTHMA
- BLADDER INFECTIONS
- BLURRED VISION
- CHILLS & FEVERS
- CHRONIC FATIGUE
- DANDRUFF
- CONJUNCTIVITIS
- DIZZINESS/VERTIGO
- FADING
- FLUCTUATING WEIGHT
- GIBB
- HAIR LOSS
- HEADACHES
- HEADBURN
- HEMORRHOIDS
- HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
- HYPOTHYROIDISM
- IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT
- LOW BLOOD SUGAR
- MOUSEMIES
- NIGHT SWEATS
- RACING HEART
- SEIZURES
- SNORE
- SLEEPING ISSUES

\* SYMPTOMS IN RED WERE MENTIONED THE MOST OFTEN

Source: <http://glutendude.com>

## Don't forget! 24/7 NurseLine

Need health care right away? A nurse can help you decide where to go if your doctor isn't available. Going to the right place can save you time and money, and you can access better care, too. Add this number to your smart phone **800-711-5947**.

## Free DocTalk Webinars

DocTalk is presented by our medical directors who share their knowledge and expertise on various health topics. Check out the 2016 topics:

### June — Diet, nutrition and weight control

Eating healthy can be hard in today's fast-paced world. Many of us resort to fast food as we rush to our next appointment. Eating right is one of the keys to a healthy life. Join us to learn some tips and guidelines for keeping your diet healthy and maintaining a healthy weight.

### August — Prediabetes

People with higher than normal blood glucose levels, but not yet in the diabetic range, have what's called "prediabetes." Insulin resistance and prediabetes usually have no symptoms. You may have one or both conditions for several years without noticing. If you have prediabetes, you have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. In addition, people with prediabetes also have a higher risk of heart disease. If you have prediabetes, you don't have to develop diabetes! Join us to learn more about this common condition and how to prevent its progression.

### October — Dealing with stress

Life is becoming faster paced by the second, and the need to juggle daily demands is increasingly more stressful. How we manage our daily stressors plays a huge role in our physical and mental health. Learn more about how stress impacts your health and walk away with practical ways to better manage the stress in your life.

Registration is limited. Sign up today for one or all of the webinars. They're free for Anthem members. [Click Here to Register](#)



## Jicama Tacos



Recipe and Photo by Primal Palate: <http://www.primalpalate.com/paleo-recipe/tacos-with-jicama-shells/>

### Ingredients

- 1 cup Guacamole
- 1 Jicama
- 1 lb Ground Turkey, *or beef*
- 1/4 cup Red Onion, *julienned*
- 2 cup Romaine Lettuce, *loosely packed*
- 1 Tbsp Cilantro, *chopped (for garnish)*
- 2 Tbsp Chili Powder
- 1 1/2 Tbsp Cumin
- 1 1/2 Tbsp Paprika
- 1 Tbsp Onion Powder
- 1 Tbsp Garlic Powder
- 2 tsp dried Oregano
- 1/2 tsp Red Pepper Flakes

### Preparation

1. Peel jicama and slice as thinly as possible using a mandolin or a sharp knife.
2. Soak jicama slices in cold water for 30 minutes prior to serving.
3. Place ground beef or turkey in a skillet and cook on medium heat until no longer pink.
4. Add seasonings and stir until evenly distributed.
5. Pat jicama slices dry, and top with lettuce, meat, guacamole, and onion.

6. Garnish with cilantro, your choice of salsa, and lime wedges, and serve

**Notes:** The jicama slices will be much more flexible after soaking in water for 30 minutes, thus making them more pliable for the tacos.

### What is Jicama?



Jicama is a root vegetable grown in the warm climates of Central America, Caribbean, and Southern Asia. It's also known as the Mexican yam, or the Mexican turnip. Jicama is semi-sweet tasting with a crunchy texture similar to an apple. It adds a great crunch and freshness to your favorite dish. It is most commonly eaten raw, seasoned with various species or fresh lime juice and chili powder. It can be added to salads, salsa and can also be cooked in soups and stir fry dishes; however some of its health benefits are slightly decreased due to cooking.

#### Jicama is a Nutritional Powerhouse!

- High in vitamin C which helps support your immune system. 100 grams of jicama is approximately 40% of our entire daily requirements for ascorbic acid (Vit.C)
- The fiber content promotes "good" bacteria growth that boosts digestive health
- Supports nerve functioning
- Rich source of potassium which may help manage blood pressure
- High in B6 which is linked to increase brain function and cognitive abilities

You can find Jicama in some local grocery stores or specialty Mexican grocery stores.