

# HEALTHY EATING

## MANAGING YOUR ASTHMA



If you are overweight, losing just a few kilos can really make a difference to your asthma.

### WHY DOES YOUR WEIGHT MATTER?

Carrying a few extra kilos can make your asthma harder to manage - the more kilos, the harder it gets.

Working towards your ideal bodyweight can help you get fewer symptoms and use less medication.

Losing weight can also help you sleep better.

Inspired? Talk to your doctor before you start any new health and fitness program. Together you can check how your asthma is going, plus work out the best diet and exercise plan for you.

### EAT WELL TO BREATHE WELL

Fresh fruit and vegetables are full of antioxidants, which may improve your lung health and help avoid asthma attacks. Aim for a well-balanced diet with 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit every day. Eating lots of fish (not fish oil supplements) may help with your asthma too.

Eating too much saturated fat may increase your risk of asthma attacks. Limit the amount of saturated fats you eat by limiting fast foods and choosing lean meats.

### LIGHTEN THE ASTHMA LOAD

Being overweight can make asthma harder to manage. Carrying extra weight puts extra strain on your lungs, and might also worsen your asthma.

If you are overweight, losing just 5-10% of your current weight (e.g. 5 or 10 kilograms for a person who weighs 100 kilograms) might really improve your asthma, so you get fewer asthma symptoms and use less medication.

Breathing problems during sleep are common among people who are overweight, and can make asthma harder to manage. If you snore or don't feel refreshed after a night's sleep, talk to your doctor.

### THE MILK MYTH

Despite the common misconception, milk and other dairy foods don't cause or worsen asthma symptoms. Don't cut these out of your diet unnecessarily.

Milk, cheese and yoghurt can all be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet unless you have a proven allergy to cow's milk.

### ENJOY AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Don't let your asthma stop you being physically active. Choose an activity you enjoy and aim for at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity every day or most days.

Consider getting involved in structured exercise: people with asthma who participate in physical training feel better.

Asthma symptoms after exercise are common but treatable. If exercise causes asthma symptoms, tell your doctor so you can find the treatment that works best for you. This could be as simple as taking a few puffs of your reliever before you warm up.

### MORE INFORMATION

See our website factsheet on Exercise and Asthma: [www.nationalasthma.org.au](http://www.nationalasthma.org.au)