



Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

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It seems that California wildfires are becoming more frequent and more devastating, sometimes leaving the air hazardous for us to breathe for long stretches of time. The smoke and toxins in the air can result in acute short-term effects of

smoke inhalation, such as shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and chest pain. Children and the elderly are at particular risk of the effects of smoke inhalation, and health problems such as asthma and

COPD may be exacerbated. There is also evidence that repeated childhood exposure to smoke from wildfires leads to an increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular disease later in life, making the population even more susceptible to life-threatening health problems when exposed to wildfire smoke as adults.

There are several immediate things one can do to reduce the effects of smoke on the lungs, such as leave the affected area when possible, wear N95 masks, and stay inside with windows closed and air filters running.

There are also some nutrients that may help protect lung health in the long term. First of all, drink plenty of water and other unsweetened beverages. Water helps all the body's organs function more smoothly and helps lubricate delicate airway passages. Hot, dry air can cause us to lose more water through breathing, and smoke irritates the throat and lungs. Smoke also irritates the eyes and stay-

adequate tear production. Drinking hot liquids, such as coffee, tea, broth, or even hot water with lemon, may help soothe irritated mucus membranes and help break up phlegm and other build-up so it can be expelled. An added benefit is the comfort and relaxation this can provide during stressful times.



There is also evidence that there are specific nutrients or foods that may offer some protection against lung diseases.

Of particular importance are antioxidants such as vitamins C, E, and A. Antioxidants help prevent and repair cellular damage that can occur when cells are exposed to toxins. Melon, citrus fruits, strawberries, and peppers are all high in vitamin C. Vegetable oils, nuts, and seeds are high in vitamin E, and anything orange, like carrots, sweet potatoes, and cantaloupe are high in vitamin A, as are eggs, liver, and fish oils. Green leafy vegetables are also good sources of all 3 of these vitamins.



Certain fatty acids also be protective against lung and cardiovascular disease. Mono and polyunsaturated fatty acids found in olive oil, canola oil, and fish may help reduce inflammation and fight infection. One study showed that consuming olive oil helped subjects' respond to environmental pollutants by improving blood vessel health and reducing blood clots.

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Nutrition and Lung Health

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The results of another study suggested that the omega-3's in fatty fish can reduce airway inflammation and fight bacterial infections in the lungs.

Certain minerals may promote lung health as well. Magnesium helps reduce inflammation and plays a role in relaxing airway muscles, making breathing easier. Avocados, nuts, seeds, and dark chocolate are good sources of magnesium. Selenium is a mineral that has been shown in some studies to reduce the symptoms of asthma and may also reduce the risk of lung cancer. Good sources of selenium include brazil nuts, tuna, sunflower seeds, beans, chicken, and eggs.

There are other specific foods that may enhance lung health as well, although the specific nutrient or mechanism is not clear. Some studies have shown that eating apples and drinking apple juice may reduce wheezing and incidences of asthma in children. Apples contain flavonoids and phenolic acid, which may help reduce inflammation in airway tissues.

Coffee eases asthma symptoms and may act as a bronchodilator, helping to widen the tiny tubes in the lungs and making breathing easier. Several studies suggest that breathing is improved for up to four hours after drinking a cup of coffee.

Green tea is high in antioxidants, and also contains quercetin, an antioxidant that has been shown to act as a natural antihistamine, reducing allergy symptoms. Consumption of cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, kale, cauliflower, and brussels sprouts, have all been linked to lower incidences of lung cancer, as has the consumption of garlic.



Ginger is also full of antioxidants and has anti-inflammatory and decongestive properties. It may also improve circulation, potentially increasing blood flow to the lungs.



Wildfires can cause stress, devastation, and unhealthy air, and the feeling that there is little we can do to influence the situation, only makes things worse. Treat yourself with care and know that you can help to protect your own health by nourishing your body with some of the foods discussed here.



Eating Better When Eating Fast Food

Even the most health-conscious among us occasionally finds themselves out to eat at a fast food establishment. While the menus of most fast food restaurants are a landmine of fat, sodium, sugar, and preservatives, there are ways to select healthier options and get out of there without totally derailing your nutrition goals. Here are some ideas for common fast food places.

Pizza

Choose an independently-owned pizza restaurant, rather than a franchise or chain. "Mom & Pop" pizza places usually make everything from scratch, from their dough to their sauces, whereas chain restaurants are more likely to use pre-made dough, sauce, and other items. Home-made is always better than pre-made, because it will have fewer preservatives and "shelf-stable" ingredients such as hydrogenated fats and corn syrups. Also, you will be supporting a small, local business.

If you are eating at a pizza place, you can make your meal healthier by choosing healthier toppings. Skip the pepperoni and sausage, and instead pile on the vegetables—peppers and onions, or mushrooms and black olives are great combinations. If you must have meat, see if chicken is an option. Instead of two or more pieces of pizza, have one slice and a nice side salad. Pizza places often have home-made vinegar and oil-based dressings, which you can ask for on the side for even more control over your meal. Cheese-less pizza is an option for those who want to avoid cheese altogether.



Chinese Food

Chinese food in America tends to be heavy on fried items and thick, fat and sugar-laden sauces. To eat a healthier Chinese food meal, avoid fried items such as egg rolls, shrimp toasts, sesame chicken, and anything breaded. Choose a lean protein such as chicken, shrimp, or tofu.



Good examples include chicken and broccoli, tofu and mixed vegetables, or prawns and string beans. Ask for brown rice instead of white to increase

the fiber in your meal and to make you feel fuller faster. Many restaurants will also serve the sauce on the side, if

requested. Soups are also a great option. Asian soups are usually broth-based so fairly low in fat. Miso, wonton, and egg drop are examples.

Burger Restaurants

These types of restaurants can be the most challenging. If you are having a burger, skip the cheese and mayo to cut down on fat calories. Many chains now have grilled chicken options, which are almost always healthier than anything fried.

Choose salads without additions like fried chicken. Go easy on the dressing or bring your own.



Sandwich Shops

Lunch meats tend to be high in fat, sodium, and nitrates. Chicken or turkey will generally be lower in fat than ham or roast beef. Tuna salad may be a better alternative, although it may be high in fat due to the mayonnaise. Whatever protein you choose, skip the cheese if you're trying to keep the fat down, choose whole-grain bread instead of white, and pile on the veggies—lettuce, tomato, peppers, onions, whatever else they have that you like!

Other Tips

Watch out for liquid calories. If you add a soda to your meal, you are adding hundreds of calories of nutritionless sugar. Opt for water or unsweetened iced tea, if available. Milk is usually available for kids.

Be careful of the condiments you add. Ketchup and barbecue sauce are very high in sugar and salt, and mayonnaise adds a lot of extra calories from fat. Mustard is slightly better, but also adds a lot of salt. Depending on what you are trying to avoid, it's probably best to go easy on the condiments.

Side dishes can also be your downfall. If you choose a lean grilled chicken sandwich, but then pair it with fried onion rings dipped in ketchup, you are adding a ton of fat and sugar calories that you probably don't need.

In general, avoid fried items, cheese, mayo and mayo-based sauces and ask for dressings on the side. Skipping the soda will automatically lop a few hundred calories off your meal. Select vegetables as toppings and sides. The bottom line is that everything can be enjoyed in moderation, even fast food. If you are trying to stick to a healthy diet, though, try to keep your fast food meals to a minimum and follow the rules above to keep it as healthy as possible.

Stay Healthy During Cold and Flu Season

In the wet, cold winter season, colds and flus can sneak up on us and make us miserable. While there is no definite way to avoid illness, there are certainly some things you can do to try to stay healthy.

Get the Flu Vaccine

The flu vaccine is formulated to be effective against the viruses that research suggests will be the most common that year. It can't protect against everything, but it's a good place to start. Anyone over the age of 6 months can get the flu vaccine, and at-risk populations, like young children and the elderly, are especially encouraged to get vaccinated. Those who have diabetes, asthma, or heart or lung disease should also be sure to get vaccinated, as well as healthcare workers.

Practice Infection Control

Wash your hands with soap and water often, but especially before eating or touching your face. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Wash highly-used and touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, telephone receivers, hand railings, pens, and anything else that might get handled by multiple people in a day. Avoid sick people when possible. If you are sick, stay home if you can, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and throw your tissues away immediately after using them.

Help Your Immune System Do Its Job

Practicing healthy habits can go a long way toward keeping you healthy. Poor diet, stress, and sleep deprivation can all negatively affect our immune systems, making us more vulnerable to illness. Eat a diet that is high in fruits and vegetables, healthy fats like fish and olive oil, whole grains, and lean proteins. Get a good night's sleep, which for most people means between 7 to 9 hours. Exercise frequently and try to maintain a healthy weight. Find ways to reduce stress, like breathing exercises, yoga, talking to a friend, or taking bath.



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Stay Hydrated

Dry mucous membranes are more susceptible to infection, so drink plenty of water and unsweetened or lightly sweetened beverages like tea. Fruit juice is fine in small amounts, as long as it is 100% juice. Warm broths and soups are also great choices to keep you warm, satisfied, and hydrated.



Clean Your Cell Phone

Most of us are constantly touching our cell phones, and then putting them to our faces to talk. You might shake someone's hand, touch an elevator button, or open a door, and then go right back to your cell phone, transferring the germs from whatever you just touched to your phone.



Use a sanitizing wipe or a little water mixed with rubbing alcohol on a microfiber cloth to wipe clean the surfaces of your cell phone and do it often.

Take Medication as Prescribed

If you do get sick, take any medication that your doctor prescribes exactly as they prescribe it. If your doctor prescribes antibiotics or antiviral medications, take the full course.



While there is no foolproof way to avoid getting sick, following some of these tips may help you keep your immune system strong and able to fend off a few colds. If you do find yourself feeling under the weather, try sipping some homemade broth, like in the recipe at the end of this newsletter, to make you feel better!

“One of the very nicest things about life we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating.”

— Luciano Pavarotti

Homemade Broth

Conventional wisdom from many cultures, and grandmothers everywhere, have always suggested that soup is the cure for the common cold, as well as many other ailments. There may be some truth to the health benefits of drinking broth, which can be high in minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients. Bone broths are now very popular, available in cartons on the supermarket shelf and even being sold at takeout windows in some cities. Bone broth is considered to be therapeutic because the long cooking time pulls minerals and collagen out of bones and into the cooking liquid. You can make broth from the bones left over from turkey, chicken, or beef bones. Seafood broth can be made from shrimp shells, fish bones, or crab or lobster shells. Vegetarian broths can also be made and are just as satisfying if the vegetables are roasted first to bring out their rich flavors. Consider freezing these items instead of tossing them, and when you have the time, simmering them away into an aromatic, body-and-soul-nourishing broth.

Basic Bone Broth Recipe

Bones leftover from roast turkey, chicken, or beef
Vegetable scraps like carrot tops, celery leaves, and onion ends

Herbs like parsley, thyme, oregano

Garlic cloves

Enough water to cover bones completely

1 teaspoon salt

½ tbsp apple cider vinegar or rice vinegar
(optional: acid helps pull minerals from the bones, but you can leave this out and increase the cooking time instead)

Place everything in a large stock or soup pot.

Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Let simmer for at least two hours, but the longer the better (you might even leave it overnight in a crockpot). When done, strain through a sieve to remove bone and vegetable bits. If the broth is not flavorful enough, return it to the pot and let simmer until slightly reduced to concentrate the flavor. Broth can be used to make soups, frozen in ice cube trays to use in cooking later, or just consumed warm from a mug. Try adding ginger, garlic, lemon, lime, citrus peels, cinnamon, lemongrass, or whatever spices or aromatics sound good to you.



Any Nutrition and Wellness News Questions?

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