

THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

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NEWSLETTER

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BROCCOLI AND ALLERGIES

Most of us probably remember when the first President George Bush famously declared that he hated broccoli, had hated it since his mother made him eat it as a young boy, that he was President of the United States and he wasn't going to eat any more broccoli. He actually banned broccoli from the White House and Air Force One! Fortunately for the President he had, according to his physicals while in office, "tests (that) showed excellent protective antibody levels". Why was he fortunate to have these results? Because, according to a new study just released by UCLA, a research team has discovered that broccoli sprouts are a rich source of sulforaphane-- a potent anti-inflammatory compound. According to the principal investigator, Dr. Marc Riedl, "This is one of the first studies showing that broccoli sprouts, a readily available food source, offered potent biologic effects in stimulating an antioxidant response."

When you realize that respiratory inflammation is responsible for asthma, allergies and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), the value of broccoli becomes clear. In the UCLA study, the test dose of broccoli sprouts caused more than a doubling of the enzyme GSTP1, which operates in the body as an antioxidant. GSTP1 (Glutathione S-transferase pi) is one of a family of enzymes that serve an important role in detoxification. Another key enzyme, NQO1, was increased by almost 200% in the subjects given broccoli sprouts. NQO1 prevents formation of certain free radicals in the human body and the results were seen after only three days of broccoli consumption! The

amount of broccoli sprouts that was required to produce these wonderful results was a serving of only seven ounces a day. Other vegetables in the same vegetable family include Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage and bok choy but broccoli appears to be the key product with the highest benefit.

OTHER GOOD FOODS

Are there other foods that might be beneficial? Yes-- the experts say the key is to eat a good mix of brightly colored vegetables. Good greens include spinach, kale, honey dew melons, green apples and grapes, kiwi, broccoli, arugula, parsley; all of these contain chlorophyll, fiber, lutein, zeaxanthin, calcium, Vitamin C, calcium and beta-carotene. They can reduce the risk of cancer, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol and enhance vision. They also help to boost the immune system, which helps to curb allergy symptoms.

Red-colored foods that are beneficial include cherries, beets, raspberries, strawberries, red grapefruit, tomatoes and red peppers. The reds contain nutrients including lycopene, ellagic acid, Quercetin and Hesperidin. Studies have been conducted on these foods showing allergy symptom alleviation. Cherries also help provide headache relief, a common symptom of allergies from which many patients suffer. From yellow and orange food, we receive carotenoids, which improve our immune systems and can help prevent allergy symptoms. These include apricots, cantaloupe, grapefruit, mango, papayas, peaches, oranges, pineapples, lemons, tangerines, pumpkin, butternut squash and carrots. Blackberries, blueberries,

plums, grapes, raisins, eggplant, purple potatoes and purple asparagus - the blues and purples - deliver vitamin C, fiber and quercetin. These nutrients can also help the immune system, support digestion and fight inflammation; so think of your watery eyes and plugged up nose and reach for a bunch of carrots instead of that bag of potato chips. The key is to have a complete selection of all of the colors to be found in the edible world. All of these foods can help fight allergies, inflammation, and headaches, strengthen our immune systems and digestion, and help decrease the allergy symptoms that can be so bothersome to a patient who is fighting the good fight. Although these dietary changes may not allow you to discontinue your allergy medications or your immunotherapy treatment, they should improve your health and make your mother happy.

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