



# 12 Ways



to Defend Yourself  
Against Allergies —

# Naturally



Experience Life

# These days, it seems like just about **everyone has an allergy.**

Some people suffer from a rhinitis allergy, the miserable runny-nose, watery-eye reaction associated with hay fever and other seasonal woes. Others have allergies to foods such as wheat, milk, peanuts, and eggs.

Around the globe, an estimated 1 billion people now experience an allergy, intolerance, or sensitivity. In other words, we are in the throes of an allergy epidemic. But why?

Health experts point to a perfect storm of allergy-inducing factors: Climate change causes longer warm seasons and more pollen exposure; thousands of new — and untested — chemicals have been introduced into consumer goods in the past few decades; and the quality of food has decreased, which damages our microbiomes and lowers our immunity.

Despite all this, there is hope. As allergies are on the rise, so is knowledge about how to build resistance and stay healthy in a challenging environment.

Here are 12 straightforward, lifestyle-based strategies to help reduce your allergy susceptibility.



# 1 Eat Plants

About 70%  
of your immune system is  
located in your gut,

---

so increasing your consumption of whole foods  
— **especially plant-based foods** —  
is one of the best ways to support immune defenses.

---

Opt for organic to protect yourself from pesticides and herbicides, and support your T-cells with foods high in folates, vitamin A, and plant compounds called flavonoids. Leo Galland, MD, coauthor of *[The Allergy Solution](#)*, says that strawberries, sweet potatoes, lentils, parsley, and green and oolong teas are all potent allergy-defense foods.



# 2 **Avoid Raw Foods**

Many raw foods are high in allergens, **but cooking can help.**

---

Heat renders some allergenic proteins inert, says Gregory Plotnikoff, MD, MTS, FACP. Someone who reacts to fresh apples may do just fine with sautéed apples, for example. (Anyone with an anaphylactic allergy should try this only with the support of his or her doctor, for obvious reasons.)



# 3 **Keep It Fresh**

Leftovers can cause problems for allergy sufferers.

---

Histamines, an immune chemical released during allergic reactions, **grow on foods the longer they sit.**

---

So while a meal straight off the stove might not cause a reaction, eating that same food two days later could trigger one.



# 4 Support Your Digestive Enzymes

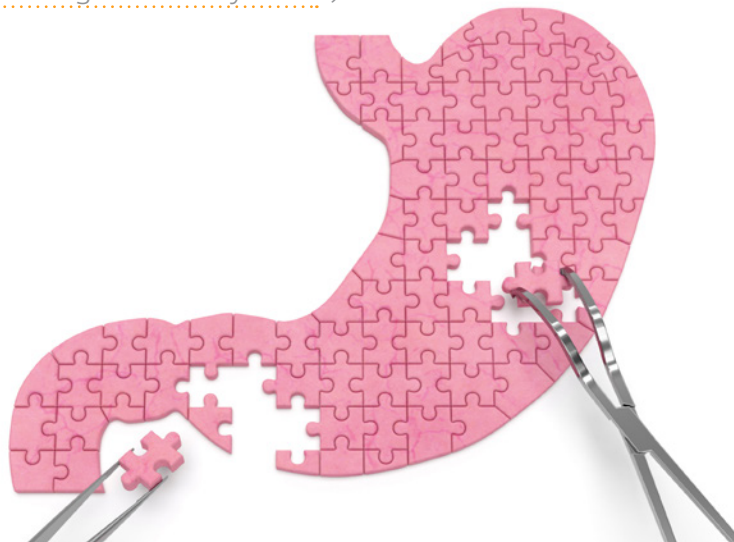
If you aren't producing enough digestive enzymes, you won't break down potential allergens.

---

“A lot of allergens are fragile, and the digestive enzymes **in the stomach or pancreas** will render them inert,” says Plotnikoff.

---

Signs of weak digestion include burping, gas, feeling full quickly, and acid reflux. “Supplementation with digestive enzymes can make up for what isn't there,” Plotnikoff says. (For more on this, go to [“Should I Take Digestive Enzymes?”](#))



# 5 Skip the Antacids

Regularly taking antacids may suppress stomach acid, **which is required for activating enzymes** that help break down allergens.

---

“The longer someone is on acid blockers, such as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), the greater the incidence of them developing food allergies and hypersensitivity,” explains P. Michael Stone, MD, MS. (For more on dealing with acid reflux, go to [“Natural Ways to Fight Heartburn.”](#))



# 6 Heal Your Gut

“Gut health is the foundation for all health,” says Plotnikoff.

---

“And proper digestion, absorption, and elimination **are the signs of a healthy gut.**”

---

Up your fiber intake by eating whole, green leafy vegetables and other plants; promote good gut bacteria by incorporating fermented foods, like sauerkraut, kvass, and kimchi; take a high-quality probiotic; and consider drinking bone broth or eating grassfed gelatin to help seal up a leaky gut lining — a common condition in allergy sufferers. (For more on this, see [“How to Heal a Leaky Gut.”](#))





# 7 Reduce Plastic in Your Life

Finding ways to reduce exposure to plastic — especially in contact with food — can make a big difference.

---

Most plastics contain the potentially hormone-disrupting chemical bisphenol A, or BPA. Trade plastic food containers for glass or stainless steel. Never heat food in plastic, since heat leaches chemicals directly into the food. And if you do use plastic water bottles or food-storage containers on occasion, make sure they're BPA-free.



# 8

## Improve Indoor Air Quality

Research suggests that 86% of air fresheners contain hazardous phthalates — **even ones that are marked “all natural.”**

---

New furniture (especially particleboard) and carpet can release chemicals that end up in household dust. Opt for vintage or secondhand items when you can. You can also let new furniture breathe in an outdoor area for as long as weather permits.



# 9 Clean Up Personal-Care Products

Steer clear of any products with synthetic fragrances, which often contain endocrine disruptors and can **trigger allergic reactions in many people.**

Consult the [Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database](#) for a comprehensive guide to safe personal-care products. (For more on fragrances, go to ["Are Artificial Fragrances Bad for Your Health?"](#))



# 10 Embrace a Few Gems

A little exposure to dirt and germs helps keep the immune system in good working order, **so stick to soap and water.**

---

Stay away from the big guns, such as antibacterials and antimicrobials, as much as possible, says Galland. Be aware that antibacterial and antimicrobial chemicals can turn up in places beyond hand soap and household cleaners — like toothpaste and mattresses. Read labels.



# 11

## Get Your Vitamin D

“Ensuring a good **vitamin D level year-round** supports balance and immune function,” says Plotnikoff.

---

A healthy vitamin D concentration is at least 20 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL), according to the National Institutes of Health. Many functional-medicine practitioners recommend more: between 50 and 80 ng/mL. Below 12 ng/mL is the danger zone. To achieve a good baseline, Plotnikoff recommends getting your vitamin D levels tested and then adjusting your supplement accordingly.



# 12

## Opt for Natural Antihistamines

When allergies do strike, Plotnikoff suggests, reach for **a natural antihistamine** combination like quercetin, stinging nettle, and vitamin C.

---

Reactions that affect the lungs, including asthma, might also be helped by increasing your body's production of glutathione, a powerful antioxidant. Sulphur-rich foods like garlic, onion, and broccoli boost glutathione in the body, or you can take a glutathione-supporting supplement, such as N-acetyl cysteine. (For more, go to ["8 Ways to Boost Glutathione"](#))



# Healthy. Happy. For Real.



Empowering people to become their healthiest, happiest, most authentic selves, and supporting a balanced, deeply satisfying way of life.

**SUBSCRIBE**

Experience Life