

## Red meat and allergies? <sup>[1]</sup>

Hi Alice!

I heard that eliminating or reducing red meat from your diet can help get rid of allergies. Is this true? Or just a rumor?

### **Answer**

Dear Reader,

ACHOO! Allergies can be an annoying condition to deal with and finding ways to prevent them from occurring might make many folks breathe a little easier. Allergies are caused by hypersensitivity to a particular substance (e.g., food, pollen, fur, or dust) and the symptoms experienced are the body's immune response to that substance. When it comes to allergies, there are actually many different types and it's not completely clear which type you're referring to, Reader. But, while research on the effects of red meat intake on food, dust, or pet allergies is virtually nonexistent, there has been some exploration in its connection to seasonal allergy symptoms — also called hay fever, which is typically induced by grass or tree pollens, causing itchy nose and eyes, sneezing, and asthma. That being said, the research is pretty limited and inconclusive. Don't start sniffing just yet though, there are other ways to help relieve allergies!? Read on for more on what research is out there and tips for alleviating related symptoms.

As far as the current research goes, the association between eating red meat and hay fever isn't supported. However, people rarely eat one type of food, so it may be helpful to consider a person's entire dietary pattern, rather than just one food. Though findings are not conclusive, and more research is needed, a diet high in fast food and processed food (which may include red meat) seems to increase the risk for allergic diseases such as hay fever, asthma, and eczema. On the other hand, research suggests eating a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants <sup>[2]</sup>, and fruits and vegetables may be protective against these diseases.

Beyond this unsupported association, symptoms of seasonal allergies can be managed by taking over-the-counter allergy medications including pills, eye drops, or nasal sprays <sup>[3]</sup> (chatting with a health care provider or pharmacist can help inform which of these medications could help).

Additional steps to prevent or manage allergies include:?

- Stay indoors on dry, windy days. The best time to go outside is after a good rain, which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Check the local TV or radio station, the local newspaper, the Internet, or a weather app for pollen forecasts and current pollen levels. Avoid outdoor activity and close doors and windows when pollen counts are high.
- Delegate lawn mowing, weed pulling, and other gardening chores that stir up allergens to others.
- Remove clothes worn outside and shower to rinse pollen from skin and hair.
- Avoid hanging laundry outside — pollen can stick to sheets and towels.
- Wear a pollen mask if you do outdoor chores.
- Keep indoor air clean by using air conditioning in the house and car and a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in the bedroom.
- Clean floors frequently with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.

*Adapted from [Mayo Clinic](#) [4].*

Scientists and health care providers are still learning about the link between diet and allergic diseases. If anything, eating a balanced diet that includes fruits, veggies, and omega-3s provides many other health benefits. For more information on maintaining a balanced diet, take a look at a whole host of related Q&As in the [Optimal Nutrition](#) [5] category of the *Go Ask Alice!* archives.

Alice!

Category:

[General Health](#) [6]

[Aches, Pains & Other Ailments](#) [7]

[Nutrition & Physical Activity](#) [8]

[Food Choices & Health](#) [9]

[Nutrients](#) [10]

## Related questions

[Multiple chemical sensitivity \(MCS\)](#) [11]

[In the know about nose-blowing](#) [12]

[Asthma attack without an inhaler — What to do?](#) [13]

## Resources

[Columbia Health Nutrition Services \(Morningside\)](#) [14]

[Medical Services \(Morningside\)](#) [15]

[Student Health Service Nutrition Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [16]

[Medical Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [17]

Published date:

Jul 08, 2016

## Footer menu

- ▼ Contact Alice!
  - Content Use
  - Media Inquiries
  - Comments & Corrections
- ▼ Syndication & Licensing
  - Licensing Q&As
  - Get Alice! on Your Website
  - Full Site Syndication
  - Link to Go Ask Alice!

**Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.**

If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

---

**Source URL:** <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/red-meat-and-allergies>

### Links

- [1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/red-meat-and-allergies>
- [2] <http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/antioxidants-1>
- [3] <http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/nasal-spray-junkie-0>
- [4] <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hay-fever/in-depth/seasonal-allergies/art-20048343>
- [5] <http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/optimal-nutrition>
- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/general-health>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/aches-pains-other-ailments>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/nutrition-physical-activity>
- [9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/food-choices-health>
- [10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/nutrients>
- [11] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/multiple-chemical-sensitivity-mcs-0>
- [12] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/know-about-nose-blowing>
- [13] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/asthma-attack-without-inhaler-%E2%80%94-what-do-0>
- [14] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/columbia-health-nutrition-services-morningside>
- [15] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-morningside>
- [16] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/student-health-service-nutrition-services-cuimc>
- [17] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-cuimc>