

Clinical Update

Folic acid may ease asthma symptoms: Study

Higher levels of folate may reduce the risk of having asthma by 16%, suggests new research

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Researchers from Johns Hopkins Children's Center report for the first time in humans a link between blood levels of folate.

Matsui and her co-workers reviewed the medical records of over 8,000 people aged between 2 and 85. Data was collected on blood levels of folate and respiratory and allergic symptoms, as well as on levels of immunoglobulin E (IgE), the predominant antibody associated with an allergic response.

Folate is found in foods such as green leafy vegetables, chick peas and lentils. Folic acid - the synthetic, bioavailable form of folate – is obtained from grain products in the US and Canada following introduction of mandatory fortification in 1998.

According to the findings of the study, higher folate levels were associated with lower levels of IgE antibodies, as well as fewer reported allergies, less wheezing and lower likelihood of asthma.

Specifically, the lowest average folate levels, defined as less than 8 nanograms per millilitre (ng/mL) were associated with a 40% increase in the risk of wheezing, compared to the highest folate levels, defined as more than 18 ng/ml.

Moreover, the lowest folate levels were linked to a 30% higher risk of elevated IgE antibody levels, compared to the highest folate levels. The researchers also report that people with the lowest folate levels had a 31% higher risk of allergic symptoms, and a 16% higher risk of having asthma, compared to those with the highest folate levels.

The area of study is ongoing, confirmed the researchers, with the plan to conduct a placebo-controlled trial of folic acid placebo in people with allergies and asthma.

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Source: www.nutraingredients.com

