



NATURIMEDICA

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MY TOP 7 NATURAL REMEDIES FOR BUSHFIRE SMOKE INHALATION

- **Taking extra antioxidants is very important** – when the pollution from the bushfires is at toxic levels, the body is working hard to neutralise free radicals produced and to remove toxins. Colourful fruits and vegetables contain high levels of most antioxidants needed - the more colour and more variety the better. Aim for 2 fruits and 6 cups of rainbow coloured vegetables per day, ideally organic to decrease toxic load.

Vitamin C is an easy to get, fantastic antioxidant that supports the immune system and improves its response, thus reducing reactions to smoke and other toxins. It's also a natural anti-histamine decreasing runny nose, itchy eyes or coughs. It's found in citrus fruits, kiwi fruits, berries, capsicum and leafy greens. In addition to vitamin C from food, I also recommend taking a good quality supplement to help the body to cope better and recover faster. Suggested dose: around 3-4 g per day in divided doses e.g. 1g of vitamin C 3-4 times per day.

- **Pineapple and papaya** – these fruits contain proteolytic (protein breaking) enzymes that break down mucus in the respiratory tract easing congestion and helping detoxification. Thick mucus is produced by the body as protection in response to inhalation of toxic particles from the fires (it literally is a particle trapping mechanism). Enzymes present in pineapple and papaya decrease the viscosity of the mucous and help to clear it faster, facilitating the necessary tissue detox and decreasing inflammation.

It's important to eat these fruits fresh and *on their own between meals*, otherwise the enzymes will break down proteins in foods instead of targeting the removal of the post smoke inhalation debris.

For maximum benefit, I suggest you also consume the pineapple core as most of the proteolytic enzymes (bromelains in particular) are present there. It's really quite tasty!

- **Increase anti-inflammatory foods high in [quercetin](#)**, a flavonoid and antioxidant which reduces allergy reactions and inflammation related to smoke or dust, or any other [histamine-mediated reactions](#). These include red grapes, onion, apples, cranberries, spinach, red capsicums and green tea. Again, it's well-worth taking quercetin as a supplement to up the body defences, with a daily intake between 800-1,200mg.

Also, increase intake of other anti-inflammatory foods. These include [turmeric](#), ginger, olive oil, walnuts, leafy greens, beetroots and good quality fish oils (eating fish is problematic nowadays, in my opinion, because of the pollution and plastics floating in the oceans or feeding the farmed fish GMO foods and antibiotics).



- **Herb thyme** - thyme works very well for any kind of congestion, it contains an ingredient called 'thymol' which is strongly anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and antibacterial. It reduces mucus in the airways which accumulates in response to the polluted, smoky air. Thyme also has an antispasmodic action helping with relaxing constricted and inflamed airways, and thus adding breathing.

Add thyme to salads or soups, or best have it as a tea.

Method: steep a small handful of thyme in boiling water and cover for 5-10 minutes, then strain and drink throughout the day. You can add a little raw honey (such as Manuka honey) for improved taste and additional throat-soothing and immune boosting benefits. You can make a bigger portion and store any leftover tea in the fridge for up to 24 hours. Reheat as needed.

Thyme can also be used as a gargle, or as a steam bath (it's great for sinuses, too). Simply add some fresh or dried thyme to a bowl of hot water, cover your head with a towel, and breathe in for a few minutes to moisten the airways. Make sure the water it's not too hot, though! You can also use a drop or two of thyme essential oil for the steam bath.

- **Water** – staying well-hydrated and lubricating the mucous membranes is very important to soothe and moisten tissues. [Dehydration](#) affects the whole body, and the delicate mucus membranes in the lungs are particularly vulnerable. Importantly, water helps to remove the microscopic particles from the smoke that are trapped in the lungs and sinuses.

Drink at least 8-10 glasses of filtered water per day and also add green vegetable juices and herbal teas such as rosehip (high in vitamin C), chamomile (gut and stress support) or nettle (natural anti-histamine and anti-inflammatory). Avoid [coffee](#), black tea, alcohol or soft drinks, as they all have dehydrating properties i.e. remove water from the body.

- **Probiotics for immune system support** – around 70% of the immune system is located in and around the gut. When over-taxed and hyper-sensitive, the immune system reacts to triggers such as smoke and dust by creating inflammation and pain as defence mechanisms. Foods containing probiotics will help support and calm the immune system and enhance detoxification. These include [fermented vegetables](#), [sauerkraut](#), [kefir](#), [yoghurt](#) as well as specific probiotics from supplements (talk to your health practitioner about the most appropriate ones for you).

Key foods supporting the immune system include foods high vitamins C (see above), [vitamin A](#) (eggs, organic butter, cod liver oil), zinc (oysters, seafood, animal proteins), eggs (high protein vitamins and minerals), garlic, broccoli, mushrooms, turmeric and [bone broths](#).

Increased intake of [fibre](#) is also highly recommended as it helps with detoxification by binding the toxins in the gut and safely escorting them out of the body.



- **Herbs and foods supporting the nervous system** - needless to say, stress reduction is a vital component of any post smoke inhalation support. They include: good nutrition as mentioned above, sleep support (see my better sleep tips [HERE](#)), B vitamins, vitamin C, as well adrenal herbs such as [holy basil](#) and Withania, and nervous system supporting herbs including passion flower, valerian, kava, chamomile or [lemon balm](#).

Herbs are powerful natural medicines and I always recommend you consult with a herbalist or a naturopath before taking herbs in any form.

I hope you find the above remedies and tips helpful and apply them to achieve faster recovery and healing.

Keep nourishing yourself and looking after your family during the bushfire season or anytime you suffer from smoke inhalation.

How to reduce your exposure to bushfire smoke

Overall, healthy people can tolerate short periods of smoke exposure quite well. However, those with pre-existing lung or heart conditions, children, pregnant women, and the elderly are more likely to be negatively affected by smoke and dust. Therefore, please seek immediate medical advice if you have trouble breathing or fall in one of the higher risk groups mentioned above.

Here are my key recommendations

- Stay indoors as much as possible and close all windows and doors. Make sure the house is well-sealed which can largely prevent the smoke particles getting into the home.
- Take off your shoes and leave them outside, ideally in a closed box. Change your clothes when you get home and wash them.
- Take a shower and wash your hair after being outside.
- Remember about the animals, too. Rinse dogs off with water after a (short) walk and keep cats or birds inside.
- Avoid exercising outdoors and go easy on exercising indoors, too. Deeper and faster breathing during exercise will significantly increase your exposure resulting in more negative health effects.
- Set an air conditioner to the recycle mode so there is no outside air brought in. You can also install a special filter to remove much of the harmful particles.
- Add a few more plants to your home especially in bedrooms to reduce air pollution and increase oxygen. Some of the plants that cleanse the air well and are easy to care for are: [peace lilies](#) (Spathiphyllum), [snake plant](#) (Sansevieria trifasciata), [golden pothos](#) (Epipremnum aureum).
- When the air quality in your home gets worse, consider relocating (even for a short period of time) to a cleaner, air conditioned environment like a shopping centre or stay with family members who have a good air conditioning system.



- Invest in a high efficiency particle air filters (HEPA filters). It will [significantly reduce](#) your personal exposure to particle concentrations indoors when there's a high level of bushfire smoke.

HEPA filters trap dust, pollen, mould, droppings from dust mites, pet dander and tobacco particles. They are often used by allergy and asthma sufferers. [According to Honeywell](#), a high-quality HEPA filter that can trap 99.97% of dust particles that are 0.3 microns in diameter. For comparisons sake, a human hair is about 50 to 150 microns in diameter.

- Use appropriate face masks when going out – ask your pharmacist for the right type tailored to your circumstances.

You can read the full post on my website [HERE](#).

If you'd like more comprehensive help with any negative bushfire smoke inhalation health effects, feel free to get in touch with me [HERE](#).

I consult with clients in the Sydney clinic and online Australia-wide. I also offer a free 15-minute discussion to talk about your health challenges and how I can help. You can book it [HERE](#).

Good health and blessings

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