

Anti-Inflammatory Diet

It's a well known fact that certain foods act in the same way as anti-inflammatory drugs, of course without the side effects ☺ The omega-3 fats in salmon, herring, anchovies, flaxseed, walnuts and omega-3-enriched eggs control hormones called prostaglandins that are responsible for the inflammatory processes in your body. Foods that are either present or absent in your diet can help you control inflammation. This buzz word is currently the hottest topic of research and at the root of SO many ailments, from arthritis to heart disease, to diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and various cancers. It's no coincidence that those foods with a high Glycemic Index and Load are also some of the top inflammatory offenders.

This diet is designed primarily to decrease inflammation in your body as well as to improve blood sugar regulation, as both contribute to chronic disease and pain. The closer you follow this diet, the sooner your body will respond. The benefits of this diet include: feeling better, increased energy, steady energy throughout the day (no mid-afternoon crash), weight loss, craving control, emotional stability, improved sleep, and decreased physical discomfort.

There is a protein in the blood called C-Reactive Protein (CRP), which is an important, testable marker for inflammatory disease. High CRP levels are considered an indicator of future heart disease. By changing your diet, you can notably reduce CRP levels in your blood. Eating organically grown foods as much as possible is always advised to get the most health-promoting effects from our food. After all, food is medicine!

THE YES FOODS: *Foods that decrease inflammation*

- Cold-water fish: wild-caught salmon, tuna, sardines, herring, rainbow trout, mackerel, high in omega-3 fatty acids
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, preferable organic
- Spices : ginger, turmeric, garlic
- Monounsaturated fats: olive oil

THE NO FOODS: *Foods that increase inflammation*

Animal Fat

- Most: grain-fed beef, pork and pork products
- Moderate: high-fat cheese, milk/cream, egg yolk, chicken with skin, turkey
- Least: grass-fed beef, wild game

Trans-fatty acids

- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Found in: crackers, cookies, chips, etc. – all processed foods are to be avoided!
* *It's more important than ever to read food labels!*

Anything that causes huge spikes in insulin

- Refined sugar, sweets
- Processed grains, white flour, white potatoes

More:

- Alcohol
- Corn and corn products
- Peanuts and peanut butter

Diet Specifics:

PROTEIN:

Small amounts of protein with every meal is key.

The optimal serving size at any one sitting is the size of your palm. Some recommendations:

FISH:

Fish is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA.

- Deep-sea ocean (vs. farmed) fish is preferred - salmon, halibut, cod, sardines, tuna, herring, rainbow trout and mackerel (fish should be poached, baked, steamed or broiled).
- Avoid shellfish.
- See Seafood Selector at <http://www.oceansalive.org/eat/cfm> for the best choice of fish.

CHICKEN / TURKEY:

Limit to 4 ounces, 3 times per week

- Only the white meat (no skin), of free-range or organically grown chicken or turkey (baked, broiled or steamed)

BEEF / PORK:

None. Avoid altogether.

LEGUMES:

Eat more of any of the following:

- Split peas, lentils, pinto beans, soybeans, mung beans, chickpeas, adzuki beans

VEGETABLES:

Eat as *many* as you can, aim for at least 5 servings per day.

Avoid frying, boiling or adding any additional salt or butter.

Grilling or lightly sauteing on low heat is good

Steaming is best in order to promote the nutrients that naturally heal our gut lining!

- Green/Dark Green Leafy/Red/Yellow/Orange vegetables: unlimited (yams/sweet potatoes/squashes allowed!)
- Increase intake of garlic, onions, leeks, ginger, turmeric
- Stop eating ALL Solanaceae (nightshade vegetables): tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant and bell pepper and chili peppers as they contain alkaloids which can increase pain and aggravate arthritis

FRUIT:

- Eat 0-2 pieces of fruit daily. Aim for low glycemic fruits (berries, peaches, apples pears, oranges, kiwi) and avoid those higher in sugar (melon, pineapple, papaya, mango, grapes, bananas).
- It's best to try to avoid citrus (though morning lemon water is ok).
- Frozen fruit is ok if there is no added sugar.
- Dried or canned fruit: little to none, especially if packed in syrup.

HEALTHY FATS / OILS:

- To make your grass-fed, organic butter even healthier - mix 1 pound of it with 1 cup of extra virgin olive oil or flax oil (from a new, dark container). Whip it at room temperature and store in the refrigerator. This provides the benefits and taste of butter and the essential fats in olive/flax oil.
- Use extra virgin olive oil for situations requiring oil. Try not to heat the oil, but put it on after food has already been heated.
- Organic, expeller-pressed, high oleic sunflower and safflower oils are ok in moderation
- Avoid canola oil wherever possible due to genetically modified sources or processing.

GRAINS:

- Eat 1-2 cups/day cooked whole grains & complex carbs –avoid gluten if possible
- Allowed: quinoa, basmati or brown rice, oat, buckwheat, millet, amaranth, teff, sorghum (sprouted wheat bread is ok)
- Limit or avoid gluten-containing grains – wheat, rye, barley, kamut, spelt
- Significantly limit processed grains (white flour, white crackers, most breakfast cereals)
- Other grain foods that may be eaten are rice crackers and wasa crackers

SNACKS:

All nuts should preferentially be raw, unsalted and stored in the refrigerator or freezer

- Almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts: unlimited (soy nuts are a great snack!)
- Nut or seed butters: almond, cashew, sunflower, hazelnut, etc. – ensure they are raw/natural
- Seeds: limited
- Whole food nut & fruit bars (e.g. Larabar, Nectar, etc.)

BEVERAGES:

It's optimal to get ½ your body weight in ounces of water per day (a minimum of 8 glasses daily, filtered or reverse osmosis) – warm it if you'd like!

- Herbal non-caffeinated teas (unsweetened): 2-4 cups daily, drink away from meals so as not to dilute stomach acid
- Green tea is high in bioflavonoids: 0-2 cups daily, drink far from bedtime as it contains caffeine
- Avoid soda of any kind (diet or regular), avoid all fruit juice and energy drinks

SWEETENERS:

- No sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup
- Limited amounts of stevia, raw organic honey or maple syrup

SPICES:

- Curry, parsley, savory, mixed Italian spice, cardamom, pepper, Celtic sea salt, turmeric, basil, garlic, ginger, flax seed, leeks, walnut and coriander. Use generously in all your stirfrys, roasted meals and soups. There's nothing that these spices can't do!
- Limit hot spices 😊

More on the NO Foods...

(Remember, these PROMOTE inflammation)

Reduce omega-6 oils –

Limiting the omega-6 fats in your diet is key as they promote the inflammatory response. Omega-6 fats are already found in abundance in our diets, so it is necessary to reduce corn, cottonseed, safflower and sunflower oils (which are found in most processed foods). Using a high quality, cold-pressed, extra virgin olive oil is best.

Cut back on high fat meats and dairy products –

Diets that include foods high in saturated fat (such as meats and dairy products) increase CRP, the biomarker of inflammation.

Lose body fat –

Having a healthy body weight is a very effective way of reducing inflammation. Research shows that fat tissue produces compounds that promote the inflammatory cascade – it's no surprise, then, that obesity is a risk factor for heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis as well as certain cancers.

Avoid foods with a high glycemic index –

Glycemic index (GI) and Glycemic load (GL) are measures of how fast a food breaks down into glucose. Foods with a high GI and GL (such as potatoes, white rice, sugar and highly processed cereals) increase blood glucose and thereby as inflammation promoters.

Incorporating all aspects of this new diet into your life may have it's challenges. But remember that the first days are the hardest, and soon enough you will feel well again. Strictly following an anti-inflammatory diet – including eating lean and low GI/GL – will reward you in so many ways: feeling that you can live life more fully, have more energy, a more stable mood, reduced cravings, better sleep and a welcomed departure from the pain or other physical discomfort you've been living with.

Know that it's ok to make mistakes on your way to incorporating this new way of eating into your life. We are here to help you troubleshoot sticking points and challenges as well as to support you on your path to whole person health.

Eating the right foods for you will have the greatest impact on your sense of wellness and vitality. Let's get you feeling great again!