

Anti-inflammatory Diet



The inflammatory process is naturally designed to be protective in the body however sometimes the immune system triggers inflammation when there is no infection. Chronic inflammation can be a major cause of free radical damage and can perpetuate and aggravate a number of health conditions such as Alzheimer's, arthritis, acne, heart disease, endometriosis, premature ageing, sinusitis and even some cancers.

There are some foods which can cause inflammation in the body. Knowing which foods may trigger inflammation and eliminating these foods from your diet can assist with the prevention of many inflammatory conditions.

Make a food diary and record any foods that noticeably trigger inflammation in your body.

Foods to avoid eating on a daily basis

The following foods can be pro inflammatory in the body:

Dairy

Milk and milk products can trigger inflammation in the body.

Natural live Yogurt may be tolerated in small amounts as it tends to be more gut friendly due to containing beneficial bacteria. Fermented products help to reduce inflammation in the stomach.

Refined Sugar

Too much sugar can triggers inflammation, weight gain, ageing, and possible diabetes. It is important to avoid any refined sugars like white sugar, brown sugar, corn syrups, jams, chocolate, lollies, confectionary, etc. Avoid artificial sugar sweeteners which can be full of chemicals.

Options for natural sweeteners include honey, stevia and fresh fruits.

Flour

Avoid refined white flour, cakes, pastries, cookies, wheat, refined breakfast cereals (e.g. shredded wheat, coco pops), pasta, cous cous, unrefined and unpolished grains.

Oils and Fats

Oils like sunflower, corn, soy, safflower and peanut contain high linoleic acid, which can have an inflammatory influence on the body. Also, many vegetable oils contain a high amount of omega-6 fatty acids, and very less of omega-3.

Too much of omega-6 and less of omega-3 in body promotes inflammation and increases the risk of chronic diseases.

Artificial Trans Fats increase the level of bad cholesterol, promote inflammation, and obesity. Most processed foods contain some amount of trans-fat e.g. burgers, pizzas, hot dogs, hot chips etc. Avoid any food products which contain trans-fat, vegetable shortening, margarine or hydrogenated oil in them.

Avoid deep fried, fatty foods, fast foods, junk foods

Nightshade Vegetables

Nightshade vegetables contain a chemical alkaloid which is known as solanine. It can trigger inflammation in some people. These people need to avoid or reduce intake of nightshade vegetables. These vegetables are tomatoes, white potatoes, paprika, eggplants and capsicum.

Processed meat and meat products

Try to avoid eating too much fatty red meat, as it causes inflammation. Eating red meat once to twice a week is ample. A lot of commercially produced poultry and meat eat corn and soy in their diet. This means a lot of omega-6 which can be pro inflammatory. This meat can also be high in fat and contain antibiotic residues so where possible choose grass fed meat which is higher in anti-inflammatory omega 3's and free range or organic poultry.

Alcohol, fizzy drinks, coffee, tea

Processed and packaged foods

These can be high in sodium and sugar, low in nutrients and high in food additives such as artificial chemicals, flavours and preservatives. These can all trigger inflammation within the body.

Avoid self-medicating and pill popping

Only take medication that is prescribed by your G.P or health care professional.

Anti-inflammatory foods

Substitute inflammatory foods for fresh, nutrient dense wholefoods preferably organic



Choose:

- **Anti-inflammatory vegetables** such as broccoli, cabbage, garlic, spinach, leeks, green beans, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, spring onions, etc.
- Choose antioxidant **rich foods such as blueberries, blackberries, raspberries**, coloured fruits and vegetables.
- Include freshly squeezed vegetable and fruit juices such as **beetroot, carrot, celery and ginger**.
- Choose **extra virgin olive oil, macadamia oil or avocado oil**. These oils have a good ratio of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Also, these oils help to reduce the cholesterol level.
- Include fresh anti-inflammatory herbs such as **turmeric, garlic and ginger**.
- Choose grass **fed lean meats and organic chicken**. Grass fed meat also contains anti-inflammatory omega 3.
- **Fresh fish**, particularly oily fish such as sardines, salmon, mackerel, are actually a great anti-inflammatory food high in omega 3.
- Eat **raw nuts and seeds** for essential oils and nutrients such as flaxseeds, walnuts, hazel nuts. Avoid roasted and salted nuts which are inflammatory and damaging to our bodies.

- Eat **whole grains and high fibre foods** such as legumes, leafy vegetables, fruits and oats which are rich in vitamins and minerals. Choose 'gluten-free, unpolished and unrefined grains such as quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice.
- Substitute **tea and coffee** for herbal teas. Green tea, White tea are Roibus tea are high in cell protecting antioxidants whilst Cammomile is soothing and calming.
- Get a **good night's sleep**. Avoid bright lights, stimulants and loud TV and music right before bedtime.
- Manage stress. **Try hatha yoga, gentle walking or deep breathing meditation**. Cook vegetable stir-fry and toss with diced tofu
- Add steamed and minced greens like **collards, spinach and kale** to casseroles, soups and stews
- Use calcium-fortified **non-dairy milk (like almond or rice milk)** instead of water in recipes such as pancakes, mashed potatoes, and oats
- Use **almond butter** instead of peanut butter
- Add **calcium-rich beans** like black-eyed peas or chick peas to soups, pasta sauces

Do I need to take supplements?

Nutritional supplements such as Omega 3's and antioxidants may be beneficial if you are suffering from an inflammatory condition. Always follow advice from your health practitioner.

By avoiding inflammatory foods and following healthy habits, you will quickly notice a healthy difference in your body and reduced inflammation. **Good luck!**