



## Eat to Beat Inflammation

### What is Inflammation and Why May Inflammation Be Harmful?

Inflammation in the body is a response to what the body detects as foreign and harmful. If your body is consistently inflamed, then it may begin to cause a problem by not healing itself and/or causing damage to healthy parts.

It is well documented that eating a Standard American Diet (SAD) that is high in processed, sugary, and fatty foods is linked to diseases of inflammation, including obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease, asthma, arthritis, and Alzheimer's disease.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), processed foods are the reason for the increase in obesity and chronic disease across the globe. These highly refined foods are normally easier to chew and swallow, which allows a person to eat a larger amount in a shorter amount of time and requires less energy (i.e. burns fewer calories) when you digest processed foods. With lower amounts of nutrients and fiber, as well as a rapid spike in blood sugar and insulin, processed foods can leave you feeling hungry again in a short time.

It is vital to our health that we decrease the amount of processed, sugary, and fatty foods we consume and, on the flip side, increase the amount of fresh, whole foods in our daily diet. Simply by adding more fruits, vegetables and other plant foods to our diets, we displace the less healthy foods that are higher in calories and low in nutrient density.

### Getting Started on an Anti-Inflammatory Diet

If you are looking to start eating a healthier overall diet, start by adopting these principles of anti-inflammatory diet.

#### What NOT to eat: Foods That May Promote Inflammation

- Lunch or Deli Meats
- Soda
- Baked Goods
- White Breads
- Fruit Juice
- Sweetened Cereals
- Fatty Cuts of Meat
- Fried Foods
- Candies and other sugary "treats"

## What to eat:

- Fruits and vegetables: 4-5+ cups per day
- Omega-3's and Monounsaturated fats: 2-3 servings daily from nuts, seeds, avocados, olive oil; fatty fish 2-3 servings per week
- Fiber: 25-35 grams per day from whole foods, including whole grains and legumes
- Protein: choose lean animal proteins and plant proteins. Individual needs vary based on weight, height and activity level (In general, adult men and women need .8 grams per kilogram body weight per day.)
- Herbs and Spices: Limit salt use and try to use different herbs and spices

## Foods That May Minimize Inflammation

- |              |              |                     |             |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|
| • Apples     | • Tomatoes   | • Eggplant          | • Flaxseed  |
| • Avocado    | • Cantaloupe | • Dark Leafy Greens | • Green Tea |
| • Berries    | • Lemons     | • Garlic            | • Turmeric  |
| • Grapefruit | • Pineapple  | • Broccoli          |             |
| • Coffee     | • Peppers    | • Sweet Potato      |             |
| • Cherries   | • Plums      | • Walnuts           |             |

## Anti-Inflammatory Eating Made Simple

Start by making small, doable daily choices to create the habit of eating an anti-inflammatory diet that includes a variety of fresh, whole and mostly organic and/or locally sourced plant foods.

Here is a quick guide to help you adopt this type of diet:

- Incorporate fruits and/or veggies into every meal
  - Start your day with fruits and/or vegetables at breakfast (don't skip this opportunity!)
  - Snack smart – make snacks high in fiber and low in sugar, such as hummus on whole grain crackers and/or with veggies, or have an apple and nuts or seeds
  - Have a salad a day (eat more leafy greens!) and include nuts or seeds on it
  - Add spinach, kale or other greens to smoothies
  - Keep frozen fruits and veggies on hand for quick & easy meals
  - Craving dessert? Choose fruits and a little dark chocolate
- Go animal protein-free (plant-based) at least one day a week, such as “meatless Monday”
- Include whole grains (gluten-free if needed) daily
- Drink water first thing in the morning and focus on hydration throughout the day
- Do drink coffee and tea but don't drink your calories! Ditch sugar-filled beverages, including in coffee and teas, juices, etc.
- Shop the perimeter of the store first to fill your cart with fresh foods
- Buy items from the grocery store that are not packaged
- Add/include high-fiber foods with every meal
- Buy organic and locally sourced foods
- Read food labels (look for foods with 5 ingredients or fewer) Remember, fresh whole foods do not have or need labels!

## Listen to the SENSE of Wellness podcast episodes on nutrition:

[Food for Mood with Dr. Uma Naidoo](#)

[Nutrition for Longevity with Jennifer Maynard](#)