

Anti-Inflammatory Diet

KEY POINTS

- Inflammation is irritation and swelling caused by your body's immune system.
 - Eating more of some foods, and limiting other foods, may decrease inflammation. It may also help with symptoms of many diseases.
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What is inflammation?

Inflammation is irritation and swelling. The body uses chemicals such as lipoproteins (a kind of cholesterol), hormones, and certain proteins, to start an immune response. The immune response means that your body sends white blood cells to body tissues that may be injured or infected. This immune response can cause inflammation.

If you have an autoimmune disease, your body's immune response mistakenly attacks your body's own tissue. Examples of autoimmune diseases include Addison's disease, arthritis, lupus, scleroderma, and Sjögren's syndrome. Inflammation often plays a part in these diseases. Inflammation may also play a part in many other diseases.

An anti-inflammatory diet may help prevent or manage symptoms of these diseases.

What changes should I make in my diet?

Foods that are high in saturated and trans fats, or foods that quickly raise blood glucose, may increase inflammation.

Try to eat more:

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Eat a plant-based diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables. Eating fruits and vegetables gives you more antioxidants, which help fight inflammation. Fruits and vegetables are also high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Eat fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, rather than canned. Limit fruit juice, which is high in calories and sugar.
- **Healthy fats:** Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish and some plants. Omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of stroke, high blood pressure, and inflammation. Have more avocados, nuts, seeds, and extra virgin olive oil. Eat fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, or sardines a few times a week.
- **Fiber:** Fiber helps to prevent constipation. It also helps keep your blood glucose steady and helps lower cholesterol levels. Whole-grain sources of fiber include whole wheat, bran, whole rye, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, quinoa, and brown or wild rice. Other good sources of fiber are flaxseeds, chia seeds, nuts, vegetables, fruits, and beans. Limit fruit juice, which has little or no fiber. When increasing the fiber in your diet, it is best to do so slowly, and drink plenty of liquid.
- **Healthy meats:** Choose lean meats, poultry, and fish. Organic or grass-fed meats may be higher in healthy fats and lower in antibiotics or hormones. They may be a better choice for fighting inflammation. Lentils, split peas, and kidney, garbanzo,

navy, and pinto beans are good sources of protein and iron. They add variety, flavor, and fiber to your diet.

- Spices and herbs: Studies show that some herbs and spices may decrease inflammation. Add turmeric, parsley, ginger, oregano, cinnamon, and garlic when you cook.

Cut back on the following foods:

- Saturated fat is found in whole milk, cream, cheese, butter, ice cream, fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin on, and coconut and palm kernel oil. Trans fat may be found in stick margarine, French fries, cookies, crackers, and baked goods. If the food label has the words "partially hydrogenated," the product probably has trans fat
- Eat a variety of fresh and minimally processed foods as much as possible. Processed foods such as bread, pasta, cakes, candy, and fruit juice quickly raise blood glucose. Sugar builds up in your blood until your body makes enough insulin to help move sugar from the blood into the cells. This process can increase inflammation.
- Limit processed meat and other highly processed foods. Highly processed foods with a long list of preservatives and additives in the ingredient list are not as healthy as whole foods. These additives may affect the bacteria in your gut, and the way that your body uses blood glucose.
- Limit added sugars and artificial sweeteners. Artificial sweeteners are in many processed foods. Artificial sweeteners are manmade sugar substitutes.
- Certain foods can cause reactions in some people. If you have food sensitivity or intolerance, you have a reaction, such as upset stomach or gas when you eat certain foods. For example, if you have celiac disease, your immune system attacks part of your intestines after you eat gluten. To relieve symptoms, the treatment is a gluten-free diet.

If you have an allergy to foods such as wheat, peanuts, milk, or soy, eating these foods can cause hives, swelling, dizziness, or trouble breathing. You can try to find which foods cause symptoms by not eating certain foods for a while. Then you can carefully try eating these foods again by adding them back to your diet one at a time to see if your symptoms come back.

Ask your healthcare provider for a referral to a dietitian to learn more.

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