



Healthy Anti-Inflammatory Diet

Healthy foods like fish high in Omega-3 fats, leafy greens, and deep colored vegetables and fruits aren't just good for you, they're also delicious!

We now know that chronic inflammation is one of the root causes of many serious illnesses including heart disease, lipid disorders, some arthritis, some cancers, and Alzheimer's disease. Inflammation is the cornerstone of the body's healing response; but when it persists or serves no purpose, it damages the body and causes illness. Stress, lack of exercise, genetic predisposition, and exposure to toxins (like first- or second-hand tobacco smoke and pollution) can all contribute to such chronic inflammation; but dietary choices play a big role as well.

Inflammation inside the body can be caused or worsened by eating foods that are processed or that contain trans-fats, refined sugars, refined flour, or high fructose corn syrup. These types of food also tend to pack on the pounds, speed up the aging process, and worsen inflammatory processes already at work in the skin such as acne and rosacea.

So instead of eating unhealthy inflammatory foods like bakery, deli meats, fast foods, processed frozen meals, and fried foods, switch to anti-inflammatory foods that reduce inflammation and promote health:

- **Fish that is rich in omega-3 fats**, including wild Alaskan (not farmed) salmon, herring, halibut, snapper, striped bass and tuna.
 - **Minimize consumption of animal-based proteins**, and they should be lean, hormone-free, and unprocessed.
 - If you eat beef, it is best to choose grass-fed beef over grain-fed beef. Grass-fed beef is more flavorful and higher in omega-3 anti-inflammatory fat than grain-fed meat.
 - Poultry should be skinless because poultry fat, concentrated just beneath the skin, contains arachidonic acid, which promotes inflammation.
 - **Avoid cow's milk!** and replace it with nut milk (unless you are allergic to tree nuts), as nut milks contain more calcium, less sugar, and no hidden estrogen, oat milk
 - My family and I found, and many patients agree, that Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Almond Milk, Califia Farms Almond Milk, and Silk Cashew Milk all taste great and have the highest calcium content. We tried the unsweetened, unflavored versions.
 - Silk unflavored almond yogurt alternative is an excellent non-dairy yogurt replacement.
- Fermented foods are an important way to keep the gut biome healthy.**
- **Avoid "low fat" foods**, as low-fat prepared foods are often highly sweetened, and many of the studies used to support the low-fat recommendation of the past 40 years had serious flaws.
 - **Avoid foods with chemically altered fats, such as hydrogenated vegetable oils** found in many prepared foods, as these raise cardiovascular disease risk.
 - **Use extra-virgin olive oil** for cooking. Monounsaturated oils, such as **avocado oil, coconut oil and nut oils** also have been found to have beneficial effects on lipids.
 - **Salads should contain a variety of deep colors:** broccoli; tomatoes; red, orange, and yellow peppers; carrots; pomegranate seeds; strawberries; and blueberries. Eating the rainbow every day ensures we get the phytonutrients of an anti-inflammatory diet.
 - **Dark green leafy vegetables:** spinach, kale, chard, and other vegetables that are rich in antioxidants, vitamin C and other nutrients that help to reduce inflammation. These should make up the bulk of the vegetables.
 - **Fruits**, such as cherries, apples, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, pineapple, oranges, lemons and limes. Cherries and blueberries are especially effective anti-inflammatory fruits that are packed with antioxidants and available frozen all year round.

- **Whole grain starches**, such as brown or wild rice, corn, sweet potatoes, and quinoa are better sources of fiber and less inflammatory than refined cereals, pastas, crackers and breads made with flour. If you find you are unable to eliminate bread and cereal products, try to choose ones with whole grains (not flour) as the first ingredients and look for the following ratio: [(Protein plus Dietary Fiber) x 3] should be less than or equal to the Total Carbohydrates.
- Herbs and spices that flavor foods but are no- or low-calorie, such as **turmeric, garlic, ginger, thyme, parsley, rosemary, basil, cinnamon and mint**.
- **Water** is the best way to hydrate your body. Avoid pop, either sweetened or diet. Fruit juice is just sugar and water unless you have juiced the fruit yourself and are getting the benefit of the solids.
- **Green tea, white tea, and red tea** contain natural anti-inflammatory compounds that may reduce your risk of heart disease or cancer.
- If you feel the need to sweeten your tea, **agave nectar** is a natural sweetener with a low glycemic index that tastes better and is less inflammatory than artificial sweeteners that have actually been found to increase appetite and may in fact be hazardous. Raw local honey helps build immunity to local pollen.

When you replace pro-inflammatory foods with anti-inflammatory foods, you help clarify your skin. In addition, you reduce inflammation within your body, promote weight loss, decrease pain associated with inflammation, and lower your risk for chronic heart disease. Keep up with inflammation-reducing exercise and add some regular form of relaxation, such as reading or yoga, and you should be well on the road to experiencing improved whole-body health.