

Inflammation and Diet

What is inflammation?

Inflammation is our body's first response to injury and disease. Over time, inflammation can harm the body and may cause disease. Smoking as well as poor exercise, sleep and eating habits can increase risk of inflammation. You can make healthy choices to reduce inflammation in your body.

	Some foods reduce inflammation ("anti-inflammatory") ENJOY	Other foods add to inflammation ("pro-inflammatory") AVOID
THE FOODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Fresh vegetables • Fresh fruits • Legumes and beans such as lentils, split peas and dried beans • Healthy fats such as nuts, seeds, oils and avocado • Fish and seafood • Lean red meat, poultry and eggs • Whole grains such as brown rice, whole/cracked wheat, quinoa, buckwheat, millet and farro • Low/moderate dairy intake (1-2 servings per day; 1 serving = 8 oz. milk or 6 oz. yogurt) • Herbs and spices such as garlic, turmeric, ginger and cinnamon • Herbal teas • Low/moderate alcohol intake (up to 1 drink per day for women; 1-2 drinks per day for men), especially red wine (when having with food) • Occasional candy and sweet treats, especially dark chocolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar, including table sugar, high fructose corn syrup, soft drinks and desserts • Refined grains such as white bread, pasta, cereal, processed snack foods, crackers and bagels • Fatty red and processed meats such as beef, pork, lamb, bacon, sausage, deli meats, salami and hot dogs • Fried foods, especially fried potatoes • Too much caffeine: Avoid intake of more than 200-300 milligrams of caffeine per day (about 2 cups of drip coffee) • Too much alcohol: More than 1 drink per day for women; more than 2 drinks per day for men
THE BIG PICTURE	Several nutrients have an anti-inflammatory effect, such as fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes), healthy fats (avocado, olive oil), omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, walnuts) and antioxidants (colorful fruits and vegetables).	A pro-inflammatory diet has high amounts of saturated fats (butter, high-fat dairy, creamy sauces), simple sugars , refined carbohydrates (snack foods, white bread), alcohol and red meat .
THE EFFECT	This type of diet lowers the risk of overweight/obesity, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and other chronic diseases.	This type of diet increases inflammation and the risk of overweight/obesity, heart disease, stroke and other chronic diseases.