

nutrition *made easy*



How to Tame Inflammation

The right food choices can help control and prevent chronic inflammation.

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Occasional inflammation, like a swollen sprained ankle or painful cut, is healthy. It's a sign that the body's immune system is healing injuries and fighting off bacteria. While a little bothersome, the inflammation is acute and goes away in a few days. But there's another type of inflammation that's not so healthy: chronic inflammation. It's triggered by the immune

system responding to irritants or foreign compounds, often in food or the environment. With no overt symptoms, chronic inflammation is a little harder to understand or even recognize. However, research has linked it with obesity, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis. Read on for the scoop on what to eat and what to skip.

Eat to Beat Inflammation

ONGOING INFLAMMATION is problematic because it alters normal body processes and cells, which can cause long-term damage and increase your likelihood of developing a chronic condition.

Food plays a pivotal role—it can either help reduce or promote chronic inflam-

mation. While there's still more research to be done, we know that filling your plate with more anti-inflammatory foods while dialing back on ones that cause inflammation may have a powerful effect on your body's ability to ward off future diseases and even slow aging.

10 Top Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Lots of foods have anti-inflammatory qualities; these are a few of our favorites. Aim to work them into your diet as often as possible.

1

CHERRIES

Both sweet and tart varieties lower C-reactive protein, one of the key blood indicators used to test for inflammation. Cherries may even offer pain relief comparable to ibuprofen. When cherries aren't in season, try tart cherry juice in smoothies and salad dressings.

2

SALMON

The omega-3 fats DHA and EPA in salmon and other oily fish play key roles in suppressing inflammation and boosting production of anti-inflammatory compounds. Aim to eat fish or sea vegetables like algae several times per week.

3

BROCCOLI

This cruciferous veggie offers healthy doses of phytochemicals that quell inflammatory compounds

associated with cancer development. Try to eat at least five weekly servings of cruciferous vegetables. These include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, mustard greens, watercress, and kohlrabi.

4

SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS

Research suggests that eating shiitake mushrooms daily lowers inflammatory markers and improves immune system function. Oyster and enoki mushrooms also have anti-inflammatory powers. Make sure you eat them raw or cook at low to moderate temps for the most impact.

5

EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

This pantry staple delivers the inflammation-suppressing compound oleocanthal, plus a small

amount of omega-3s. Try other oils, too, such as flaxseed and canola, for a stronger dose of omega-3s.

6

AVOCADO

The creamy fruit works twofold thanks to monounsaturated fats and antioxidants. Avocado may even counteract eating some inflammatory foods: In one study, people who topped their hamburger with avocado had lower inflammatory markers than those who ate just the burger.

7

TURMERIC

Curcumin is the powerful compound in turmeric that eases symptoms in almost all inflammation-related conditions. Research varies on how much you need, but aim to cook with turmeric several times a week (curry powder is a good source).

8

TOMATOES

Tomatoes' lycopene propels them to the next nutritional level. Studies show lycopene reduces and suppresses inflammation—which is why tomatoes help lower cancer and cardiovascular incident risks.

9

SPINACH

While all leafy greens are recommended, spinach offers a mix of antioxidants that boost the immune system and suppress inflammation. It also helps that the leafy green is one of the most versatile veggies for quick meal prep.

10

STRAWBERRIES

These berries are loaded with anthocyanins and antioxidants called ellagitannins, which sweep up harmful free radicals that promote inflammation. In fact, all berries are good sources.

A Day of Anti-Inflammatory Eating

WE'VE TAKEN THE GUESSWORK out of eating to beat inflammation and loaded breakfast, lunch, and dinner with flame-fighting foods. All you have to do is cook and enjoy!

BREAKFAST

QUINOA BOWLS WITH AVOCADO AND EGG

Active: 15 min. Total: 15 min.

This quick, satisfying breakfast is loaded with anti-inflammatory foods: extra-virgin olive oil, avocado, tomatoes, quinoa, and omega-3 eggs. For even more anti-inflammatory benefit, serve with an orange or grapefruit.

- 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1 cup hot cooked tricolor quinoa
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup canned unsalted black beans, rinsed, drained, and warmed
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
- 2 large omega-3 eggs
- 1/2 ripe avocado, sliced

1. Whisk together 1 1/2 teaspoons oil, vinegar, and dash of salt.
2. Combine quinoa, tomatoes, beans, cilantro, and 1/8 teaspoon salt; toss gently to combine. Divide mixture evenly between 2 bowls.
3. Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium. Add remaining 1/2 teaspoon oil; swirl to coat. Crack eggs, 1 at a time, into pan. Cover; cook until whites are set and yolk is still runny, 2 to 3 minutes. Drizzle dressing evenly over quinoa mixture; top with eggs and avocado. Sprinkle with remaining dash of salt. Garnish with additional cilantro, if desired.

➤ **SERVES 2** (serving size: about 2/3 cup quinoa mixture, 1 egg, and 1/4 avocado)

CALORIES 343; **FAT** 16.4g (sat 3.1g, mono 9g, poly 3.1g); **PROTEIN** 15g; **CARB** 35g; **FIBER** 9g; **SUGARS** 3g (est. added sugars 0g); **CHOL** 186mg; **IRON** 4mg; **SODIUM** 332mg; **CALC** 86mg

The Top Inflamers

These foods and habits fan the flames of inflammation. Try to limit or eliminate them as much as possible.

- ▶ Excessive alcohol
- ▶ Regularly eating more calories than your body needs
- ▶ Trans and saturated fats
- ▶ Fried foods
- ▶ Refined carbs like white bread, white rice, etc.
- ▶ Added sugars
- ▶ Artificial sweeteners
- ▶ High-fat meats and processed meats

LUNCH

SALMON SALAD WITH CHERRY VINAIGRETTE**Active: 15 min. Total: 15 min.**

Cherry juice is a year-round alternative with the same anti-inflammatory benefits as fresh cherries. If you're taking this salad to work, store the dressing separately and drizzle over the salad just before eating.

- 2 Tbsp. tart cherry juice
- 4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1 tsp. rice vinegar

- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. honey
- 1/2 tsp. grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 cups dark baby greens mix (such as Dole Power Up Greens Baby Kale and Greens)
- 2 Tbsp. very thinly sliced red onion
- 1 (6-oz.) can pink or red skinless, boneless salmon, drained and flaked
- 1/2 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- 1/3 cup diced cucumber
- 2 Tbsp. toasted slivered almonds

1. Combine the first 8 ingredients (through salt) in a large bowl; whisk until well combined. Add greens and red onion; toss gently to combine. Divide salad mixture evenly between 2 plates; top evenly with flaked salmon, edamame, cucumber, and almonds.

▶ **SERVES 2** (serving size: 2 cups)

CALORIES 334; **FAT** 20.4g (sat 2.8g, mono 11g, poly 4.8g); **PROTEIN** 25g; **CARB** 15g; **FIBER** 6g; **SUGARS** 5g (est. added sugars 1g); **CHOL** 53mg; **IRON** 3mg; **SODIUM** 609mg; **CALC** 219mg

DOES DAIRY PROMOTE INFLAMMATION?

Contrary to popular belief, dairy products like yogurt actually have an anti-inflammatory effect in most people. Yogurt reduces inflammation by supporting gut health. But saturated fat can promote inflammation, so choose lower-fat versions.

However, if you have a dairy allergy or sensitivity, continue to avoid dairy, as it will trigger an inflammatory response.

SHOULD I AVOID NIGHTSHADE VEGETABLES?

Nightshade vegetables, such as tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, and potatoes, are often blamed for arthritis inflammation due to their compound solanine. However, there's no conclusive research that they trigger inflammation. Nightshades are packed full of anti-inflammatory nutrients, such as lycopene and beta-carotene, so don't avoid them. However, if eating a specific one triggers pain or inflammation symptoms, it likely isn't the entire nightshade family, but rather a sensitivity to one that can be eliminated.



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ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

DINNER

BLACK PEPPER-CURRY CHICKEN SAUTÉ

Active: 25 min. Total: 25 min.

Black pepper adds a subtle spiciness and enhances your body's absorption of turmeric in the curry. For the boldest flavor, use 1 teaspoon peppercorns. Serve with roasted cauliflower (as shown) or broccoli for an extra anti-inflammatory boost.

- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-in. pieces
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt, divided
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups vertically sliced onion
- 2 tsp. minced peeled fresh ginger
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 1 cup canned light coconut milk
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 tsp. peppercorns, crushed
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro or basil
- 2 cups hot cooked brown rice

1. Sprinkle chicken with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground pepper. Heat $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add chicken to pan; cook, stirring frequently, 5 to 6 minutes or until chicken is lightly browned and almost cooked through. Remove chicken from pan.

2. Reduce heat to medium. Add remaining $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add onion; cook 4 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add ginger and garlic; cook until softened, about 1 minute. Add curry powder; cook 15 to 30 seconds or until fragrant, stirring constantly. Stir in coconut milk, lime juice, crushed peppercorns, and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Return chicken to pan. Cover, and cook over medium-low until sauce is slightly thickened and chicken is done, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in cilantro or basil. Serve over rice.

➤ **SERVES 4** (serving size: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rice and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chicken mixture)

CALORIES 336; **FAT** 10.6g (sat 4g, mono 3.4g, poly 1.8g); **PROTEIN** 30g; **CARB** 31g; **FIBER** 3g; **SUGARS** 2g (est. added sugar 0g); **CHOL** 83mg; **IRON** 1mg; **SODIUM** 434mg; **CALC** 37mg

