

## Pain, Inflammation and Diet



The right foods can be a powerful medicine when it comes to the inflammation and pain associated with injuries. On the other hand, the wrong foods can exasperate symptoms and discomfort. Inflammation is your body's way of increasing blood flow to an injury, bringing in nutrients that heal and white blood cells to swallow germs. While the natural response of inflammation is an important part of the body's strategy to repair damage, excessive amounts can result in accelerated tissue deterioration and a slowing of the overall healing process. Keeping the following in mind will help control inflammation and pain as well as promote healing.

### Foods to Emphasize

Emphasize a whole foods diet. Choose and eat foods in their natural, whole form, or as close to how they occur in nature as possible. This means limit over-processed foods, which are often found in bags, boxes, or cans.

Increase omega-3 fatty acids, through foods like wild, cold-water fish, walnuts, grass-fed meats, eggs, and flaxseeds.

- Look for DHA rich eggs. Although eggs have some DHA, some egg producers will add DHA-rich marine algae into the hens' feed, which naturally passes into their eggs. This makes the eggs more powerful at helping to control inflammation due to their fatty acid content.
- Use flaxseed meal generously. For optimum freshness, grind flaxseed as needed (a blender or mini-food processor work well). Sprinkle it over hot or cold cereal, soups, salads, rice, fruit, cooked vegetables or add it to cottage cheese, applesauce, yogurt, smoothies, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, spaghetti sauce, burgers, meatloaf, or granola.
- Eat grass-fed, naturally raised cattle graze on nutrient rich grass, which gives the end product a beneficial essential fatty acid ratio. Conventionally raised cattle are fed foods like corn and soy that they are not designed to eat.
- Consume copious amounts of vegetables, and fruits-especially berries, preferably organic. If fresh berries are not available or are too expensive, opt for frozen. Try berries mixed in yogurt or kefir, top your pancakes or waffles with berries mixed with maple syrup, add them to a blended smoothie, or make a blueberry or cheery pie for dessert.
- Steam your veggies or sauté them in olive oil, butter, ghee, or coconut oil.
- Choose the brightest and deepest colored veggies available. For example, kale has more nutrition than green leaf lettuce, red cabbage has more than green cabbage.
- Use the spices turmeric, rosemary, and ginger liberally in your cooking. Make tea using green tea leaves, rosemary, or ginger root.
- Eat pineapple and papaya when available.
- Eat hot chili peppers if they appeal to you and aid your symptoms.
- Drink clean, filtered water regularly throughout the day and avoid the "water-draining" beverages such as coffee, soda, and alcohol.

### Foods to avoid

Do away with pro-inflammatory foods, such as refined foods, sugar, white flour, damaged fats, and hydrogenated oils and any foods with these ingredients.

- Avoid coffee, alcohol, and other sugary beverages.

Find and eliminate your food sensitivities and see if symptoms improve. Try eliminating the suspected foods for a few weeks and add them back in one at a time and evaluate for symptoms. Be sure to keep a detailed food diary to help identifying the foods that work best with you and your unique needs.

Suggestions for Your Shopping List

**Veggies and Fruits:** Kale, Spinach, Red Cabbage, Carrots, Onions (red), Garlic, Broccoli, Hot peppers (if they agree with you), Sweet peppers, Zucchini, Tomatoes (unless sensitive), Cherries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Cranberries, Blackberries, Pineapple, Papaya, Apples

**Grains, Nuts, and Seeds:** Flaxseeds (organic bulk), Walnuts (organic bulk), Oatmeal, Whole grain flours for baking, Whole grain bread

**Meats and Eggs:** Wild, cold-water fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna, sardines), Grass-fed beef, Buffalo, Eggs (optional: DHA rich versions), Whole milk, Plain yogurt (if not sensitive to dairy)

**Fats, Oils, and Condiments:** Extra virgin olive oil (organic), Butter or ghee - organic (unless sensitive to dairy), Organic coconut oil, Hot pepper sauce, Fresh ginger, Ground turmeric, Rosemary, Green tea

**Snack foods and Sweets:** Trail Mix (made with raw nuts and seeds, dried cranberries and dried coconut and chocolate chips), Stevia (herbal sweetener-be sure it is pure stevia with no additives), Raw honey (unfiltered and unpasteurized), Popcorn (popped in olive oil- unless sensitive to corn), Dried fruit (cranberries, blueberries, apples), Crystallized ginger, and Food Bars.