

# ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

## What is Systemic Inflammation?

In the past, you may have thought of inflammation as a swollen joint from arthritis or a rolled ankle. You are definitely correct in your thinking, however you are thinking of acute inflammation, the body's healing response to a local injury or local problem. What I am talking about here though, is systemic inflammation, which is inflammation on a more silent, chronic, or all-over-body level. Systemic inflammation is invisible, however it can also be interpreted as whole body fluid retention. Systemic inflammation is occurring inside the body where it can't be seen. Just because you can't see it however, doesn't mean it isn't dangerous. Just about every disease state that is around today, is, at least in part, caused by systemic inflammation. These include but are not limited to: chrons, ulcerative colitis, auto-immune disease, rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, alzheimer's and even depression.

## Why an anti-inflammatory diet?

Eating an anti-inflammatory diet allows you to naturally reduce the level of systemic inflammation in your body through the foods you eat.

## Causes of systemic inflammation

### Dietary

- Trans-fats
- Omega – 6 Fatty acids
- Refined sugars
- Gluten
- Refined grains
- Alcohol
- Food additives
- Red meat
- Dairy

### Environmental factors

- Smoking or passive smoke
- Pollution
- Pesticides/herbicides
- Heavy metals
- Chemicals and airborne irritants

### Stress

- Workplace
- Relationships
- Personal
- Psychological

### Acute and Chronic illness

- Excess weight / obesity
- Heart disease
- Arthritis
- Celiac disease
- Crohn's disease

### Genetics

- Family history

The best way to prevent or reverse systemic inflammation is to reduce exposure to the above factors. Exercising 3-5 x per week for at least 30 minutes per session will also help to reduce systemic inflammation. Another important factor to consider is stress reduction. Yoga and/or meditation which promote mental clarity can help.

Also choose to eat more anti-inflammatory foods such as:

- Blueberries
- raw cacao
- green tea
- wild-caught salmon
- ginger
- turmeric
- extra virgin olive oil
- dark leafy greens
- sweet potatoes
- kelp

You also need to make sure you have enough Omega 3 fatty acids in your diet as they are the best anti-inflammatory 'drug's around. Eat oily fish such as salmon 2-3 times per week, and also supplement daily with a good quality high dose fish oil. These factors combined are all a great way to fight against silent inflammation.

### Swapping in / Swapping Out

Rather than cutting out foods, I'd like you to think of swapping certain foods IN as you swap certain foods OUT. Have a look at this chart below for some ideas to change over to an anti-inflammatory diet.

Swap Out	Swap In
White bread	Spelt, Rye or Sourdough breads
Coffee	Dandelion tea
Black tea	Herbal teas
Margarine	Organic Butter Mashed Avocado Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Cow's milk	Almond Milk Coconut Milk Rice or other nut milks Organic goat's milk
Cow's cheese	Goats cheese Sheeps cheese
Yoghurt (filled with sugar)	Natural yoghurt Goats yoghurt Sheeps yoghurt Coconut yoghurt
Vegetable and Seed Oils	Extra Virgin Olive Oil Coconut Oil Macadamia Oil
Refined or Processed Sugar	Raw Honey Organic Maple Syrup Rice Malt Syrup
Table Salt	Sea Salt
White Rice	Brown Rice Quinoa Cauliflower Rice
Traditional Pasta	Zucchini Pasta, Buckwheat Pasta, Mung Bean Pasta
Chocolate (filled with sugar)	Raw Cacao Homemade sweets (raw desserts)
Dried Fruit with Sulphur	Sulphur free dried fruit
Processed ham and bacon	Nitrate free or preservative free organic ham and bacon
Pre-packaged salad dressings	Lemon juice, olive oil and/or Apple Cider Vinegar
Take away foods	Homemade foods
Store brought jam	Homemade chia jam
Packaged foods	Real foods – fruit, vegetables and meats
Store brought mayonnaise	Homemade mayonnaise Hummus
Packaged cereals	Buckwheat, quinoa or oat porridge Homemade granola Other breakfast ideas (see below)
Ice-cream	Banana Ice-cream
Fizzy drinks, Soda or Alcohol	Water Sparkling water with fresh lime Kombucha or Water Kefir.

### Helpful hints

- Eat real foods, not too much, mostly vegetables.
- Eat fresh foods, bought recently and not left over for more than 1-2 days.
- Read the back of packaged foods – if there are more than 5 ingredients – don't eat it.
- Read the ingredients of packaged foods – if there are any numbers – don't eat it.
- Avoid white refined grains, white sugar & artificial sweeteners.
- Avoid cow's milk and cheese, instead try goats or sheep's dairy products.
- Avoid coffee and soft drinks. You really only need water, herbal teas and fresh juices.
- Make your minimal daily protein 2 portions the size of the palm of your hand (or 3 in pregnancy).
- Make sure you have protein at every meal or snack. It is the protein that fills you up and helps maintain muscle tone while losing weight.
- Use low glycemic carbohydrates where possible & only small amounts of high glycemic rice/pasta/bread as accompaniments to, not the basis of, your meal.
- Eat frequently at least every 4-5 hours to keep blood sugar levels stable & avoid cravings. Protein providing foods keep blood sugar levels stable for longer.
- Eat your biggest meal at lunchtime rather than for dinner – or, if that's not possible make sure you have at least 2 hours between dinner and bedtime.
- Drink plenty of water (2-3 litres daily) – but remember many teas and all sweet drinks will reduce your fluid balance.
- Drinking more than one glass of water/liquid with a meal can reduce digestive activity. Avoid drinking too much water or liquid with meals.
- Fruit juice (even unsweetened) is high in sugar and low in fiber. Have a piece of fruit instead!
- Eat plenty of fibre – fruit (no more than 2-3 pieces a day), vegetables, oats, linseeds, legumes, whole grains, nuts & beans.
- Enjoy your food! And allow yourself the occasional 'treat' – then reaffirm your intentions to eat well and healthily 90% of the time.
- Replace common table salt with healthier sea salt.
- Make a delicious salad dressing to top your salad or as a dip for your steamed or baked vegetables. Choose from the following ingredients: cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, flaxseed oil, lemon juice, apple cider vinegar, wholegrain mustard, garlic, natural yoghurt, tahini & fresh herbs.
- Drink herbal teas instead of coffee or soft drink – try peppermint, chamomile, licorice, dandelion tea and green tea.
- Try some alternative milks to dairy milk – nut milks, oat milk, rice milk, coconut milk or 'Coco Quench' – a delicious combo of coconut and rice milks that are delicious in hot drinks. Homemade is best, but read the back of the packets of bought milks for the best option with the least amount of numbers.
- "The body heals 8 times faster when you exercise regularly " Kris Carr
- Develop a morning routine: try lemon juice in warm water or Apple Cider Vinegar
- Clean out your fridge and pantry. If 'bad' foods are not in the house, then you are less likely to eat them.
- Sprinkle turmeric on your meat and/or vegetables and salad. It is a great natural anti-inflammatory.
- Eat at least 6 types of seasonal vegetables/salad every day, especially greens.
- Eat 2 serves of fresh fruit daily in a variety of colours.
- Include 2-4 serves of raw nuts, seeds and cold pressed oils in the diet everyday.

Foods that are labeled as low fat, fat free or skinny are off limits. These foods are, in fact, not healthier for you at all. The fact is that these foods have been altered away from their natural state, and usually the 'fat' that was originally present has been replaced with processed sugars or carbohydrates which get absorbed and stored as fat in the body and contribute to your overall systemic inflammation.

You need to give your body its best chance ever to operate at optimum health and wellness. One of the best ways to do this is to feed your body clean, natural foods that will fuel your body with vitamins, nutrients and minerals. This will not only allow your body to stay looking its very best, but it will also keep your organs and immune system operating at their very best capacity and therefore keep you healthy on the inside as well.