

Anti-Inflammatory Diet

To supplement anti-inflammatory nutrients while continuing to ingest pro-inflammatory substances is counter-productive. These dietary guidelines help reduce inflammation for most people.

1. Decrease or eliminate red meat and dairy products. Some arthritis patients also seem to react to poultry.
2. Decrease or eliminate refined sugar.
3. Eliminate caffeine (including coffee, black tea, cola drinks, and chocolate).
4. Eliminate any likely food allergens during the initial three or four weeks such as gluten grains, citrus fruit, and night shade vegetables (tomatoes, white potatoes, red and green peppers, eggplant, paprika, and tobacco). These foods can be added back into the diet one at a time (one new food every third day) while carefully observing the effect. Forms are available to make it easier to monitor the effect of these foods.
5. Drink plenty of *pure* water. Chlorine is an antibiotic and can diminish our friendly gut flora. Studies have associated chlorine in drinking water with increased risk of some types of cancer. It is probably best to drink at least a half hour before the meal and no sooner than a hour after so the digestive juices won't be diluted.
6. Increase your consumption of *fresh, raw or lightly steamed* fruits and vegetables. Good fruit choices include apples, bananas, grapes, mangoes, papayas, peaches, pears, prunes, kiwis, and other sub-acid fruits. Use discretion if the patient has blood sugar problems although fruit often does not cause a problem if the diet is low fat and high fiber. Good vegetables include asparagus, spinach, zucchini, parsley, artichoke (without the butter), kelp and other sea-veggies, okra, snow peas and many more. Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower as well as onions, chives, and peppers are very nutritious but may create digestive difficulties for some people. The solution is often simply chewing the food better and possibly adding supplemental digestive enzymes such as Metazyme or Beano. Spices such as garlic, tumeric, etc. are also very healthy and should be used regularly if well tolerated.
7. For snacks, consider raw vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds. The fruits and veggies contain lots of enzymes, bioflavonoids, and other phytochemicals, while the *raw* nuts and seeds are rich in essential fatty acids, especially flax seed, pumpkin and sunflower seed, walnuts and almonds (almonds can be allergenic to some people). Raw seeds like sesame and flax need to be ground for proper digestion. An electric coffee grinder works well. These healthy snacks can be combined e.g. raw vegetable sticks dipped in tahini (ground sesame seeds) or almond butter.

These suggestions are very helpful for most people with inflammatory conditions such as sprains, strains, bursitis, tendonitis, arthritis, etc. and can be used in conjunction with supplementation. Most people find that eating this way also often lowers blood lipids, smoothes out blood sugar variations, helps with weight management, reduces digestive problems, increases energy, and more. It is important to note that fats digest more slowly so when fat is reduced in the diet, we may become hungry sooner and be tempted to eat M&M's, corn chips, snack crackers, cookies, etc. This hunger is not a problem if we have prepared plenty of healthy snacks as mentioned above.