



Diet and Inflammation

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Chronic inflammation can not only be painful but can lead to serious health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Numerous studies have shown a link between diet and inflammation. A diet that is high in refined grains, sugar and certain fats have shown to increase inflammation. A Mediterranean style diet that includes many servings of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, plant oils, nuts and seeds and fish and lower amounts of processed foods and red meat is associated with decreased inflammation.

A diet with a wide variety of foods and an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, plant-based fats and oils, and fish is important for providing the necessary nutrients for good health. Certain foods within these groups have been linked with a reduction in inflammation:

Fruits: Red grapes and red grape juice, pomegranate and cherries are associated with decreased muscle soreness after exercise. Cherries are high in the antioxidant called anthocyanin and has been shown to reduce symptoms of arthritis and gout.

Vegetables: Broccoli, kale, spinach and tomatoes are high in antioxidants that may help reduce inflammation throughout the body.

Whole grains: Whole grains are less refined and have more nutrients naturally versus refined grains that may have lost nutrients during the processing. Choose 100% whole wheat breads and cereals such as oatmeal, bran cereals, Wheaties, Cheerios, and Shredded Wheat. Also, choose brown rice instead of white rice and whole wheat pastas.

Omega-3 fatty acids: Are a type of fat found in cold water fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring and tuna. It is also found in flaxseeds, flaxseed oil and walnuts. These foods have been found to have anti-inflammatory effects.

Beverages: Green Tea is rich in antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory effects. Coffee has been shown to reduce pain and muscle soreness after exercise. Red wine contains the antioxidant resveratrol, which has been associated with a reduction in pain. **Water** lubricates the muscles and helps to absorb shock.

Spices: Ginger and curcumin have been linked with a reduction in pain after exercise and pain from arthritis.

Supplements: Studies have not been conclusive but some suggest reduction in pain from arthritis from use of Glucosamine and chondroitin together. SAME in some studies has been shown to have anti-inflammatory effect.