



**THE FOODS YOU EAT
(AND DON'T EAT)
CAN DETERMINE THE
LEVEL OF PAINFUL
INFLAMMATION IN YOUR BODY.**



Did you know?

Foods high in fiber are effective in preventing constipation which is known to aggravate back pain.



NOURISH YOUR BODY TO REDUCE ACHES & PAINS

Dehydration can worsen pain.

Our joints have cartilage which is made up of 60% water. This cartilage acts like a cushion, or a shock absorber, and reduces the friction between the bones in the joint. To help reduce the inflammation and maintain the shock absorbing properties of cartilage, keep a water bottle with you at all times and drink up!

Exercise: a natural pain-reliever

Exercise has been shown to be one of the most effective natural pain-relievers, mood boosters, and stress busters. Exercise may reduce pain and improve function in your body. Remember to start slow and always consult your provider. Aquatic exercises, yoga or tai chi may be especially helpful. Participating in regular exercise will help you maintain strong muscles and limber joints.



The good, the bad and the ugly of inflammation

Inflammation plays a central role in healing, but left to run wild, this process can lead to arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease. Inflammation is part of the process by which the immune system defends the body from harmful agents, such as bacteria and viruses. When the body signals an injury, your immune system sends out an army of white blood cells to surround and protect the area. Long-term or chronic inflammation, however, can both lead to and result from some severe and possibly life-threatening conditions.

TIP!: Avoiding excess calories can help you stay lean or lose excess body fat. This is important because being overweight or obese is a known risk factor for chronic pain.

Our bodies become chronically inflamed by a variety of things, including stress, environmental toxins, inactivity, and yes—certain foods and substances in our diets!

Eating foods that contain pro-inflammatory substances like sugar, dairy, processed meats, and trans fats can make your pain worse and longer lasting. Think of it this way: have you ever noticed that your joints feel achier and stiffer the day after a huge “treat meal” of ice cream and pizza?

***TIP!: Want to learn more? Check out this book:
Foods that Fight Pain by Dr. Neal Barnard***

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The foods you eat (and don't eat) can determine the level of painful inflammation in your body.

Research suggests that diet can have a significant impact on inflammation in the body. Some foods increase inflammation, while others reduce it.

Eat these foods to help reduce inflammation.



- **Fruits and vegetables** are packed with antioxidants that help fight inflammation.
 - **Good sources:** colorful foods such as blueberries, blackberries, cherries, strawberries, spinach, kale, broccoli and red bell peppers.
- **Fatty fish** is rich in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.
 - **Good sources:** salmon, tuna and mackerel
- **Healthy fats from nuts and seeds** are full of inflammation-fighting monounsaturated fat and fiber.
 - **Good sources:** walnuts, almonds, pistachios and sunflower seeds.
- **Beans** have several antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds.
 - **Good sources:** black, garbanzo, kidney and pinto

According to the Arthritis Foundation, avoid these foods as they cause inflammation:

- **Sugary or highly processed foods**, including desserts, pastries and sodas
- **Saturated fats**, such as red meat, full fat dairy products, and many rich desserts
- **Trans fats**, including fast food, fried foods, cookies, and donuts
- Excess **omega-6 fatty acids** that are in corn oil, sunflower oil, and vegetable oil
- **Refined carbohydrates** which raise blood sugar levels and promote inflammation. They can be found in processed foods, some white breads and cereals, white rice, and french fries.
- **Alcohol**

Did you know?

The primary dietary source for trans fats in processed food is "partially hydrogenated oils." The best way to steer clear of trans fats is to avoid processed foods such as chips, cookies, pastries, and crackers.

Changing your diet and lifestyle could allow you to reduce the amount of medication you take or even stop taking it. Even small changes, such as switching to whole grains and eating more fish and less red meat, can make a difference in your health. Work with your health care team on a plan that's right for you!

Sources: Arthritis.org, Harvard Health, Cleveland Clinic