

WELCOME WELLNESS

ANGIE MATTHEWSON MPH RDN CSO

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

Short-term inflammation serves important roles in the body, such as wound healing and fighting infections. However, low-level chronic inflammation has been tied to many chronic diseases. There is growing interest that diet is the key to decrease this harmful type of inflammation.

Many individuals experience diet-related changes in symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, IBS and other autoimmune diseases. Enter "anti-inflammatory diet" into a search engine, and you'll find plentiful anecdotal evidence (and cookbooks for sale!). However, controlled trials have had mixed results.

Foods deemed *anti-inflammatory* include: fruits and vegetables (especially those with dark colors); healthy fats (ex: olive oil, avocados), fatty fish (such as salmon & sardines), tree nuts, dark chocolate, green tea, moderate red wine (5 oz for women & 10 for men, daily), and spices such as turmeric and cinnamon.

Foods considered *pro-inflammatory* include: refined starches (white bread & pasta), sugar-sweetened beverages, concentrated sweets (i.e. cookies, cake & ice cream), processed meats (hot dogs, sausage, bacon), snack foods like crackers and chips, soybean & corn oil, and especially trans fat.

We could summarize: *Eat more whole foods, especially plant-based. Eat less refined grains, added sugars and processed meats.* That should sound familiar! It is very similar advice to the Mediterranean Diet, which has a well-established correlation with reduced risk of chronic diseases.

The concept of linking inflammation and diet does bring something unique though: a unified theory of *why* foods are good or bad for our bodies.

As it turns out, the foods previously correlated to chronic diseases are the same foods now known to increase levels of inflammatory markers,

One Small Thing –

Make your list and check it twice!



Pixabay

Here are some foods that have particularly good reputations for reducing inflammation. Some, but not all, make it regularly onto my grocery list. If one or more of these don't appeal to you, don't worry! There are 13 listed here. And don't forget that ALL fruits and vegetables have health benefits!

1. Berries
2. Fatty Fish
3. Broccoli (and other cruciferous vegetables, like brussels sprouts and cauliflower)
4. Avocado
5. Green Tea
6. Peppers
7. Mushrooms
8. Grapes
9. Turmeric
10. Extra Virgin Olive Oil
11. Dark Chocolate (at LEAST 70% cacao)
12. Tomatoes
13. Cherries

Source:

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/13-anti-inflammatory-foods#section1>

**Featured Recipe:
Greek Stuffed Portobellos**



Ingredients

3 TBSP Extra Virgin Olive Oil
(divided)
1 clove garlic, minced
½ tsp ground pepper, divided
¼ tsp salt
4 portobello mushrooms (wiped
clean, stems & “gills” removed)
1 cup chopped spinach
1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese
2 TBSP pitted & sliced Kalamata
olives
1 TBSP chopped fresh oregano

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400F. Combine 2
TBSP oil, garlic, ¼ tsp pepper +
salt in a small bowl. Using a
silicone brush, coat mushrooms
with mixture. Place on a large
rimmed baking sheet and bake until
mostly soft, 8 to 10 minutes.
Meanwhile, combine spinach,
tomatoes, feta, olives, oregano and
remaining 1 TBSP oil in medium
bowl. Once mushrooms have
softened, remove from oven and
fill with spinach mixture. Back
until tomatoes have wilted, about
10 minutes.

Recipe & picture from Eating Well:

<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/274595/greek-stuffed-portobello-mushrooms/>

such as Interleukins (IL), C-reactive protein (CRP), homocysteine, and Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF-alpha). High saturated fat and high glycemic index foods have both shown spikes in inflammation markers. In turn, these molecules increase insulin resistance and induce Beta-cell failure. Genetic and epigenetic differences can explain why some people remain metabolically healthy despite inflammatory diet choices. In susceptible individuals, a feedback loop initiates with upregulation of the pro-inflammatory response. Our gut microbiome (GMB) may further mediate the inflammatory effect of certain foods.

Lifestyle and Inflammation

In addition to dietary choices, lifestyle factors can impact inflammation. Inadequate sleep and exercise have both proven to increase inflammatory markers. Again, the advice is not new. We are simply identifying one mechanism by which adequate rest and physical activity improve health.

Supplements?

Beyond general categories and particular foods, research has identified individual food components that seem to create the anti-inflammatory benefits. It's no surprise that these are now marketed in supplement form. Clinical evidence is mixed, and the best advice remains to get the components from the foods.

Selected sources & Further reading -

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/anti-inflammatory-diet-101>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/foods-that-fight-inflammation>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/6-anti-inflammatory-supplements#section3>

Kolb H and Mandrup-Poulsen T. “The global diabetes epidemic as a consequence of lifestyle-induced low-grade inflammation;” *Diabetol* 2010; 53:10-20.

Spreadbury I. “Comparison with ancestral diets suggests dense acellular carbohydrates promote an inflammatory microbiota, and may be the primary dietary cause of leptin resistance and obesity;” *Diabetes Metab Syndr Obes* 2012;5;175-189.