

# **The Health Benefits of Anti-Inflammatory Diet**



Inflammation is a process that occurs in every human. It helps your body to heal itself and also defend itself from harmful processes.

Inflammation is created by your immune system to protect the body from disease, injury, or infection. It is worth mentioning that without inflammation, your body would not be able to heal from so many things.

Inflammation is harmful when it becomes chronic. Chronic inflammation is a slower form of inflammation. It usually lasts longer than 6 weeks and may cause various health problems.

When your doctor looks for inflammation, he or she is looking out for test markers in your blood, such as homocysteine, and C-reactive protein.

It is important to note that there are a lot of things you can do to arrest inflammation and improve your overall health.

This article gives a detailed overview of the anti-inflammatory diet and its health benefits.

## **What causes inflammation?**

Several lifestyle factors, most especially habitual ones, can promote inflammation.

Eating lots of high-fructose corn syrup and sugar is very harmful. It triggers diabetes, insulin resistance, and obesity ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)).

Consuming plenty of refined carbs, like white bread, may contribute to inflammation, obesity, and diabetes ([6](#), [7](#)).

It is also worth mentioning that eating a lot of packaged and processed foods promotes inflammation and damages the endothelial cells lining your arteries. These foods are known to contain trans fats ([8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#)).

Another major culprit is vegetable oils. They are mostly used in processed foods. Regular intake of vegetable oils disrupts the balance between omega-6 fatty acids and omega-3 fatty acids. Many scientists believe that this has the potential to promote inflammation ([15](#), [16](#), [17](#)).

Alcoholism and excessive intake of processed meat can also cause inflammation in your body ([18](#), [19](#), [20](#)).

Another factor that can promote inflammation is leading an inactive lifestyle, i.e., one that involves a lot of sitting ([21](#), [22](#)).

## **What's the role of the anti-inflammatory diet in reducing inflammation?**

One of the best ways to tackle inflammation is by reducing the number of inflammatory foods that you eat, and taking in more anti-inflammatory foods.

Your diet should be based on whole foods, rich in nutrients – foods that contain plenty of antioxidants. It is also important that you avoid processed foods as much as you can.

Antioxidants fight off and reduce the levels of free radicals in your body. Free radicals are reactive molecules created as by-products of metabolism. However, if they are not contained, they can lead to inflammation.

Your diet should be balanced in carbs, protein, and fat. Also ensure that you take adequate vitamins, water, fiber, and minerals.

A typical anti-inflammatory diet is a Mediterranean diet. Studies have shown that the Mediterranean diet reduces inflammatory markers, like IL-6 and CRP ([23](#), [24](#), [25](#)).

Low-carb diets also have anti-inflammatory effects, especially for obese people or in people with metabolic syndrome ([26](#), [27](#), [28](#)).

Vegetarian diets are also known to reduce inflammation ([29](#)).

## **What foods should you avoid to prevent inflammation?**

Some foods are known to increase one's risk of inflammation. Completely avoid or at least minimize your intake of the following foods:

- Processed snacks like chips, pretzels, and crackers
- Desserts such as candy, ice cream, cake, and cookies.
- Sugary beverages like fruit juices and sugar-sweetened drinks
- Processed meat such as sausages bologna, and hot dogs
- Excessive consumption of alcohol
- Processed vegetable and seed oils like corn oil and soybean oil

## **Examples of healthy anti-inflammatory foods**

Below is a list of healthy anti-inflammatory foods. Include plenty of these in your diet.

- Fruits like cherries and grapes
- Healthy fats such as coconut oil and olive oil
- Vegetables like Brussels sprouts, kale, broccoli cauliflower, and cabbage
- Fatty fish such as sardines, salmon, herring, anchovies, and mackerel.
- Peppers like chili and bell peppers
- Nuts like almonds
- Dark chocolate
- Turmeric, cinnamon, fenugreek, and other spices
- Green tea

## Other tips that can quell inflammation

After organizing your diet, the next thing you should do is incorporate good living habits as part of your anti-inflammatory lifestyle. These include:

- **Regular exercise:** Leading an active life via exercise can decrease the level of inflammatory markers in your body as well as your risk of diseases ([30](#), [31](#)).
- **Supplements:** Some supplements such as curcumin and fish oil are known to reduce inflammation.
- **Sleep:** Sleep is very important. Depriving yourself of quality sleep triggers inflammation ([32](#), [33](#)).

## Takeaway

Inflammation, especially the chronic form is very unhealthy and can trigger diseases. Your lifestyle and diet are major drivers of inflammation. They can worsen it. Add as many anti-inflammatory foods as possible to your diet plan. This will ensure optimal health, lower your risk of disease, and help you to live a healthy life.