

Anti Inflammatory Diet - Controlling Inflammation with Food

Can The Foods You Eat Make A Difference In Chronic Pain?

Inflammation

Inflammation is defined as a localized reaction of tissue to irritation, injury, or infection. Its symptoms include pain, swelling, red coloration to the area, and sometimes loss of movement or function. We commonly think of inflammation as the painful component of arthritis.

Medical Treatments

Common medical treatments for inflammatory conditions include rest, exercise, stretching, and medications designed to reduce the inflammation and control the pain. These medications include Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), steroid medications, and perhaps ultimately joint replacement surgery. The NSAIDs are widely used as the initial form of therapy.

For the most part NSAIDs are tolerated fairly well, although they can irritate the stomach and lead to ulcers. In many instances, long term use can lead to kidney problems.

Diet and Inflammation

The foods we eat play an important roll in how we feel. Loading up on junk foods and fast foods tend to make us feel worse due to the unhealthy fats that are used in the cooking processes. Excessive consumption of sugars and refined starchy carbohydrates like white flour can make inflammation worse. Switch your diet to whole fruits, vegetables, and lots of cold water oily fish.

Nightshade Plants

While the whole fruits and vegetables are important for their vitamins, minerals, and natural antioxidants, **some vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplant may actually make inflammation worse.** These vegetables are part of the nightshade family of plants and contain a chemical alkaloid which is an irritant.

Essential Fatty Acids

The right type of fats in our diets will impact pain and inflammation in a positive way. Omega-3 oils that are found in cold water oily fish, walnuts, flax and pumpkin seeds will reduce inflammation. It may be beneficial to supplement the omega 3 oils with flax oil or fish oil capsules. Add some vitamin E as well.

Water and Dehydration

One big factor in pain is dehydration. When we do not drink enough water, we hurt and inflammation feels worse. Make sure to drink at least 60 to 80 ounces of water every day. Avoid heavy caffeine and alcohol consumption because they contain diuretics that will cause the body to lose more water.

Delayed Food Allergies

Many people have delayed reactions to foods that will increase inflammation and pain. These type of "food allergies" are not really allergies like hayfever, but they do involve the immune system and can make pain and inflammation much worse. Frequently the underlying problem is due to faulty digestion or excessive consumption of any particular food. Most any food that is consumed more than 4 days a week can be suspected as a possible allergen, but some of the more common allergic foods are milk and dairy, wheat, corn, eggs, beef, yeast, and soy. Even healthy foods can cause problems. There are blood tests that can be performed, or elimination diets that can be undertaken to determine the allergic foods.

Changing Our Diets

The common western high fat, high sugar diet is likely to increase inflammation while a healthy diet low made up of whole foods can actually help to decrease inflammation and pain. Choose low fat protein sources combined with fruits, vegetables and greens. Apples and red onions are especially great choices because they contain quercetin, a powerful natural anti-inflammatory agent. A diet like this may help decrease inflammation and sensitivity. Avoid sugars and junk food whenever possible