

# Inflammation Balance

In recent years there has been an explosion in chronic inflammatory health problems and accompanying reliance on prescription anti-inflammatory drugs. Inflammation often gets a bad press yet is actually an essential response to help the body protect and heal itself.

There's a big difference however between acute and chronic inflammation - this response is helpful in the short term yet isn't something you want switched on for prolonged periods. When inflammation is excessive, ongoing or out of control, delayed healing or chronic, painful inflammatory conditions, tissue damage and destruction can occur. In fact, ongoing inflammation is involved in many chronic and / or degenerative health problems, from arthritis, asthma and eczema to depression, some forms of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, dementia and more.



## Health Problems Associated with Inflammation

- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Skin (eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis)
- ✓ Asthma
- ✓ Mental health (depression)
- ✓ Cognitive function (Alzheimer's Disease)
- ✓ Cardiovascular health problems
- ✓ Diabetes (type 1 and 2)
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- ✓ Some forms of cancer
- ✓ Inflammatory bowel disorder (IBD, Crohn's disease, colitis)

### IN THIS INFLAMMATION BALANCE FACT SHEET YOU WILL FIND:

- ✓ What to eat more of, less of and why.
- ✓ 6 Lifestyle tips for inflammation balance
- ✓ Top 10 anti-inflammatory nutrients & ingredients

## Did you know?

NSAIDs (Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) are associated with many adverse health effects and yet millions rely on them daily to cope with chronic pain and inflammation. Scientists agree there is widespread need for natural therapeutic alternatives to support balanced inflammation.

Inflammation creates free radicals which can damage body tissues. It is crucial to support your body's own antioxidant systems and to consume dietary antioxidants as these help to eliminate harmful free radicals before they can cause further damage and destruction.

Needless to say, supporting the balance of inflammation in your body is something very proactive you can do for your health overall. Taking steps to bring inflammation back into balance is a bit like reducing the speaker volume when music is blaring too loud. Your diet, lifestyle and supplement choices are a great place to start because they can all have a significant influence on which way the inflammation dial gets turned.

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## Inflammation-balance diet tips

What to eat more of	Why?
<b>Omega-3 fats:</b> wild oily fish (sardines, mackerel, anchovies, salmon & herring), walnuts, flaxseeds, hemp seeds and their oils, chia seeds, grass-fed meat and eggs from pasture-fed chickens	The dietary ratio of omega-3: 6 fats is <b>key for inflammation balance</b> . Most people consume too many omega-6 fats and not enough omega-3s. Increasing omega-3s is a great way to improve this ratio.
<b>Diverse variety of plant foods</b> (prioritise vegetables over fruits)	Including in your diet a diverse variety of plant foods helps to feed beneficial gut microflora which in turn help to <b>keep inflammation in check</b> .
<b>Prebiotic foods:</b> diverse plant foods <b>Probiotic foods:</b> kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha	Prebiotic foods <i>feed</i> beneficial bacteria whilst probiotic foods <i>provide</i> beneficial bacteria. Regularly including these types of foods in the diet can support a healthy gut microflora, which in turn supports <b>balanced inflammation</b> .
<b>Lower carbohydrate alternatives to bread, pasta, potatoes &amp; rice:</b> try cauliflower rice, courgetti, cabbage pappardelle.	These foods help to support even blood sugar levels which in turn supports <b>inflammation balance</b> .
<b>Cruciferous vegetables:</b> broccoli, cauliflower, radish, watercress, cabbage, pak choi, kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli sprouts.	Inflammatory processes generate harmful free radicals which can cause tissue damage and destruction. Cruciferous vegetables contain bioactive compounds that have <b>powerful antioxidant activity</b> to help neutralise free radicals before they cause damage. Broccoli sprouts are especially helpful.
<b>Culinary herbs:</b> parsley, coriander, basil, thyme, oregano, mint and especially rosemary (fresh or dried)	Rosemary has significant <b>anti-inflammatory</b> and <b>antioxidant activity</b> and may help to support beneficial gut microflora too. Culinary herbs in general contain many compounds that help to support <b>antioxidant</b> and <b>anti-inflammatory</b> pathways.
<b>Berries:</b> strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, blueberries	Berries deliver powerful plant compounds that have significant <b>antioxidant</b> activity. They're also <b>lower in naturally occurring sugars</b> than many other fruits. Reducing sugar consumption overall (even from natural sources) is great news for <b>inflammation balance</b> .
<b>Ginger:</b> in food or drinks; fresh or ground	Ginger has significant <b>anti-inflammatory</b> properties.
<b>Cinnamon:</b> in food or drinks; stick or ground	Cinnamon helps to support <b>blood sugar balance</b> which in turns helps to <b>balance inflammation</b> .
<b>Turmeric:</b> in food or drinks; fresh or ground	Turmeric has significant <b>anti-inflammatory</b> and <b>antioxidant</b> properties.
<b>Choose organic, free range and grass fed:</b> for as much of your food and drink as possible: both plant and animal produce	Organic food is produced without harmful pesticides & herbicides and restricts the routine use of antibiotics in animals. In addition, grass-fed meat and eggs from pasture-fed chickens tend to be higher in the more <b>anti-inflammatory</b> omega-3 fats. All of this helps your body to <b>keep inflammation in check</b> .
<b>Fresh whole foods, cooked from scratch</b>	When meals are cooked from scratch using natural fresh whole foods they provide <b>essential nutrients the body needs to keep inflammation in balance</b> , such as magnesium, zinc, vitamin E & B vitamins and are without any unwanted 'pro-inflammatory' extras such as added sugar, damaged fats or artificial additives.
<b>Choose fresh filtered water</b>	Install a good quality water filter for your home tap water (eg Berkey). This is to remove possible contaminants which may trigger inflammatory processes. Fresh filtered water helps to support <b>balanced inflammation</b> .

What to eat less of	Why?
<p><b>Omega-6 fats:</b> refined vegetable oils such as soybean, corn, safflower and sunflower, cashews, almonds, sunflower seeds, grains, grain-fed meat, poultry and offal, dairy products from grain-fed cattle.</p>	<p>Omega-6 fats tend to be more <b>pro-inflammatory</b> whereas omega-3 fats are more anti-inflammatory. We need both types in our diets but most people consume too many omega-6 fats and not enough omega-3s. Reducing intake of omega-6 fats whilst increasing omega-3s is an effective way to support a healthier balance.</p>
<p><b>Highly refined, processed &amp; convenience foods and trans fats:</b> ready meals, take-aways, cakes, biscuits, convenience foods, margarine</p>	<p>These foods are typically low in essential nutrients and often contain chemically altered or damaged fats that may be <b>pro-inflammatory</b> and harmful to health</p>
<p><b>Elevated intake of high carbohydrate foods:</b> potatoes, breads, crackers, cereals, pasta, rice, couscous, cakes, biscuits.</p>	<p>Excessive intake of high carbohydrate foods may disrupt blood sugar levels and thus may be more <b>pro-inflammatory</b>.</p>
<p><b>Sugar:</b> added sugar, sugary drinks &amp; snacks</p> <p><b>High fruit intake:</b> Especially tropical, citrus &amp; fruit juices</p>	<p>Refined sugar in any form may <b>promote inflammation</b>, as does high intake of even natural sugars found in fruits and fruit juices.</p>
<p><b>Non-organic food, intensively farmed food</b></p>	<p>Non-organic and intensively farmed foods may contain substances called endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), some of which may <b>promote inflammation</b>. Grain fed meat, poultry and offal are higher in omega-6 fats which are more <b>pro-inflammatory</b>.</p>
<p><b>Food additives:</b> artificial sweeteners (sucralose, acesulfame K, aspartame), emulsifiers, flavour enhancers (monosodium glutamate)</p>	<p>Artificial sweeteners may disrupt blood sugar balance and negatively affect the gut microflora, emulsifiers may damage the gut lining, contributing to inflammation and subsequently a higher likelihood of food hypersensitivity reactions. Flavour enhancers may <b>promote inflammation</b>. In short, all of these food additives are best avoided as much as possible.</p>
<p><b>Alcohol:</b> Wine, champagne, prosecco, beer, lager, spirits</p>	<p>Alcohol disrupts blood sugar balance, has adverse effects on the gut microbiota, increases fat storage and negatively affects sleep. All of which may have <b>pro-inflammatory effects</b>.</p>
<p><b>Caffeine:</b> Tea, coffee and caffeinated energy drinks</p>	<p>Excessive caffeine disrupts blood sugar balance, has a diuretic effect which may promote the elimination of important inflammation-balancing nutrients such as magnesium and zinc, and may also interfere with the absorption of some nutrients too. Together this may contribute to <b>increased inflammation</b>.</p>
<p><b>Check for possible hidden food allergens:</b> gluten (wheat, barley, rye, spelt, kamut, some oats), dairy (milk, cheese, butter, yoghurt), corn, eggs, soy, nuts, nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, bell peppers, aubergine), citrus, yeast (bakers' yeast, brewers' yeast, fermented products)</p>	<p>Many common foods can cause a delayed (IgG mediated) hypersensitivity immune reaction, which then triggers an <b>inflammatory response</b>. Symptoms may happen anywhere from a few hours to a few days after ingestion which can make it a real challenge to pinpoint a specific trigger. Foods listed opposite are the most common culprits, however not everyone is affected and the specific triggers are highly individual. If hidden food allergens are a possible underlying cause of chronic inflammation, it is important to work with a healthcare practitioner to identify, work through and eliminate possible triggers.</p> <p>(NB: This is not the same as the immediate, rare and life-threatening (IgE mediated) hypersensitivity reaction that occurs with a classic food allergy)</p>

## 6 Lifestyle tips for inflammation balance

1. **Sleep** – Consistently getting good quality sleep is important for every aspect of health, and not least for supporting your body's delicate balance of inflammation. Many research studies have now shown that lack of sleep contributes to a more inflammatory state.

### super sleep tips!

- Keep regular sleep hours
- Create a calming routine before bed (eg. chamomile tea & relaxing bath)
- Switch off electronic devices an hour before bed
- Get daylight exposure as early as possible each day
- Create a cool, dark, distraction-free sleep environment



2. **De-stress** – Bringing stress back into balance is often much easier said than done, yet chronic stress simply can't be ignored in the context of inflammation. We now know that ongoing stress is associated with inflammatory effects throughout the whole body, including in the brain. Exercise is a great way to de-stress, as is mindfulness meditation, yoga, pilates, t'ai chi and spending time outside in nature. In fact, there are many different ways to de-stress; the most important thing to do is find what works for you and do it regularly.
3. **Body composition** – Achieving and maintaining a healthy body composition (fat: lean tissue ratio) is important for inflammation balance. This is because elevated fat stores are associated with increased inflammation. Body composition may be supported through a combination of diet and lifestyle factors.
4. **Detox your life** – Toxins are everywhere, in our food, water, home, work and outdoor environments, and many can trigger inflammatory processes. It's impossible to avoid toxins completely, but there are steps you can take to reduce your overall load. [Take a look at our useful guide here.](#)
5. **Check for and deal with underlying infections or injury** – Chronic viral, bacterial, parasitic or fungal infections or unresolved injury may be factors underlying ongoing inflammation. It is important to check in with your GP or health care practitioner who can help to identify if this is the case for you and provide appropriate support where needed.
6. **Sunlight** – Spend time outdoors in daylight every day. Morning sunlight helps to strengthen your circadian rhythms, and bare skin exposure to midday sun helps with the skin's production of vitamin D; an essential nutrient for inflammation balance. Spending time outdoors in nature also supports feelings of calm and relaxation, is an effective way to de-stress and can help to improve your sleep. A real win-win.

## Top 10 Anti-Inflammatory Nutrients and Ingredients

1. **Curcumin** – The main active component of turmeric, curcumin has widespread **anti-inflammatory and antioxidant** activity. It is notoriously difficult to absorb however, and in supplement form may be best delivered with fenugreek galactomannans for slow release delivery and improved bioavailability.
2. **Ginger** – Evidence suggests that ginger has significant **anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving** properties.
3. **Boswellia** – A traditional Ayurvedic remedy that has long been used to support a wide range of chronic **inflammatory** conditions and is now evidence-backed by scientific studies.
4. **Rosemary** – This popular herb has a long history of traditional use, with significant reported **antioxidant, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties**. Studies show that rosemary helps to balance key inflammatory pathways in the body.
5. **Vitamin C & Citrus bioflavonoids** – More than 50 years of research supports vitamin C's role in the **immune system** and as a **powerful antioxidant**. Citrus bioflavonoids have demonstrated **antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects**.
6. **Green tea** – A powerful **antioxidant** and helps to **modulate several inflammatory pathways**.
7. **Glutathione** – During inflammation, oxidative stress is higher, which increases the need for antioxidants. Often referred to as the body's *master antioxidant*, glutathione is a powerful compound produced naturally by the body in response to oxidative stress. Glutathione can also be taken in supplement form but has low bioavailability when taken orally, so is best delivered in the Setria® form. Setria® glutathione is a reduced form of glutathione that has been shown to increase blood glutathione levels when taken orally.
8. **Alpha lipoic acid** – Often referred to as the *universal antioxidant* because it is water and fat soluble; alpha lipoic acid can go anywhere in the body, even across the blood brain barrier. Alpha lipoic acid can also regenerate other antioxidant nutrients such as vitamins C, E, glutathione and Co-Q-10.
9. **Vitamin D, Magnesium & B Vitamins** – Many people are low in vitamin D and a large body of research has demonstrated **anti-inflammatory effects** of vitamin D. Magnesium is another key nutrient for **inflammation balance**; this important mineral is often low in Western diets and yet is needed (along with B vitamins) as a key co-factor for pathways that help to keep inflammation in balance.
10. **Omega-3s** - Typical Western diets, high in omega-6 and low in omega-3 fats contribute to a wide range of illnesses characterised by pain and inflammation. A daily supplement of high quality omega-3 rich fish oil may help to support a more beneficial ratio of omega-6: 3 dietary fats, which in turn supports inflammation balance.



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