

The Anti-Inflammatory Diet

A diet consisting of a wide variety of plant-based foods, accompanied by moderate amounts of whole grains, lean proteins, and healthful fats can help to combat systemic inflammation. Here are the basic principles of an anti-inflammatory diet that will help you fight the inflammation that can damage your tissues and cause disease.

Food allergies, sensitivities, or intolerances can also trigger an immune-inflammatory response. So if you know you have a sensitivity to a particular food, please modify the diet below to meet your needs.

Vegetables

How much: 5-7 servings/day, 2 servings should be green leafy vegetables (1 serving = 2 cups salad greens or ½ cup vegetables)

Best Choices: Leafy greens such as spinach, kale, broccoli. Carrots and sweet potatoes.

Why: Dark leafy greens contain antioxidants, flavonoids, vitamin C, and E which help protect against cellular damage and aid in tissue repair. Carrots and other colorful vegetables also contain antioxidants and other important nutrients like vitamin A and fiber to support the gut microbiome.

Fruits

How much: 2-3 servings/day (1 serving = 1 medium-size fruit, ½ cup chopped fruit)

Best choices: Berries such as blueberries and raspberries have been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties. Peaches, oranges, grapefruit, red grapes, plums, pomegranates, cherries, apples, and pears are also good choices because they are lower in sugar.

Why: Rich in flavonoids and carotenoids that provide anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Citrus fruits are also high in vitamin C which is important for immune system function.

Fatty Fish

How much: 4-6 servings/week (1 serving = 4 ounces of fish)

Best Choices: Wild salmon, mackerel, sardines, cod. Best to bake or broil as opposed to fried, dried, or salted.

Why: High in omega-3 fatty acids which have been shown to help reduce inflammation.

Other Proteins

How much: 2-4 servings/week (1 serving = 4 ounces chicken/meat, 2 eggs, 1 ounce of cheese)

Best Choices: Natural cheeses, grass-fed organic chicken or meat, organic eggs.

Why: Try to limit your consumption of red meat. Choose organic, free-range animal proteins.

Whole Grains

How much: 1-2 servings/day (1 serving = ½ cup cooked grains)

Best Choices: Brown rice, wild rice, buckwheat, millet, quinoa, gluten-free oats, or ancient grains like amaranth. It is best to avoid gluten and wheat products.

Why: Whole grains have a high fiber content which has been shown to reduce inflammatory markers in the blood and support the gut microbiome. Whole grains also digest slowly, reducing blood sugar spikes that promote inflammation.

Beans and Legumes

How much: 1-2 servings/day (1 serving = ½ cup cooked beans or lentils).

Best Choices: Black beans, chickpeas, lentils, black-eyed peas

Why: Rich in minerals, b vitamins, fiber and polyphenols that work as anti-oxidants.

Healthy Fats

How much: 5-7 servings/day (1 serving = 1 teaspoon oil, a handful of nuts, 1-ounce avocado).

Best Choices: Nuts such as almonds and walnuts, extra virgin olive oil, ground flax seeds, avocados.

Why: Rich in antioxidants, monounsaturated fats.

Fermented & Cultured Foods

How much: 1 serving/day (1 serving = 4 ounces Kefir or yogurt, ½ cup of others).

Best Choices: Fermented vegetables, Kefir, plain yogurt, miso, natto, tempeh, sauerkraut.

Why: Contain probiotics that help to optimize gut flora helping to support the immune system and prevent chronic inflammation.

Herbs & Spices

How much: Unlimited

Best choices: Turmeric, curry powder, ginger, garlic, chili peppers, basil, cinnamon, rosemary, thyme, oregano. Try anti-inflammatory herbal tea using fresh ginger or turmeric with a slice of lemon.

Why: All are powerful, natural anti-inflammatory agents.

Tea

How much: 2-4 cups/day

Best Choices: White, green, oolong teas.

Why: Tea is rich in catechins, an antioxidant compound that reduces inflammation.

Healthy Sweets

How much: Sparingly

Best Choices: Dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa), fruit sorbets.

Why: Dark chocolate is high in polyphenols with anti-inflammatory activity.

Water

How much: ½ your body weight in ounces of water a day

Best Choices: Purified water, water with a small amount of natural fruit juice or lemon. Avoid drinking out of plastic bottles, choose glass when able.

Why: Water is vital for the functioning of every organ in the body.

Avoid Pro-Inflammatory Foods

- Baked products that have partially hydrogenated vegetable oils
- Vegetable oils such as corn, sunflower, safflower, and soy or trans fats
- Fried foods such as French fries and potato chips
- Soda and high-sugar juices
- Food or drink with artificial sweeteners or food additives, such as MSG and aspartame
- Fatty red meat
- Processed meats such as hot dogs, sausage, and luncheon meats
- Sugars and refined grains

Why: These are pro-inflammatory foods that will fuel inflammation.

The Anti-inflammatory Food Pyramid



Healthy Sweets
Dark chocolate (sparingly)



Tea
(2-4 cups a day)



Herb & Spices
Garlic, tumeric, rosemary
(unlimited amount)



Fermented Vegetables & Cultured Foods
Kefir, yogurt, sauerkraut
(1 serving a day)



Healthy Fats
Nuts, olive oil, avocados,
flax seeds
(5-7 serving a day)



Whole Grains
Brown rice, wild rice, quinoa
(2-3 servings a day)



Beans & Legumes
Black beans, lentils
(1-2 servings a day)



Fatty Fish
Salmon, sardines, cod
(4-6 servings a week)



Other Proteins
Eggs, poultry, natural
cheeses
(2-4 servings a week)



Vegetables
Spinach, kale, broccoli, pep-
pers, beets, carrots, onions
(5-7 servings a day)



Fruits
Blueberries, blackberries,
raspberries
(2-3 servings a day)