

# Foods That Fight Inflammation

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## Editorial

The immune system of Human body becomes activated when the body recognizes anything that is foreign—such as an invading microbe, plant pollen, or chemical. This often triggers a process called inflammation. Intermittent bouts of inflammation directed at truly threatening invaders protect your health. Sometimes inflammation persists, day in and day out, even when you are not threatened by a foreign invader. That's when inflammation can become your enemy. Many major diseases that plague us—including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression, and Alzheimer's—have been linked to chronic inflammation. One of the most powerful tools to combat inflammation comes not from the pharmacy, but from the grocery store.

### Foods that cause inflammation

**Try to avoid or limit these foods as much as possible:**

- Refined carbohydrates, such as white bread and pastries.
- French fries and other fried foods.
- Soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Red meat (burgers, steaks) and processed meat (hot dogs, sausage).
- Margarine, shortening, and lard.

The health risks of inflammatory foods: Some of the foods that have been associated with an increased risk for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease are also associated with excess inflammation.

### Anti-inflammatory foods

**An anti-inflammatory diet should include these foods**

- Tomatoes.
- Olive oil.
- Green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, kale, and collards.
- Nuts like almonds and walnuts.
- Fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines.

Fruits such as strawberries, blueberries, cherries, and oranges.

### Benefits of anti-inflammatory foods

On the flip side are beverages and foods that reduce inflammation, and with it, chronic disease, says Dr. Hu. He notes in particular fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, apples, and leafy greens that are high in natural antioxidants and polyphenols—protective compounds found in plants.

Studies have also associated nuts with reduced markers of inflammation and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Coffee, which contains polyphenols and other anti-inflammatory compounds, may protect against inflammation, as well.

### Anti-inflammatory diet

To reduce levels of inflammation, aim for an overall healthy diet. If you're looking for an eating plan that closely follows the tenets of anti-inflammatory eating, consider the Mediterranean diet, which is high in fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, fish, and healthy oils. In addition to lowering inflammation, a more natural, less processed diet can have noticeable effects on your physical and emotional health. "A healthy diet is beneficial not only for reducing the risk of chronic diseases, but also for improving mood and overall quality of life. The foundation of an anti-inflammatory diet includes primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, and legumes. When eating animal protein sources, make sure to choose wild seafood, organic pasture-raised eggs, and grass-fed land animals. Inflammation is inevitable. It's the body's natural way of defending against foreign invaders and helping us heal from injury, which is good! But it's when it goes into overdrive and turns into chronic inflammation, that things can get hairy. "Chronic inflammation can interrupt and damage body cells. Inflammation occurs naturally as part of the body's immune response. When your body is fighting an infection or injury, it sends inflammatory cells to the rescue. This results in those classic signs — swelling, redness, and sometimes pain. That's completely normal and natural.

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