

[IMAGE]

Your Diet and Inflammation

We all know we should avoid high consumption of certain foods (processed food, sugar, caffeine, etc.) but are there foods we could be including in our diets that could help us heal? According to Cathy Garvey, a registered dietician with the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, the food you eat can be just as important in determining your health as supplements and any medications you take. Why? Because certain foods help protect your body against inflammation.

Inflammation can be a factor in several chronic conditions including heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, cancer, obesity, autoimmune diseases and Alzheimer's disease. It occurs when the immune system cells that guard against infection and help to repair injury begin to attack healthy organs, joints and arteries. Foods that reduce inflammation include Omega-3 fats (walnuts, tuna, salmon); antioxidants (blueberries, spinach, sweet potatoes); probiotics (yogurt); and fiber (apples, black beans, artichoke). Food that promote inflammation include trans fats, saturated fats, as well as high levels of Omega-6 fats like corn oil, peanut oil or grapeseed oil.

inflammation - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark A great example of an anti-inflammatory diet is the Mediterranean diet because of its emphasis on fruits, vegetables, fish and whole grains. On the Mediterranean diet, 40 percent of your daily calories come from fat. However, it is the healthy, monounsaturated type rather than unhealthy saturated and trans fat. According to the Mayo Clinic, "research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean diet reduces the risk of heart disease. In fact, a recent analysis of more than 1.5 million healthy adults demonstrated that following a Mediterranean diet was associated with a reduced risk of overall and cardiovascular mortality, a reduced incidence of cancer and cancer mortality, and a reduced incidence of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases." In addition to fighting inflammation, the Mediterranean diet could also help you achieve good heart health.

Garvey believes that, "when you eat more omega-3 rich foods and whole foods and minimize processed foods, you not only lower your levels of inflammation, but also provide your body with beneficial vitamins and nutrients that help with the prevention of disease."

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