

[IMAGE]

Foods That Fight Inflammation

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Acute inflammation is necessary for survival. For example, when we get cuts, we need to inflame and let our immune and blood cells work hard to heal our cut. But chronic inflammation where our body non-specifically is in an inflammatory state all the time, is not good for our health. We now know that chronic inflammation plays a significant role in development and progression of many diseases including but are not limited to diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, cancers, heart disease, and autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis or lupus.

So, how can we safely protect ourselves from chronic inflammation?

Let's first start by looking at factors that worsen inflammation in our life. Lack of sleep, chronic stress, fast food or processed foods, lack of exercise, and lack of plant-based foods or vegetables can all lead to worsening of our inflammatory status.

Now that we've established what some of the common factors are that worsen inflammation, we can perhaps work backwards and see if we can get you and your family a little less inflamed.

For my patients in my integrative medicine clinic in San Jose CA, I tend to recommend various lifestyle changes and supplements for sleep, stress management and tips on incorporating exercise into their daily life. But the aspect that I focus most on is their diet. In my opinion, it is one of the most important factors in managing the level of inflammation in our body.

vegetables - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark So, what should you be eating?

- Vegetables
- Legumes
- Nuts
- Wild Fish
- And did I mention vegetables

For those people who have no sugar issues such as glucose intolerance, pre-diabetes, or diabetes (you need to check with your doctor what your status is), then I would also highly recommend whole grains and fruits. For those with a lot of sugar issues, I would limit these in favor of vegetables in its place so as to limit insulin issues from worsening by over-exposure to excessive amounts of high glycemic index/load foods (or foods high in sugars/carbohydrates).

By eating a wide variety of vegetables and I highly recommend making a point to eat all the colors of the rainbow in regards to vegetable types, then you are automatically helping your body turn on the "off" switch towards inflammation. Healthy fats found in foods like nuts, avocados and olive oil are also good for inflammation.

As usual, I always stress the fact that we are not cookie cutter individuals and hence our diets cannot be cookie cutter either (so check with your doctor and registered dietitian about your specific nutrient needs), but in general a diet rich in whole foods like vegetables, legumes and nuts are going to help you and your loved ones quite a bit in your quest for an anti-inflammatory lifestyle.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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