

Patient Handout: The Antiinflammatory Diet

Inflammation in the body is known to contribute to chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, inflammatory gut disorders, arthritis, obesity, cancer, and dementia. Eating an Antiinflammatory Diet may help to lessen inflammation and decrease chronic disease. Here are some simple guidelines:

Antiinflammatory diet guidelines:

- 1) Insure adequate omega-3 fat intake.
 - Eat two servings (4 ounces each) of fatty fish per week, or supplement with 1 gram (1000 mg) combined EPA + DHA daily. These will be listed on the white label.
 - Reduce use of omega-6 fats to keep ratio of omega-6:omega-3 in range of 2:1–4:1.
- 2) Choose healthy fats.
 - Substitute extra-virgin olive oil for other vegetable oils, trans-fats, or butter in your cooking for health benefits.
- 3) Increase vegetable and fruit intake (especially vegetables)
 - Eat 5–9 servings of vegetables and fruit per day, with more than half as vegetables.
 - Color your diet! – deeply colored fruits and vegetables contain higher amounts of protective phytochemicals.
 - Use the plate method – the biggest portion (half the plate) is where the vegetables go (excluding potatoes).
- 4) Choose whole grain carbohydrates and limit the portion sizes.
 - Choose carbs that are whole grain (requires chewing!), and aim for total of 25 grams of fiber per day.
 - Rx: Double your vegetable intake, and half your intake of refined carbohydrates (anything with flour and/or sugar)!
- 5) Get your protein from plant sources such as legumes, nuts and seeds, and/or choose lean, natural animal sources of protein in moderate amounts.
- 6) Spice it up! Include antiinflammatory herbs and spices such as garlic, turmeric, rosemary, ginger, oregano, cumin, and cayenne in your diet.
- 7) Eat mindfully
 - Be mindful of your food portions. Quality AND quantity matters. Regardless of how healthy your food choices are, excess calories from any source can increase inflammation and obesity.
 - Savor your food.
- 8) Adopt the Okinawan philosophy of “*hara hachi bu*” – stopping when nearly 8/10 full and paying attention to your hunger and satiety signals.²² Remember to focus on the whole diet pattern, not just components. Choose food that is closest to its natural form (ie, less processed). Best dietary advice in 7 words: “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”¹¹⁶
- 9) Adopt an antiinflammatory LIFESTYLE
 - Incorporate regular exercise that you enjoy into your life.
 - Keep weight under control. It is important to prevent and reduce obesity, especially abdominal obesity, as obesity itself sets up chronic inflammation in the body.^{117 118} Maintain body mass index (BMI) between 18.5–24.9.
 - Be aware of, and find healthy ways to reduce stress.
- 10) Enjoy 1–2 ounces of dark chocolate (at least 70%) as an occasional treat!

Eat More:

Foods high in omega-3 fats

- Cold water fish (Salmon, Spanish Mackerel, Anchovies, Sardines, Herring)
- Ground flax seeds or lignin rich flax oil
- Walnuts

Vegetables

- Yellow, orange, and red veggies (peppers, carrots, beets)
- Dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, arugula, broccoli)

Deeply-colored fruit

- Berries, melons, citrus fruit

Whole grains

- Steel-cut or whole rolled oats
- Sprouted-grain breads

Antiinflammatory spices

- Turmeric
- Ginger
- Rosemary
- Oregano
- Cayenne

Eat Less:

Foods high in trans- and omega-6 fats

- Processed and red meats
- Dairy products
- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Corn, cottonseed, grapeseed, peanut, soy oils

Refined carbohydrates (with a high glycemic load)

- White breads or bagels
- English muffins
- Instant or white rice
- Rice and corn cereals
- Crackers, cookies, cakes

Sodas and juices

- Including “diet” drinks