



The Velma B. Cox Foundation: For Type II Diabetes & High Blood Pressure

Fighting Inflammation with Food

~By Dr. Samantha Williams, ND~

Inflammation is the body's natural way of defending against infection and helping us heal from injury. But when inflammation happens too frequently, it develops into chronic inflammation, which can damage our cells and trigger diseases. Experts link chronic inflammation to increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer's, etc. However, the good news is that one of the most powerful tools to combat inflammation comes from the foods we eat. A healthy lifestyle as well as a healthy diet, such as eating nutrient-dense foods like fruits and vegetables, can help decrease inflammation. In addition, it is highly recommended to eliminate foods like processed and junk foods, which are known to trigger it.



Consider the following tips...

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1. EAT MORE PLANT-BASED & ANTIOXIDANT-RICH FOODS

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans/legumes are rich in anti-inflammatory nutrients like antioxidants and phytochemicals. These compounds help to prevent, delay and/or repair some types of cell and tissue damage caused by inflammation. They are found in colorful fruits and veggies like berries, leafy greens, beets and avocados, as well as, beans and lentils, ginger, turmeric and green tea.



2. AVOID GLUTEN

More and more people are becoming sensitive to gluten. Gluten is a protein found in many grains, including wheat, barley and rye. It is common in foods such as bread, pasta, pizza and cereal. Gluten can cause immune and inflammatory reactions damaging cells of the intestinal tracts (common for those with celiac disease) or generalized inflammation (common for those with gluten sensitivity). Consume more high fiber non gluten whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, millet, oats, amaranth, buckwheat etc.

3. GET YOUR OMEGA-3S

Omega-3 fatty acids play a role in regulating your body's inflammatory process. It also can help to regulate pain-related inflammation commonly seen in conditions like arthritis. Omega 3s are healthy fats found in fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines as well as, in nuts like walnuts & pecans and in-ground flaxseed & chia seeds.

4. CUT OUT SUGAR & PROCESSED FOODS

Sugary cereals, drinks, soda, cookies, pastries, crackers and deep-fried foods are all pro-inflammatory and thus increase the level of inflammation in the body. They also often contain high levels of saturated fats, Omega 6 and sugar, which are all linked to inflammation.

While there is not one particular food that is the cure-all for inflammation, the key is to focus on eliminating processed foods and consuming plant-based and antioxidant-rich foods in combination with adequate sleep, regular physical activity and stress reduction.



References:

1. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/how-to-use-food-to-help-your-body-fight-inflammation/art-20457586>
2. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/foods-that-fight-inflammation>

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