- Inflammation

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EAT to BEAT inflammation

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Science shows us that inflammation can stem from, and also be affected by, many factors, and one of the biggest influences on it is diet (poor sleep, spiralling stress and getting too little exercise are other biggies). Choosing the wrong foods too frequently can trigger inflammatory responses, but picking the right ones may actually fight and prevent inflammation to help us feel our best. We've seen the power of anti-inflammatory eating in our joint practice: Clients who eat this way have improved their insulin resistance, gotten off blood pressure medications and much more.

DID YOU KNOW?

About one in three Australians has a chronic inflammatory disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis or psoriasis.

SOURCE: THE WALTER AND ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Get to know the four pillars of an anti-inflammatory diet:

Focus on fibre

Fibre helps stabilise blood sugar and prevent spikes that can cause the body to overproduce harmful inflammatory free radicals. Fibre also keeps you satisfied for hours, lowers your LDL (bad) cholesterol level, aids in the removal of toxins from the body, supports immune health and helps you stay regular. You'll want to get plenty of both soluble and insoluble fibre. Soluble fibre attracts water to form a gel-like substance in the gut, which, since it slows digestion and isn't easily absorbed into the bloodstream, lowers blood sugar and helps keep cravings at bay. Insoluble fibre works like an intestinal broom, sweeping stool and toxins through the gut to support healthy bowel movements.

FIND SOLUBLE FIBRE IN: beans, avocados, sweet potatoes, pears, figs, oats, barley, carrots
FIND INSOLUBLE FIBRE IN: prunes, leafy greens, wholegrains, nuts, unpeeled apples

Lean into omega-3s

These polyunsaturated fats may help boost a process within cells that cleans out dysfunctional or unnecessary proteins that might otherwise cause inflammation, and they also play an integral role in heart, lung, blood vessel and immune system function. Moreover, one recent analysis of 70 studies found that fish oil significantly reduced disease activity, pain and morning stiffness in people with rheumatoid arthritis. Women should aim to get 1.1g per day of omega-3s, while men should get 1.6g.

FIND OMEGA-3S IN: fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, mackerel and herring; oysters, chia seeds, walnuts, flaxseeds (linseeds), hemp seeds

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES; ISTOCK



Load up on antioxidants

To put it simply, polyphenols help turn off the body's inflammation switch. Found in colourful plant foods, these micronutrients act as powerful antioxidants that can help lessen or prevent inflammatory damage caused by free radicals. In fact, many experts regard them as "life span essentials" for their potential to reduce chronic disease risk. Tuck into as many colours as you can to ensure you get a variety of antioxidants that play different roles (for example, anthocyanins support heart health, and lycopene offers protection from the sun's UV rays and may reduce the risk of some cancers). Many herbs and spices also possess antioxidant properties, so experiment with seasonings.

FIND ANTIOXIDANTS IN: **berries, leafy greens, tomatoes, beetroot, red cabbage, sweet potatoes, beans, dark chocolate, herbs and spices, tea**

Pack in protein

Protein-focused meals help keep blood sugar levels stable, preventing the release of excess insulin and thereby thwarting the formation of inflammation. They also keep you energised and satiated and thus help to modulate food intake, promoting a healthier bodyweight. Getting enough protein at breakfast is particularly important – this starts you out with stable blood sugar levels and reduces your risk of having an inflammation-causing carb crash later on. Find yummy reasons to incorporate more protein into your daily meals. Try adding low-fat milk and peanut butter to porridge, or grab a hard-boiled egg and a nut bar.

FIND PROTEIN IN: **seafood, poultry, eggs, low-fat dairy, beans, lentils, nuts, tofu, tempeh**

AVOID THESE!

- **Refined carbohydrates**
- **Processed meat**
- **Fried foods**
- **Sweetened beverages**
- **Trans fats**
- **Added sugars** P

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