

Best and Worst: Top 10 Most Inflammatory and Anti-Inflammatory Foods!

17 comments

By **Rea Frey**, September 18, 2010 at 9:37 am

Inflammation: A localized physical condition in which part of the body becomes reddened, swollen, hot and often painful, especially as a reaction to injury or infection.

We all know when something is inflamed. But, what about inflammation on the *inside* of our bodies? Internal inflammation can happen for a host of different reasons: high temperatures when cooking food, eating processed foods, sugar, trans fats, etc. A high level of inflammation within the body can cause many health problems. An easy way to combat this? Eat more anti-inflammatory foods and eliminate the inflammatory ones.

But, what is an anti-inflammatory food? More importantly, what is an *inflammatory* food? While you know healthy, whole foods from processed foods, none of us can see the true effect they have on our bodies (sometimes, until it's too late).

Often diseases such as diabetes, PCOS, excess weight gain, coronary heart disease and countless other illnesses can be contributed to the inflammation from various foods. Here is a list of some of the most anti-inflammatory foods.

TOP 10 ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

1. **Wild Alaskan Salmon:** Salmon contains anti-inflammatory omega-3s (wild is better than farmed) and has been known to help numerous ailments. Try and incorporate oily fish into your diet twice weekly. If you don't like fish, try a high quality [fish supplement](#).
2. **Kelp:** High in fiber, this brown algae extract helps control liver and lung cancer, douses inflammation, and is anti-tumor and anti-oxidative. Kombu, wakame and arame are good sources.
3. **Extra Virgin Olive Oil:** The secret to longevity in Mediterranean culture, this oil provides a healthy dose of fats that fights inflammation, can help lower risks of asthma and arthritis, as well as protect the heart and blood vessels.
4. **Cruciferous Vegetables:** Broccoli, brussel sprouts, kale and cauliflower are all loaded with antioxidants. Naturally detoxifying, they can help rid the body of possible harmful compounds.
5. **Blueberries:** Blueberries not only reduce inflammation, but they can protect the brain from aging and prevent diseases, such as cancer and dementia. Aim for organic berries, as pesticides are hard to wash away due to their size.
6. **Turmeric:** This powerful Asian spice contains a natural anti-inflammatory compound, curcumin, which is often found in curry blends. It is said to have the same effect as over-the-counter pain relievers (but without their side effects).
7. **Ginger:** Ginger contains a host of health benefits. Among them, it helps reduce inflammation and control blood sugar. Ginger tea is a great addition to any diet.
8. **Garlic:** Though a little more inconsistent (in terms of research), garlic can help reduce inflammation, regulate glucose and help your body fight infection.

9. **Green Tea:** Like produce, this tea contains anti-inflammatory flavonoids that may even help reduce the risks of certain cancers.

10. **Sweet Potato:** A great source of complex carbs, fiber, beta-carotene, manganese and vitamin B6 and C, these potatoes actually help heal inflammation in the body.

TOP 10 INFLAMMATORY FOODS

These foods have been linked to obesity, increased risks of numerous diseases and even death in some cases.

1. **Sugar:** Sugar is everywhere. Try and limit processed foods, desserts and snacks with excess sugar. Opt for fruit instead.

2. **Common Cooking Oils:** Safflower, soy, sunflower, corn, and cottonseed. These oils promote inflammation and are made with cheaper ingredients.

3. **Trans Fats:** Trans fats increase bad cholesterol, promote inflammation, obesity and resistance to insulin. They are in fried foods, fast foods, commercially baked goods, such as peanut butter and items prepared with partially hydrogenated oil, margarine and vegetable oil.

4. **Dairy:** While kefir and some yogurts are acceptable, dairy is hard on the body. Milk is a common allergen that can trigger inflammation, stomach problems, skin rashes, hives and even breathing difficulties.

5. **Feedlot-Raised Meat:** Animals who are fed with grains like soy and corn contain high inflammation. These animals also gain excess fat and are injected with hormones and antibiotics. Always opt for organic, free-range meats who have been fed natural diets.

6. **Red and Processed Meat:** Red meat contains a molecule that humans don't naturally produce called Neu5GC. Once you ingest this compound, your body develops antibodies which may trigger constant inflammatory responses. Reduce red meat consumption and replace with poultry, fish and lean cuts of red meat, once a week at most.

7. **Alcohol:** Regular consumption of alcohol causes irritation and inflammation to numerous organs, which can lead to cancer.

8. **Refined Grains:** "Refined" products have no fiber and have a high glycemic index. They are everywhere: white rice, white flour, white bread, pasta, pastries... Try and replace with minimally processed grains.

9. **Artificial Food Additives:** Aspartame and MSG are two common food additives that can trigger inflammation responses. Try and omit completely from the diet.

10. **Fill in the Blank:** Do you constantly have headaches or feel tired? Sometimes, you may develop an allergy to a food and not even know it. Coffee, certain vegetables, cheese... there might be a trigger you aren't even aware of. Try and take a few foods out to see how you feel and slowly incorporate them back in to see if there might be a hidden culprit lurking in your diet!