

Big Fat Truths About Chronic Inflammation

Chances are at one time or another you've experienced inflammation as the painful result of trauma - a big puffy knee, a newly sprained ankle, or even the reddish edges of a paper cut.

But another type of inflammation-chronic inflammation-can result from normal daily activities such as walking or even typing.

Unfortunately, most people with chronic inflammation don't even know they are affected. In others, symptomatic conditions such as arthritis, colitis, sinusitis, fatigue, cataracts, hair loss or chronic pain may lower the quality of life. If left untreated, chronic inflammation can contribute to the development of major diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer and Alzheimer's.

Inflammation is the body's first response to trauma or repetitive activities. Whether you just sprained your ankle or spent the day typing at the keyboard, inflammatory chemicals are produced as part of the recovery and healing process. After the initial inflammatory response, the body normally produces anti-inflammatory hormones to counter this inflammation.

The body's anti-inflammatory system depends upon properly balanced consumption of dietary fats to produce the chemicals that manage inflammation. The easiest way to understand this system is to use the ABC model. "A", "B" and "C" fats comprise three categories of fats found in foods that are converted in the body into chemicals known as eicosanoids. A and C fats have anti-inflammatory effects, and B fats have inflammatory effects.

A fats, also known as omega-6, are found in most vegetables, as well as their oils (safflower, sunflower, corn and soy). Because these fats are prevalent in most diets, there is usually no need for supplementation. If you eat too much A fat, there is the danger it will convert in the body to B fat, which is the saturated variety.

B fats are primarily found in dairy products, with lesser amounts in meats, egg yolks and shellfish. Saturated fat is converted to inflammatory chemicals that aid a normal healthy body in recovery, bloodclot formation, zinc absorption and regulation of blood-pressure and pain. (As an aside to the discussion of

B fats, it is very important to note that trans fats, better known as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, can adversely affect eicosanoid balance, contributing to chronic inflammation as well as other serious health problems. Trans fats are in shortening and margarine and are commonly used as ingredients in many packaged foods. Read labels and strictly avoid trans fats!)

C fats contain a high level of the essential omega-3 oils that form powerful anti-inflammatory chemicals. Unlike the case with omega-6 oils, most diets lack adequate omega-3 oils, and there is no danger of these oils converting to saturated fat. The best dietary sources are fish such as wild salmon, mackerel and sardines, flax and pumpkin seeds, walnuts and beans. Supplements include EPA fish oil or organic flaxseed oil.

Hot or spicy foods, such as garlic, onion, ginger and red pepper naturally help reduce inflammation.

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with natural chiropractic care.**