



# How to Eat an Anti-inflammatory Diet

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## Why Should I Eat an Anti-inflammatory Diet?

We need inflammation for many healing responses in the body. However, chronic inflammation is responsible for many damaging effects of common diseases. Eating well helps us balance the healing and harmful sides of inflammation. Since ancient times, inflammation has been described as redness, heat, swelling, and pain. We initially believed that inflammation had simple causes. However, we now know that inflammation is the result of a complex dance of chemical mediators that impact every cell type and organ system. Inflammation creates an environment in the body where many harmful conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer can overwhelm us.

Inflammation can cause many problems, but it's also the first step in healing. Inflammation sends out signals of tissue damage or invasion by foreign substances to call for a measured response to protect us. Inflammation after an infection or physical injury is healthy and normal. It subsides after the body has healed itself. This capacity for both hurt and harm is why inflammation needs to be managed carefully. You can reduce the harmful side of inflammation by eating well.

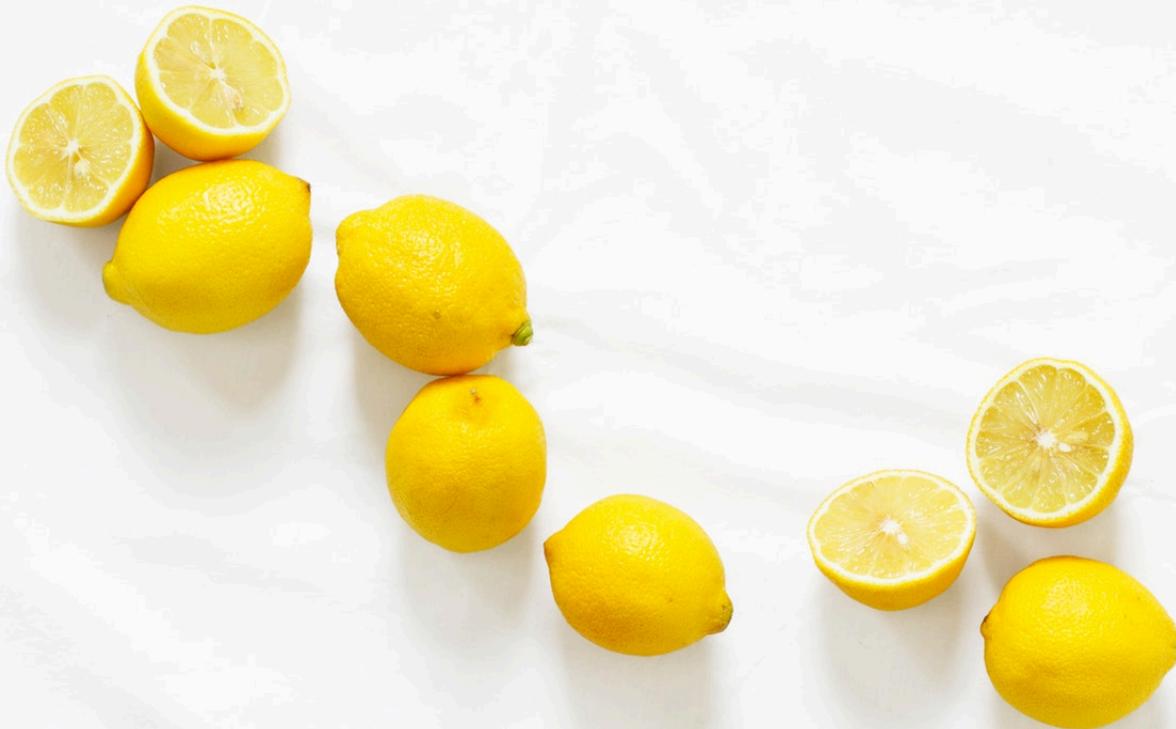
## How Does Inflammation Cause Chronic Pain?

Let's talk about some biochemistry.

The link between inflammation and chronic pain is oxidative stress, a part of the inflammatory process. Oxidative stress involves free radicals, high-energy particles that zip around our system like little out-of-control bumper cars and damage our cells. Some free radicals are produced by your body during normal and healthy metabolism. Others are stimulated by outside influences such as smoking, too much sun exposure, toxics in our environment and the wrong foods. Regardless of their source, free radicals damage our cells, cause swelling and pain and interfere with healing.

## Nutrition is a Powerful Cure for Chronic Pain

Diet [plays a major role in preventing chronic diseases](#). You've likely heard of antioxidants. Here's why they matter. Antioxidants, mostly derived from food and supplements, are molecules that can deactivate free radicals and make them harmless. 80% of your immune system lies in your digestive tract. If the free radicals are not deactivated by antioxidants, your digestive tract can be constantly attacked. Your immune system will respond with inflammation.



# The Top 10 Anti-inflammatory Foods

## 1. Vegetables

I encourage everyone I know to enjoy more dark-colored leafy greens. They really are a plentiful and remarkable superfood. Packed with vitamins, minerals, and carotenoids, leafy greens likely reduce your risk of cancer. In addition, they are a wonderful source of calcium.

## 2. Fruit

Like oatmeal, fruits have a large amount of soluble fiber that reduces cholesterol. Enjoy fresh fruit after your meal for a tasty dessert. Here's an important note: fruit juice isn't as healthy as you think. Even juices with no added sweeteners naturally contain the sugar of all the fruit it took to make the drink. Fiber makes us feel full and naturally prevents us from eating too much fruit sugar. It's easier to down five glasses of orange juice than to eat five oranges in one sitting.

## 3. Berries

Berries are rich in antioxidants. Anthocyanins, the antioxidants that color your berries, combine with quercetins to reduce inflammation and slow down memory loss in seniors. The ellagic acid in berries also prevents cancer. If you have arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation recommends that you eat berries each day to reduce your pain.



# The Top 10 Anti-inflammatory Foods

## 4. Fish

An [analysis of 20 studies](#) suggests that eating one to two 3-ounce servings of fatty fish a week—salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, or sardines—reduces the risk of dying from heart disease by 36%. The omega-3 fats in fish reduces blood pressure, improves blood vessel function, and may help ease inflammation. Replace some of your red meat intake with fish. Sautéed, steamed, or baked, fish is versatile and delicious. Fish cooks so quickly that it makes a wonderful weekday dinner.

## 5. Avocados

Enjoy your guacamole. The monounsaturated fat avocados contain may help reduce blood cholesterol. They also have [large amounts of beta-carotene, fiber, and potassium](#) (60% more than bananas, another good source of potassium). Avocados may be high in fat, but don't shy away from them.

## 6. Extra-virgin olive oil

The Mediterranean populations have used olive oil as a staple in their diets for centuries to positive effect. “Extra-virgin” refers to the very first cold-pressing of a batch of olives. “Cold-pressed” means that the olives were pressed without heat or chemicals. Cold-pressing preserves the phenolic compounds which may help [inhibit genes that cause inflammation](#). These genes are also related to obesity, type-2 diabetes, and high cholesterol. For a simple and one of the most delicious salad dressings around, mix half a cup of olive oil and add in two tablespoons of lemon juice. Add a pinch of salt and pepper. That's it!



# The Top 10 Anti-inflammatory Foods

## 7. Nuts

Nuts [reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease](#), contain good polyunsaturated fats, and are also rich in arginine. Arginine may help your blood vessels. Nuts are wonderful for you but pack a lot of calories. Definitely enjoy nuts in moderation. Use nuts to replace, not add to, your usual snack. Roasted nuts go rancid quickly so avoid pre-roasted nuts unless you know when they were prepared and intend to eat them soon. Instead, try this. Soak raw nuts for six to eight hours to reduce the phytates. Phytates interfere with the absorption of some of the good nutrients in nuts. Dry them in a dehydrator or in a very low oven with the door partly open.

## 8. Beans and lentils

We should all eat more beans. These powerhouses of protein, fiber, and minerals help keep your blood pressure in check. In addition, they contain a lower proportion of starch compared to grains. If you are diabetic, have more beans. Using beans or lentils for a main course with a small amount of meat for flavoring can also stretch the food dollar. For dinner, I often have lentils in salad with vegetables or in a soup. I place lentils in the bottom of a roasting pan and add chicken breasts, sliced onions, and homemade (or store-bought organic) broth. Cover and cook until the chicken is done, add greens, and enjoy. Here's a recipe for lentil soup.



# The Top 10 Anti-inflammatory Foods

## 9. Whole-grain foods

Whole grains are high in dietary fiber which reduces your cholesterol and risk of cardiovascular disease. A bowl of steel-cut oats each day for breakfast is an easy way to add whole grains to your diet. Fiber soaks up water when in the body and moves slowly through the digestive tract, **attaching to bile acids** along the way and **carrying them out of the body**. As bile acids are composed of cholesterol, oats reduce your cholesterol level. Fiber also keeps your bowels healthy and makes bowel movements easier to pass.

## 10. Dark chocolate

Enjoy your dessert! Dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa is rich in flavanols which may lower blood pressure. Eat dark chocolate in moderation as it is also bursting with calories – two ounces packs about 300 calories. Place a piece of dark chocolate on your tongue, close your eyes, and savor it. You'll find that you only need a small amount to satisfy your taste buds.



## Chew on this

Sometimes the best solutions can be the simplest. Research shows that chronic pain drugs seldom help patients in the long-term. Drugs often seem to 'work' only because of their short-term effects.

Nutrition, on the other hand, is proven by our best research to reduce your pain. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are also far less expensive than pharmaceutical drugs. Eating a balanced diet is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your pain



## 3 Day Anti-Inflammatory Meal Plan

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This healthy meal plan is packed with whole food recipes to start you off on the right foot to an anti-inflammatory diet. These meals are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to enhance your health. They're also rich in fiber to ensure regularity and help the body detox.

You may notice certain foods throughout the meal plan that have an increased ability to reduce inflammation in the body. Some of these foods include, turmeric, which has been backed by numerous studies as an effective painkiller.

Ginger is another great food you will see that helps to reduce inflammation. And lastly, omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fish, like salmon, and seeds like chia seeds or hemp seeds. These healthy fats help to regulate levels of inflammation in the body, as well as support heart and brain health.

## BREAKFAST

# Simple Morning Detox Smoothie

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 green apple or pear
- 1/2 cup packed spinach
- 5-8 kale leaves, stems removed
- 1 tbsp chia or hemp seeds (or both)
- 1/2 cup of water or coconut water

### Directions:

1. Add all of your ingredients to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth. Enjoy.



## LUNCH

# Firehouse Chili

### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic large
- 1/2 onions large, any color
- 1 cup organic textured soy protein (you can sub lentils)
- 2 tbsp chili powder (10 g)
- 1/2 tsp chipotle powder (1-2 g)
- 28 ounces tomatoes crushed, canned without salt (800 g)
- 15 ounces dried beans kidney or any kind, cooked
- 1 bell peppers red
- 1 cup carrots diced
- 1/2 cup cashews
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 tsp agave syrup or maple syrup
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 3 green onions chopped, scallions, spring onion

### Directions:

1. Heat one cup of water. Add the textured soy protein and let sit while you are doing everything else.
2. Prep the vegetables: Mince the garlic, slice the green onion, dice the red pepper, onion, and carrot.
3. In a large skillet with a lid, heat oil and sauté onion and carrot for five minutes.
4. Add the garlic and cook for one minute.
5. Stir in chili powder and chipotle, if using, and cook one more minute.
6. Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to low and simmer, covered for 30+ minutes.



Recipe & photo by Stephanie Weaver

## DINNER

# Broiled Salmon with Smashed Potatoes

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. baby red potatoes, scrubbed (The little ones have more skin-to-flesh ratio. That gives them higher fiber content and reduces the glycemic index.)
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil leaves (optional)
- Himalayan or Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3-6 oz portions of wild caught salmon (I enjoy sockeye salmon)
- Butter or olive oil to drizzle
- Herb mix

### Directions:

For the potatoes:

1. Put the potatoes and 1 tsp. salt in a large saucepan or pot and fill with enough cold water to cover the potatoes by about 1 inch. Bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Lower the heat to maintain a steady simmer, cover the pot partially, and cook for 15 min until tender. Drain.
3. Preheat the oven to 375F.
4. Place potatoes on a cookie sheet or a shallow broiling pan. Using a fork, press down on each potato until the skin breaks and the potato is flattened.
5. (Place in the oven 15 min before cooking the fish.)
6. Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper and bake for 20 min. If you like your potatoes a little crispy, broil them for the last 5 mins.

For the fish:

1. Place the salmon in a broiler-safe dish.
2. Drizzle with a little butter or olive oil and sprinkle with the herb mix.
3. Place on the second shelf from the broiler and turn the broiler to 'high'.
4. Broil the fish until the top is golden.
5. Turn the oven dial to 400F. Let the fish bake until desired doneness. I like my fish cooked through until it pierced easily with a fork. That takes about 10 min.

**Serve this meal with salad or steamed greens.**



## BREAKFAST

# Scrambled Green Eggs

### Ingredients:

- 2 organic eggs
- 2" of zucchini
- 1/4 onion
- 2 handfuls of kale or spinach
- 1/2 avocado
- Butter or oil

### Directions:

1. Mince the onion.
2. Cut the zucchini into 1/4" cubes.
3. Slice kale or spinach into 1/2" strips.
4. Coarsely chop the avocado.
5. Sauté the onion, then add the zucchini to cook until it softens.
6. Slide it to the edges of the skillet.
7. Crack the eggs in the middle of the pan and scramble.
8. Once cooked, mix the greens together with the scrambled eggs.
9. Add the avocado to slightly warm it, then serve.



## LUNCH

# Tomato Soup

### Ingredients:

- 6 tomatoes pureed
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 paces zucchini cubed
- 2 stalks celery chopped
- 1/2 bunch parsley chopped
- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 2 tbsp Italian seasoning
- 4 cups water

### Directions:

1. In a saucepan, gently cook the garlic for a minute.
2. Add onion and cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add zucchini, celery and cook for 7-10 minutes.
4. Add pureed tomatoes, Italian seasoning and water heat to a boil.
5. Remove from stove, salt and pepper to taste.
6. Garnish with parsley.



## DINNER

# Yam and Lentil Curry

### Ingredients:

- 1 large onion chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp of minced fresh ginger
- 2 large yams cut into 1-2 inch chunks.
- 1 can coconut milk
- 2 tbsp of a curry mix powder
- 1 tbsp of turmeric powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp of cardamom
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 6 cups of vegetable or chicken stock\*\*
- ground pepper to taste and salt to taste
- 1 can of stewed chopped tomatoes. Or 2-3 large chopped fresh tomatoes.
- juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 cup lentils
- 1 cup split green peas
- 1 hot pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Sauté the onion and garlic in oil until soft, then add ginger. Add coconut milk and all the spices. Adjust the seasoning to your liking.
2. Add the hot pepper (optional).
3. Add the stock.
4. Add lentils and split peas.
5. Add tomatoes and lemon juice and cook until the vegetables and lentils are soft

\*\*You may need to add more stock or water if soup is too thick.

## BREAKFAST

# Mango Cucumber Smoothie

### Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup mango
- 1/2 cup cucumber
- Handful of fresh basil
- 1 cup of water or coconut water
- 1/2-1 tbsp chia seeds

### Directions:

1. Add all of your ingredients to a blender, except for the chia seeds.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Stir in chia seeds, and enjoy!



## LUNCH

# Never Fail Fish

### Ingredients:

- 4 oz of fish per person
- 2 tbsp of soy sauce
- 1/4 cup of vegetable stock or white wine
- A selection of your favorite herbs
- Oil or butter

### Directions:

1. Place the fish in a small heated skillet with a tsp of oil or butter.
2. Add 2 tbsp soy sauce.
3. Add 1/4 cup of vegetable stock or white wine.
4. Season with herbs.
5. Cook covered for 10 min per inch of thickness of fish. (Your fish is ready when it flakes easily with a fork.)

**Serve with a big salad.**



## DINNER

# Vegetable Stir Fry

### Ingredients:

- 1 red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup red bell peppers julienned
- 2 cups whole snow peas
- 4 cups spinach chopped
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp organic soy sauce
- Salt to taste
- Brown rice or quinoa, for serving

### Directions:

1. Cook the garlic and ginger with oil in a skillet.
2. Add the onions and bell pepper till soft.
3. Season with soy sauce.
4. Add the snow peas for roughly a minute.
5. Remove from heat and add the spinach. Give it a few good stirs to wilt it and serve warm.
6. Add salt to taste.
7. Serve over cooked rice or quinoa.



## SNACKS IDEAS

### Kale Chips

**Ingredients:**

- 1 head of kale, stems removed
- Extra virgin olive oil

**Directions:**

1. Warm oven to 350 degrees.
2. Tear kale into bite size pieces and lay them out in a single layer on a cookie sheet.
3. Drizzle extra virgin olive oil.
4. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes. You want the edges to be slightly browned but not burnt.
5. Season to taste.

### Chocolate Date Pecan Truffles

**Ingredients:**

- 10 Medjool dates, pitted
- 1 cup pecans
- 1/2 cacao nibs
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1-2 tbsp almond milk, as needed

**Directions:**

1. Add all the ingredients to a food processor (except the salt) and process until finely ground and dough-like.
2. Form the mixture into small balls.
3. Place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment.
4. Sprinkle with a little of sea salt if desired.
5. Refrigerate until firm.

Recipe by Stephanie Weaver

## Ask Dr. Tick FREE Q&A WEBINAR

Join pain specialist Dr. Heather Tick for the opportunity to ask your health-related questions and start healing.

