

Quick Start Guide to Anti-inflammatory Foods

- ? *What is an anti-inflammatory diet?*
- ? *How can it improve my fatigue?*
- ? *Can food really lower my inflammation?*

Research has shown that antioxidants play a key role in reducing inflammation. So why not take advantage of their benefits through food?

An anti-inflammatory way of eating is designed to help lower chronic inflammation, which has been linked to a variety of health concerns, including heart disease, joint pain, and digestive issues. Doctors have long recognized that long-term inflammation can negatively impact overall health, but the good news is that we can take action with the foods we eat every day.

One of the most powerful tools for fighting inflammation isn't found in a pill - it's in your grocery cart! When working with my patients, I always start by reviewing their diet and identifying simple, impactful changes. Since we eat multiple times a day, why not make sure our food choices support our health?

A great way to reduce inflammation is by adding more antioxidant-rich foods to your meals. The anti-inflammatory diet is essentially a way of eating that's packed with antioxidants, helping to support your body's natural healing processes.

I created this quick-start guide to show you easy, practical ways to incorporate anti-inflammatory foods into your daily routine - so you can start feeling the benefits right away!

Don't Eat These:

Stay away from foods that are packaged, or “ultra-processed” foods, as much as possible. I try to avoid these foods as best as I can because they don't have much nutritional content... It's kind of a waste to eat these foods, in my mind. I'd rather spend time, money and calories on healthier foods, if I can.

- ✘ Packaged foods
 - E.g. Baked goods, cakes, cookies, biscuits, waffles, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, microwaveable dinners, dehydrated soups, sugary cereals, processed meats and deli meats, and certain sauces
- ✘ Trans fats
 - Lots of baked goods have trans fats because they make the food shelf-stable so if you see treats like muffins or cakes sitting on a shelf (not refrigerated) then there's a big chance they have trans fats
 - E.g. Pie crusts, cake mixes, margarine, shortening, fried foods, anything battered, frostings
 - Trans fat must be listed on the ingredient list so avoid anything that says “partially hydrogenated ___ fat/oil” or “shortening”
- ✘ White flours without fiber
- ✘ Soda
- ✘ Juices
- ✘ Sugary foods like ice cream, candy, cakes, etc.
- ✘ Salad dressings that aren't homemade
- ✘ Jarred sauces (can be high in sugar and artificial preservatives)
- ✘ Processed and cured meats, e.g. deli meats
- ✘ Canned foods (can be high in preservatives like salt, sugar, artificial ingredients)
- ✘ Alcohol
- ✘ Natural sweeteners and artificial sweeteners (e.g. syrups in your coffee or soda)
- ✘ Take-out meals

PRO Tips:

- Stay away from the middle aisles as much as possible. That's where all the ultra-processed foods hang out
- If it's packaged and you can't understand a bunch of the ingredients then try finding another option - it might be a similar packaged food that has more "natural" ingredients or something you can make instead
- Don't go to the grocery store when you're hungry! Make sure to eat a healthy, filling meal before you shop so you're not tempted
- Make a shopping list and stick to it

Do Eat These:

So how can you support your health and reduce inflammation? Add more antioxidants! Focus on fresh, whole, natural, and unprocessed foods whenever possible. Whole foods are packed with essential nutrients and antioxidants that help combat inflammation and support overall well-being. I aim to eat this way for at least 90% of my meals—and it makes a difference!

- ✓ Vegetables
- ✓ Fruits
- ✓ Spices and herbs
- ✓ Beans, legumes
- ✓ Fish, seafood, crustaceans
- ✓ Poultry, eggs, organ meats
- ✓ Beef, organ meats like liver (1-2 times per week)
- ✓ Nuts, seeds
- ✓ Nut/seed butters
- ✓ Dairy, if it's tolerated; greek yogurt, sour cream, ricotta (is high in protein), feta, goat cheese
- ✓ Oils like olive, avocado, coconut or cold-pressed nut/seed oils
- ✓ Whole grains

High-antioxidant Superfoods:

- Berries like blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, cranberries, Gogi berries, acai berries
- Cherries
- Golden kiwi (golden kiwi has twice the vitamin C than regular green kiwis!)
- Camu camu
- Brightly coloured fruits and veggies like cooked tomatoes, carrots, squash, and broccoli

- Microgreens and sprouts
- Spices and herbs
- Organ meats like liver
- Polyphenols (plant chemicals) found in berries, dark chocolate, tea, apples, citrus, hibiscus tea, garlic, onions, soybeans, and coffee
- Unsaturated fats found in almonds, pecans, walnuts, flaxseeds, pumpkin and sesame seeds, and olive oil
- Omega-3 fatty acids: Best source is fatty fish (such as salmon, mackerel, sardines); other sources are walnuts, flaxseeds, chia seeds
- Leafy green vegetables: Spinach, kale, swiss chard, etc.
- Cruciferous veggies: Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, collard greens, arugula, bok choy

PRO Tips:

- **Eat the Rainbow!** Brightly coloured fruits and veggies are super high in antioxidants. Try to eat a fruit or veggie from each colour of the rainbow everyday
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store as much as possible: Produce, Fish, Meat/Poultry, Dairy
- Buy fresh produce, when possible
- Frozen veggies and fruit are also a great option especially when trying to save time on meal prep
- Use lots of spices and herbs in your cooking. They add flavour so you don't have to add a ton of salt **and** they're packed with antioxidants
- If you're craving sugar then eat protein and drink water
- Fruit, especially berries, with yogurt are a great alternative to sugary desserts
- Some people have a tough time with beans and legumes. One trick is to soak them overnight and even sprout them to make them easier to digest
- Making smoothies are a quick and easy way to get a big serving of antioxidants
- If you notice fruits or veggies starting to go bad then roughly chop them up, put them in ziploc bags and freeze for smoothies
- I'm not against carbs like potatoes but only if they're whole potatoes with the skins on, and roasted or baked with lots of herbs, spices and healthy oils like avocado oil or made into a homemade potato salad with lots of fresh herbs, onions, garlic
 - ◆ One awesome hack is to **eat your protein and veggies first BEFORE** eating the carbs on your plate. This can help prevent a big blood sugar spike and make you feel more full so that you make room for the more nutritious foods and don't fill up on carbs