

Inflammation Information

Those of you who read this newsletter regularly may be aware of my fascination with inflammation and its far-reaching effects on our health. Preventing chronic inflammation may be one of the most important ways we can modify our risk of developing many common age-related diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. By understanding inflammation and taking steps towards preventing it, you could lower your risk of developing many chronic diseases.

Inflammation Overview

Inflammation is actually an immune system response to damage, irritation, or infection. It's our first line of defense when our bodies want to destroy a harmful substance and then repair the affected tissue. Acute (short-term) inflammation is a good thing; it means your immune system is responding properly to an infection or a foreign body. When your body has healed, inflammation usually ends. Chronic systemic inflammation, on the other hand, may indicate that a good thing has gone bad. Sometimes, acute inflammation progresses into chronic inflammation, as in the case of a long-running bacterial infection, but chronic inflammation most often occurs on its own, unrelated to acute inflammation. Poor diet and exercise habits, stress, genetics and belly fat are believed to be the main underlying causes of chronic inflammation.

Modify Your Risk Factors

Controlling inflammation, a risk factor for all of the diseases listed in the box to the right, with dietary and lifestyle measures may help prevent or delay their onset. In order to lower your chances of developing diseases of aging, it is



Inflammation is linked to many conditions including:

- Obesity
- High blood sugar and diabetes
- Metabolic syndrome
- Hypertension
- Alzheimer's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Heart Disease
- Gum Disease
- Rheumatoid Arthritis and other autoimmune diseases
- Asthma

important to identify your personal factors that may be contributing to inflammation:

Smoking is the absolute worst thing you can do for your health, so if you still smoke, stop immediately; if you've stopped

smoking, give yourself a pat on the back; if you've never smoked, give yourself two pats on the back.

Belly fat is a physical sign of inflammation. Your belly is not just a storage space for fat; abdominal fat is considered to be an organ of metabolically active tissue that produces hormones, including inflammatory hormones, which help turn on your immune system's inflammatory responses. If you are apple shaped (carry your weight around your middle), or a man with a waist circumference of 40 inches or more, or a woman with a waist circumference of 35 inches or more, you're at greater risk for inflammation-related health problems. Following an anti-inflammatory diet and controlling your blood sugar can help you lose belly fat and reduce inflammation.

Pollution can trigger inflammation. Limit your exposure to pollution and second-hand smoke and avoid exercising outdoors during rush hour.

Gum disease is emerging as a significant player in the inflammatory process. Take good care of your teeth and gums by brushing at least twice daily, flossing daily, eating plenty of crunchy foods and keeping soft sticky foods to a minimum.

Stress can take its toll physically as well as emotionally. Although stress is unavoidable, you can change the way you deal with stress. Meditation, breath work, yoga, tai chi, and exercise in general are all excellent ways to alleviate your stress.

Exercise not only helps control stress, it also helps reduce inflammation, manage weight, boost the immune system and improve insulin sensitivity, which in turn can prevent the onset of many diseases. If you are sedentary, belly fat can



Gelson's registered dietitian, Jessica Siegel, has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are not tailored to specific health problems. Consult your physician before beginning any nutritional program. To contact Jessica, please call her at 1-800-GELSONS.

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accumulate quickly, but the encouraging news is that when you are more active, abdominal fat burns off faster than fat in other areas of your body.

Chronic sleep deprivation can cause inflammation. If you think you may have sleep apnea, talk to your doctor; otherwise, commit to a normal, adequate sleep schedule to improve your weight and health.

Diet is obviously important to your overall health and weight. In order to combat inflammation, you need to replace most of the harmful pro-inflammatory foods in your diet with healthful, antioxidant-rich anti-inflammatory foods. Pro-inflammatory foods, which should be minimized or avoided, are listed in the table at the end of this article. They are mainly unhealthy fats, processed foods and foods that contain refined grains, sugars and unhealthy fats. There is evidence that foods containing partially hydrogenated fats (also called trans fats) encourage the accumulation of belly fat, so be especially vigilant of foods that contain this ingredient.

Anti-Inflammatory Eating

An anti-inflammatory diet is a simple style of eating that should be maintained for life, not just for a few weeks or months. Make vegetables, fruit, whole intact grains, beans, legumes and healthful fats the basis of your daily diet. Produce (including herbs and spices) contains phytonutrients that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties; grains, beans and legumes are nutritious slow-digesting carbohydrates that help to control blood sugar; and healthful fats are rich in monounsaturated fats and



omega-3 fatty acids, which are strongly anti-inflammatory. Eat fish and seafood, organic yogurt, cheese, eggs and lean poultry and meat several times a week, but not necessarily daily, as it is better to reduce your consumption of animal products (in general, Americans eat too much meat and poultry and not enough plant-based proteins, like soy and other beans). Consider talking to your doctor about taking an omega-3 supplement from fish oil if you don't regularly eat fatty fish, like salmon, tuna, sardines and black cod at least twice a week. Aim to create

balanced meals and snacks that contain carbohydrates, protein and fat to help promote satiety and control blood sugar.

The following are lists of pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory foods. The pro-inflammatory foods are items that you should try to eat infrequently. Replace the pro-inflammatory foods with the anti-inflammatory foods, which are listed by food group, and work to include these healthful foods in your diet frequently. Specifically, aim for at least 4–5 half-cup servings of vegetables, 3–4 half-cup servings of fruit, 3–5 half-cup servings of whole intact grains, 5–7 one-teaspoon servings of good fats (or one tablespoon of nuts or seeds), 1–2 half-cup servings of beans and legumes daily; and 3–6 four-ounce servings of fish and seafood, 1–2 servings of other animal foods (one egg, three ounces poultry or meat, eight ounces milk or yogurt, one ounce of cheese) weekly. Choose minimally processed treats, such as dark chocolate, occasionally and eat them sparingly. Generally, all vegetables and whole intact grains are anti-inflammatory. Remember that variety and moderation are key when it comes to eating all foods, even healthful ones.

Pro-Inflammatory Foods

Beef fat	Energy bars with coatings	Peanut oil
Breads	Fast food	Protein bars with coatings
Butter	Flour	Refined grains
Cakes	Fractionated oils	Rice mixes
Candies	Fried foods	Safflower oil
Chicken fat	Frozen desserts	Shortening
Chips	Frozen dinners	Snack foods
Coconut oil	High fructose corn syrup	Soft drinks
Cookies	Highly processed foods	Soybean oil
Corn oil	Margarine	Stuffing mixes
Cottonseed oil	Muffins	Sugar
Crackers	Palm or palm kernel oil	Sunflower oil
Cream	Partially hydrogenated fats	Trans fats
Doughnuts	Pastries	

Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Vegetables

Artichokes
Asian mushrooms
Asparagus
Beets
Bell peppers
Bok choy
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Chili peppers
Cooking greens
Cucumber
Dark green leafy vegetables
Garlic
Onions
Orange sweet potatoes
Peas
Salad greens
Spinach
Tomatoes
Tomato products
Winter squash
Zucchini

Fruits

Apples
Apricots

Avocado
Blackberries
Black raspberries
Blueberries
Cantaloupe
Cherries
Cranberries
Kiwifruit
Mangoes
Nectarines
Oranges
Other citrus fruits
Peaches
Pears
Plums
Pomegranates
Prunes
Raisins
Red grapefruit
Red grapes
Strawberries

Proteins, Beans & Nuts

Almonds
Black cod
Cashews
Ground flax seeds
Halibut
Herring
Mackerel

Omega-3 enriched eggs
Pecans
Pistachios
Pumpkin seeds
Rainbow trout
Salmon (preferably wild)
Sardines
Soy beans
Soy milk
Sunflower seeds
Tofu
Tuna
Walnuts
Whitefish

Fats

Avocado
Expeller pressed organic canola oil
Extra virgin first cold pressed olive oil
Fatty fish
Hazelnut oil
Nuts
Omega-3 supplements
Seeds
Walnut oil

Spices

Basil
Bay leaves
Black pepper
Cayenne pepper

Cinnamon
Curry
Ginger
Mint
Mustard
Nutmeg
Oregano
Rosemary
Sage
Thyme
Turmeric

Whole Intact Grains

Barley
Brown rice
Buckwheat (kasha)
Bulgur
Oats
Quinoa
Wheat berries
Wild rice

Miscellaneous

Cocoa (non-alkalized)
Dark chocolate
Green tea
Plain unsweetened nonfat or low-fat yogurt
Red wine
Water

Anti-Inflammatory Dinner Menu Ideas

Last month in *Nutrition Notes* I wrote “Menu Planning Strategies” and planned a week’s worth of dinners for you. This month, I have planned some dinners using recipes that emphasize anti-inflammatory ingredients to help you get started with your anti-inflammatory eating plan. *Bon appétit!*

Day	First Course	Protein	Vegetable 1	Vegetable 2	Starch	Dessert
Monday	Tomato and Avocado with Pine Nuts*	Zesty Halibut with Sweet Potatoes and Kale*	(in the halibut)	Steamed broccoli	(in the halibut)	Fresh Blueberry Granita*
Tuesday	Fresh melon	Turkey with Dried Cranberries and Pine Nuts*	Harvest Asparagus Sauté	(in the asparagus sauté)	Lundberg Brown and Wild Rice Blend	1/2 Julie's Organic Ice Cream Sandwich
Wednesday	Amy's Low in Sodium Creamy Tomato Bisque Soup	Grilled Tofu with Grapefruit and Avocado Salsa*	(in the tofu)	Spiced Butternut Squash*	(in the squash)	1/2 ounce dark chocolate
Thursday	Spanish Watermelon Salad*	Organic Steak with South American Chimichurri Sauce*	(in the steak)	Roasted baby potatoes	(in the potatoes)	Summer Berry Delight*
Friday	Harvest Split Pea Soup	Tuna, Cherry Tomato and Avocado Panzanella Salad*	(in the salad)	(in the salad)	(in the salad)	Chocolate Covered Fruit*
Saturday	Go out to dinner					
Sunday	Family dinner at Mom's house					

*Recipes available at www.gelsons.com

Naked Food of the Month: Turnips & Rutabagas

This installment of my “Naked Food of the Month” series features turnips and rutabagas, two root vegetables in the cabbage family. Turnips have been eaten since ancient Roman times and rutabagas, believed to be a cross between a turnip and a wild cabbage, have been around since the seventeenth century. These humble roots offer health benefits and taste great with little preparation—in other words, naked.

As part of the cruciferous family of vegetables, both turnips and rutabagas contain indoles, which are phytonutrients that act as “indirect” antioxidants because they do not contain antioxidants themselves but instead signal our bodies to make our own antioxidants. The antioxidants that we make ourselves are fantastic because they can be produced for up to three or four days after we eat a food like turnips, whereas antioxidants that we eat tend to leave our systems in a matter of hours. These indirect antioxidants play an important role in cancer prevention, especially for breast, ovarian, prostate, lung, colon and stomach cancers. Turnips and rutabagas also contain vitamin C, an antioxidant that plays a role in boosting the immune system, preventing heart disease and certain cancers and facilitating the absorption of iron. Rutabagas are a creamy gold color and therefore contain some beta carotene, the antioxidant that can help promote eye health.

Read My New Blog!

I want to help you raise healthy eaters, so I have started a blog called “Healthy Families” on our website, www.gelsons.com. I document my experiences and thoughts about feeding my eleven-month old daughter and hopefully impart some worthwhile nutritional wisdom to my readers. Please check it weekly and join me on this very important parenting journey.



A serving of each of these root vegetables is a half cup, with turnips containing only 15 calories and rutabagas containing 45 calories per serving. Both offer about two grams of fiber per half cup. Overall, rutabagas offer more vitamins and minerals than turnips, but not necessarily more phytonutrients.

Turnips are shaped like beets and rutabagas are shaped like toy tops, with turnips being white with purple or green tops (where they were exposed to the sun) and rutabagas being slightly irregularly shaped with a golden yellow flesh and gradated tan to purple exterior. Turnips are in season year round and rutabagas are in season in the winter and spring. Look for roots that are small and heavy for their size, although most of what you find at Gelson's will be considered small—large ones can be over a foot in diameter and weigh up to 50 pounds!

When you take them home, store them in plastic bags in the refrigerator crisper for up to two weeks. Usually, rutabagas are wax-coated and must be peeled, but Gelson's rutabagas are fresh and wax-free so peeling is optional. If you like, use a vegetable peeler or paring knife to remove the skin of either root. While they can be eaten raw, most people prefer to cook them. They can be steamed, braised or roasted, though rutabagas can take longer to cook since their flesh is firmer. Both of these roots have a cabbage-like sweet, peppery flavor that becomes more pronounced when they are cooked, especially

rutabagas, and can be cooked pretty much any way that potatoes and sweet potatoes are prepared. They pair well with chervil, flavorful cheeses, garlic, lemon, nutmeg, parsley and thyme. This month, try my recipe for Naked Turnips and Rutabagas.

Jessica's Store Appearances Body Fat Testing

Jessica will be offering complimentary body fat testing and answering your questions about weight loss, food and nutrition. For more information, please visit www.gelsons.com.

Thursday, May 6

Tarzana 11:00am-1:00pm
Body Fat Testing &
Healthy Food Sampling

Friday, May 7

Tarzana 11:00am-1:00pm
Body Fat Testing &
Healthy Food Sampling

Monday, May 10

Tarzana 10:00am-5:00pm
Body Fat Testing &
Healthy Food Sampling

Wednesday, May 12

Tarzana 10:00am-5:00pm
Body Fat Testing &
Healthy Food Sampling

Friday, May 21

West Hollywood 12:00pm

Monday, May 24

Irvine 12:00pm
Newport Beach 3:30pm

Tuesday, May 25

Hollywood 4:30pm

Thursday, May 27

Marina del Rey 4:30pm

Friday, May 28

Century City 12:00pm

Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedance and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.