

Food triggers of inflammation

Introduction

It has been known for many years that dietary factors can and do influence the general health of the body. In this article, I decided to focus on common food triggers that can aggravate inflammation. It is very common for patients to present in clinic with generalised fatigue, aches and pains, headaches and aggravation of musculoskeletal complaints.

Overview

Research suggests that many common inflammatory conditions may be affected by certain food allergy, intolerance or sensitivity reactions that contribute to inflammatory symptoms. Removal of these foods from one's diet has been shown to significantly reduce common inflammatory symptoms & improve an individual's general health & well-being.

General guidelines

Eliminate aggravating foods

- Wheat and highly processed carbohydrates - White rice, pasta, bread
 - It is preferable to avoid all gluten containing grains where possible, however, those listed above are the most aggravating
- Cow's milk products
- Solonaceae family - Potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums/peppers, aubergines, chillies, tobacco
- Citrus fruit family
- Red meat
- Caffeinated beverages

Increase

- Oily and white fish
- Alkalisng fruits and vegetables
- Lots of Dark Leafy Greens!
- Encourage omega 3 fatty acids - ALA (flaxseed, canola, walnut); EPA and DHA (Fish – mackerel, tuna, salmon, sardines, snapper, perch, gemfish)
- Encourage antioxidants - Brightly coloured fruits and vegetables, fresh herbs - basil, coriander, mint and parsley

Reduce

- Omega 6 fatty acids - Safflower, sunflower, peanut, soy, corn, sesame, almond, brazil, cashew, peanut, pecan, pine nut

Food choices

Food Group	Include	Exclude
Fruits	Unsweetened fresh, frozen or water-packed, fruit juices (except those specifically prohibited)	All citrus fruits: oranges, grapefruit, lemon, lime; grapes, fruit drinks, ales, dried fruit.
Vegetables	Raw, steamed, sautéed, juiced or baked vegetables (except those specifically prohibited)	Canned or creamed vegetables, all nightshade family vegetables (tomatoes, all potatoes except sweet potatoes/yams, eggplant, capsicums.
Beverages	Purified/filtered or low-sodium natural mineral water, fresh vegetable & fruit juices, herbal tea (non citrus), dandelion coffee/tea, caro, ecco, non-dairy milks, hot carob, green tea	Alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, caffeinated beverages, soft drinks

Food Group	Include	Exclude
Fats	Cold or expeller pressed oils from: olive, flaxseed, linseed, safflower, sunflower, sesame, walnut, pumpkin, almond.	Margarine, butter, shortening, processed oils, salad dressings, spreads.
Breads/Grains	Rice - brown rice, rice bread, rice pancakes, rice cakes, rice pasta, rice milk, cream of rice, puffed rice; Tapioca; Amaranth; Millet; Teff; Quinoa	Wheat, corn, oats, barley, spelt, kamut, rye or gluten containing products
Protein Sources	Fish (fresh or canned) – cod, halibut, mackerel, salmon, tuna, trout, blue-eyed cod, barramundi, snapper, perch, sardines; Meats: wild game, chicken, turkey, lamb (hormone free); Legumes – dried beans, peas, Humous, tahina, falafel (homemade); Eggs (organic and hormone free); soy products – tofu, tempeh, soy milk, soy yoghurt. Small amounts of goat's or sheep's dairy products – milk, yoghurt, cheese	Beef, pork, cold cuts, frankfurters, sausage, salami, canned meats, shellfish
Nuts and Seeds	Encourage omega 3 fatty acids in both oil, food product, and nut butter forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALA (flaxseed, canola, walnut) EPA and DHA (Fish – mackerel, tuna, salmon, sardines, snapper, perch, gemfish) Enjoy smaller quantities of Omega 6 fatty acids in both oil, food product, and nut butter forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safflower, sunflower, peanut, soy, corn, sesame, almond, brazil, cashew, peanut, pecan, pine nut 	Peanuts, pistachios, peanut butter
Dairy Products	Milk products from rice, quinoa, amaranth, millet, almond and small amounts from sheep's and goat's milks	Milk products from cow, oat and other grains; soy; non-dairy creamers
Spices	Aniseed, bay leaf, basil, cardamom, celery seed, chilli, cinnamon, cumin, dill, dry mustard, fennel, garlic, ginger, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, poppy seeds, rosemary, saffron, sage, tarragon, thyme, turmeric	Cayenne pepper, table salt
Sweeteners	Small quantities of unrefined, organic honey, maple syrup, brown rice syrup, rice nectar, fruit sweetener, molasses, Agave syrup	No white or brown refined sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup
Sauces	Tamari, apple cider vinegar, humous, tahina, tahini, homemade teriyaki sauce, homemade cashew sauce, homemade miso gravy, balsamic, apple or rice vinegar	Tomato, salsa, soy, teriyaki, barbecue, sweet & sour, sweet chilli sauce

* Remember to keep soy product intake to a minimum.

General Health Tips

A few key points to consider:

- Respect your body with what you put into your mouth. If it doesn't feel as though your body will benefit from it, it is best avoided.
- Respect your body with the environments and people you surround yourself with
- Eat when you are hungry and only what you require to function at your optimum
- Connect to the idea of eating what 'gives you energy' rather than what 'takes energy to assimilate'
- Hydrate even when not thirsty with pure spring water
- Ensure you have a minimum of 8 hour restful sleep per night
- Avoid anything you have a 'need' for - food addictions are too common and suggest an imbalance
- If your weight does not reflect your healthiest body, look at why this is the case. Weight loss or gain can indicate a number of factors from what is consumed, lack of exercise, hormonal imbalances, emotional issues, excessive stress and others.
- Learn to rotate foods & not over consume the same type of foods on a regular basis.
- Remember to enjoy eating again. Have a colourful meal that is rich in nutritional value & flavour. Take pleasure in preparing wholesome meals that you will enjoy eating, as food is nourishment for life. Digestion starts in your brain so think about what you are going to eat and enjoy eating.
- Chew your food carefully and slowly.
- Partake in regular aerobic exercise for 1/2 - 1 hour every day.

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