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Your Anti-Inflammation Guide: What's Normal, What's Not—and What You Can Do

Inflammation is your body's natural defense system—but not all inflammation is created equal. Understanding the difference can help you know when it's helpful... and when it may be harming your health.

Acute Inflammation: Part of the Healing Process

Acute inflammation is your body's short-term response to injury or illness. When you get a cut, sprain, or infection, your immune system sends protective cells to begin healing.

What to expect:

- Appears quickly
- It lasts a few hours to a few days
- Common signs include redness, swelling, heat, and pain



When to seek care:

Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen after a few days, last longer than two weeks, or include fever, spreading redness, or severe pain.

Chronic Inflammation: The Hidden Risk

Unlike acute inflammation, chronic inflammation can linger for months or years—often with subtle but widespread effects on the body.

Common signs may include:

- Persistent fatigue
- Joint or muscle pain
- Digestive issues
- Skin conditions (like rashes or eczema)
- Difficulty focusing or changes in mood

Left unmanaged, chronic inflammation is linked to long-term health concerns, making early awareness and lifestyle changes key.

Eat to Reduce Inflammation

One of the most effective ways to manage chronic inflammation is through nutrition. An anti-inflammatory eating pattern focuses on whole, minimally processed foods that support immune health and reduce stress on the body.

Food to add

- ✓ Vegetables (leafy greens, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes)
- ✓ Fruits (berries, cherries, apples, oranges)
- ✓ Healthy fats (olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds)
- ✓ Omega-3s (salmon, tuna, sardines)
- ✓ Plant proteins (beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu)
- ✓ Whole grains (oats, quinoa, brown rice)
- ✓ Flavor boosters (turmeric, ginger, garlic)
- ✓ Gut-friendly foods (yogurt, kefir, fermented foods)

Foods to limit

- ✗ Refined carbs (white bread, pasta, cereals)
- ✗ Fried foods and trans fats
- ✗ Added sugars and sugary drinks
- ✗ Processed meats
- ✗ Highly refined oils
- ✗ Artificial sweeteners
- ✗ Gluten or dairy (if sensitive)

When to Talk to Your Provider

Consider checking in with a healthcare professional if you experience:

- Ongoing fatigue or trouble sleeping
- Persistent joint or muscle pain
- Frequent digestive issues
- Recurring skin problems or infections
- Unexplained anxiety or depression

The Bottom Line

Inflammation plays an important role in healing—but when it becomes chronic, it can impact your overall health. The good news? Small, consistent lifestyle choices—especially around nutrition—can make a meaningful difference.



Resources

- [What Is General Inflammation? How to Treat It and When to See a Doctor](#)
- [What Are Artificial Sweeteners, and Are They Bad for Me? 6 Possible Risks to Consider](#)
- [How to reduce inflammation in the body](#)
- [Quick-start guide to an anti-inflammation diet](#)
- [What is inflammation?](#)