

7 Steps to Pain Relief

WITH AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

Get Colorful with Your Diet and Reduce Your Pain

Our joints, gut and brain function best when we eat whole foods, including vegetables, beans, fruits and whole grains. Our bodies produce inflammation as a natural response to “foreign invaders.” Processed items, with their added sugar, salt, preservatives and partially hydrogenated oils, can all contribute to pain and inflammation.

To reduce inflammation and pain:

1

AVOID PROCESSED ITEMS

These can contribute to pain and inflammation. Processed items include commercially baked goods, fast foods and sweetened breakfast cereals. They are high in sugar, white flour, corn starch/syrup, trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils) and unhealthy oils.

TIP: Think about food on a spectrum

Whole foods are at one end of the spectrum, highly-processed items are at the other.

2

SLASH YOUR SUGAR CONSUMPTION

Sugar is a stripped carbohydrate that spikes blood sugars. Satisfy your sweet tooth with fruit or dark chocolate. If you desire baked goods, make (or find) a batch of homemade cookies with whole ingredients like rolled oats, whole-grain flour, raisins and dark chocolate chips.

3

EAT THE RAINBOW

Try for 6 to 8 servings of vegetables daily and 2 to 3 servings of fruit. Diversity in your choices helps strengthen your immune system. Enjoy leafy greens, crucifers (broccoli, cabbage) and root vegetables (yams, carrots).

TIP: Keep it interesting by “eating the rainbow”

Red-orange: carrots, kumquats, pumpkin, apples, sweet potatoes, red beets, golden beets, apricots, kidney beans, adzuki beans, raspberries

Yellow: pineapple, split peas, chickpeas, parsnips, squash, persimmon, golden beets, onions

Green: Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, pears, dark leafy greens (collards, lettuce, Swiss chard, kale, bok choy, spinach)

Purple-blue: blueberries, blackberries, plums, raisins, red cabbage

4

INCLUDE NOURISHING FATS

You'll find these in avocados, olives and olive oil, dark chocolate (72% cacao), nuts, natural nut butters and oily fish like salmon, sardines and anchovies. Go for diversity. Stay away from items made with processed oils: soybean, cottonseed and corn oil.

5

EAT A VARIETY OF WHOLE GRAINS

Delicious whole grains include barley, buckwheat, oats, quinoa, brown rice, rye, spelt and bulgur (or cracked) wheat. Limit white flour (in cakes, cupcakes, breads) to occasional celebrations only.

TIP: Add more **disease-fighting phytonutrients** to your diet:

Add herbs

(like parsley and rosemary) crushed with aromatics (like garlic)

Drink tea

Sprinkle your food with **colorful spices** (like paprika and cumin)

6

CHOOSE HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN SOURCES

Eat fish two or three times a week and plenty of beans, which are also rich in fiber. When you eat meat or poultry, make it pastured, free-range or grass-fed. Why? You are what you eat — and what what-you-eat eats.

7

LIMIT ALCOHOL

It's one drink daily for women and two drinks for men, maximum. One drink = 1 oz. of distilled spirits, 5 oz. of wine, or 12 oz. of beer. And you can't save up!

Perfection is the enemy of progress, so don't try for perfect. Every day we make many food choices.

TIP: Try making **small changes** to your diet:

Drink **unsweetened iced tea** instead of soda

Eat **homemade cookies**, not store-bought

Add **more vegetables** on your plate and less pasta

SOURCE: cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/index.html

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