



Minimally Invasive Spine Care

By West Florida Pain Management, P.A.

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Prescription: Being Well—Benefits of an Anti-inflammatory / Anti-Aging Diet

You can make a tremendous difference in the long-term quality of your life with diet and enjoyable exercise. The old saying, “you are what you eat,” really is true. Here’s how an anti-inflammatory diet can help.

The cell membrane of every cell in your body is composed of fatty acids. Fatty acids in your body can be inflammatory or anti-inflammatory. Altering your dietary intake changes whether you have inflammation/breakdown taking place or healthy processes. Many vitamins and nutrients are necessary for cells to function effectively without stress and breakdown.

Inflammation is linked to many diseases: back pain, neck pain, degenerative diseases, arthritis, cancer and heart disease.

I strongly recommend an anti-inflammatory diet, consisting of fish, chicken (without skin), eggs and lean red meats for protein. The rest of your calories should come from fruits, vegetables and nuts. The vegetables should consist of dark green and brightly colored varieties. Fruits should include primarily apples, berries and cherries, but other types of fruit are healthy choices as well. Nuts, especially walnuts and almonds, should round out your caloric intake. Other anti-inflammatory foods include avocados, olive oil and seeds. Beans and legumes are also a good source of protein, fiber, potassium and magnesium.

What to avoid:

- Bread, cereals, dairy, cake, cookies, candy, soda, and other refined sugar and flour products. These foods lead to an insulin surge and inflammation.
- Butter and cooking oils from corn, sunflower, safflower, peanuts and cottonseed. Canola oil is not good for you. Margarine is also terrible. Use coconut oil for high temperature cooking; use olive oil for low temperature cooking.
- Trans fatty acids, found in almost all packaged foods, breads, and peanut butter. This results in inflammation, arthritis and heart disease.
- Smoking, which causes inflammation and breakdown of blood vessels, joints, discs and skin.

What to include:

- You should drink coffee, tea or green tea daily, but avoid dairy and other processed additives when you enjoy them. You may use stevia as a sweetener.
- Eat high cacao dark chocolate daily (over 70% cacao).
- Exercise Daily. Walk at a steady pace for 30 minutes. If you enjoy swimming, that is good exercise too. Water jogging is also a great way to workout without putting a lot of stress on joints. Aim for 20-30 minutes of activity per day. Slowly build up and you will be amazed at the change in your body and your life. You should consult your doctor before beginning any exercise program.
- **I do recommend some supplements:**

- Vitamin D3—5,000 units per day. Aim for a blood level of at least 40. Sunscreen prevents the manufacturing of Vitamin D. 15 minutes of sun per day without sunscreen will substitute for this.
- Probiotics. I recommend the brand PrebioPhage. Probiotics prevent inflammation in your gut. If your gut is inflamed, you won't be able to absorb the proper nutrients. Try to eat unsweetened yogurt, especially Greek yogurt, or drink kefir daily.
- Fish Oil—The best anti-inflammatory supplement is Omaprem with 30 different healthy fatty acids. Fish oil has 2 fatty acids. (www.omaprem.com see display in front room) If you take fish oil then 3,000-4,000 mg per day in divided doses with meals. It needs to be high in EPA and DHA, too. 500 mg of each 1000 mg capsule should consist of these. Use fish oil that is deodorized.
- Turmeric Extract or Cumin—2,000 mg per day. You can use this as a spice on food and/or take capsules.
- Magnesium. Low magnesium promotes inflammation. Most chronic pain patients are functionally low in magnesium. Apply it topically as Dermamag, or bathe in Epsom salts. Soaking your feet in Epsom salts can also increase your magnesium levels, since it is absorbed well through your skin. By following these methods, you can restore your magnesium levels in 1-2 months. Taking approximately 400 mg of magnesium oxide per day by mouth after you have restored your levels is okay.

To conclude, I have a quote from Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician: “Let food be thy medicine, and let thy medicine be food.” Moreover, I do not believe that the food conglomerates have any concern for your well-being. This is reflected by a quote from noted author Wendell Berry: “People are fed by the food industry, which pays no attention to health, and treated by the health industry, which pays no attention to food.” As a doctor, I would like to change your overall health. Being mindful of what you eat will likely make all the difference.

I have researched and thoroughly read about anti-inflammatory diets for years. Here are a few excellent references:

- Articles by Dr. Mark Gostine
- “An Anti-inflammatory Diet for Pain Patients” by David R. Seaman, DC, MS found in Practical Pain Management, November 2012 issue
- “Pain and Stress” found in Pain Week 2012 by Rachel M. Volk
- Anti-inflammatory Food Pyramid by Dr. Andrew Weil

IF YOU HAVE A HISTORY OF KIDNEY STONES-AVOID HIGH OXALATE FOODS LIKE ALMONDS, CHOCOLATE, BLACKBERRIES AND SOY PRODUCTS. LISTS OF HIGH OXALATE FOODS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.