

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Vegetables

Bell Peppers
Bok Choy
Broccoli
Broccoli Sprouts
Brussels Sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Chard
Collards
Fennel Bulb
Garlic
Green Beans
Green Onions/Spring
Onions
Kale
Leeks
Olives
Spinach
Sweet potatoes
Turnip Greens

Nuts & Seeds

Almonds
Flaxseed/Linseed
Hazelnuts
Sunflower Seeds
Walnuts

Fruits

Acerola (West Indian)
Cherries
Apples
Avocados
Black Currants
Blueberries
Fresh Pineapple
Guavas
Kiwifruit
Kumquats
Lemons
Limes
Mulberries
Oranges
Papaya
Raspberries
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tomatoes

Herbs & Spices

Basil
Cayenne Peppers/Chilli
Peppers
Cinnamon Cloves
Cocoa (at least 70% cocoa
chocolate)
Licorice
Mint
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Thyme
Turmeric

Fish

Cod
Halibut
Herring
Oysters
Rainbow Trout
Salmon
Sardines
Snapper Fish
Striped Bass
Tuna
Whitefish

References: [Dietary intake of trans fatty acids and systemic inflammation in women](#)
[The suppressor of cytokine signalling 3 \(SOCS3\) inhibits leptin activation of AMP-kinase in cultured skeletal muscle of obese humans](#)

Pro Inflammatory Foods:

1. Sugars

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Excessive sugar intake has been linked to increased risks of obesity, inflammation and chronic diseases such as [syndrome X](#) and type 2 diabetes.

Find them in: Sugar-sweetened beverages like soft drinks, fruit drinks and punches are one of the major sources of dietary sugars that many have overlooked. Do you know that drinking a can of Coke is as good as sucking ten sugar cubes? Other obvious sugar-loaded foods to avoid or at least limit include pastries, desserts, candies and snacks. And when you're looking out for sugar in the ingredients list, note that sugar has many names: corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, golden syrup, maltose, sorghum syrup and sucrose are some of the creative names used.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Got a sweet tooth? Opt for natural sugars found in whole fresh fruits instead. Not only do they give you the sweetness you crave for, they also supply you with antioxidants and fibers that you can't find in sugary foods and drinks, including fruit juices. Dates, figs, persimmons, kiwis, papayas, watermelons and tangerines are but some of the natural sweet treats you can sink your teeth into.

2. Common Cooking Oils

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Common vegetable cooking oils used in many homes and restaurants have very high omega-6 fatty acids and dismally low omega-3 fats. A diet consisting of highly [imbalanced omega-6 to omega-3 ratio](#) promotes inflammation and breeds inflammatory diseases like [heart disease](#) and [cancer](#).

Find them in: Polyunsaturated vegetable oils such as safflower, soy, sunflower, corn and cottonseed oil. These cheap oils are also commonly used to prepare most processed foods and takeaways.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Replace your omega-6-saturated cooking oils with extra virgin olive oil. It has a more balanced omega-6 to omega-3 essential fatty acids ratio, is rich in oleic acid, an anti-inflammatory oil, and full of polyphenolic flavonoids.

3. Trans Fats

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Trans fatty acids are notorious for their double whammy effect: they increase the levels of 'bad' cholesterol, while lowering levels of the 'good' cholesterol. But that's not all they can do. They have also been found to promote inflammation, obesity and resistance to insulin, laying the ground for degenerative illnesses to take place.

Find them in: Deep fried foods, fast foods, commercial baked goods and those prepared with partially hydrogenated oil, margarine and vegetable shortening. Note that items that list 0g trans fats on the label may still contain some amount of this toxic fats. This is because in the US, the

government allows items containing less than 0.5g of trans fats to be declared as trans-fat free. Commercially prepared peanut butter is one good example. Your best bet is to read the ingredients list and make sure partially hydrogenated oil or vegetable shortening is not used.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Look for alternative products that contain no trans fats, or don't have partially hydrogenated oil or vegetable shortening in the ingredients list. When in doubt, assume that all commercially prepared foods contain trans fats unless stated otherwise.

4. Dairy Products

Pro-inflammatory Agent: As much as 60% of the world's population can't digest milk. In fact, researchers think that being able to [digest milk beyond infancy is abnormal](#), rather than the other way round. Milk is also a common allergen that can trigger inflammatory responses, such as stomach distress, constipation, diarrhea, skin rashes, hives and breathing difficulties, in certain people.

Find them in: Milk and dairy products are as pervasive as foods containing partially hydrogenated oil or omega-3-deficient vegetable oil. Apart from obvious milk products like butter and cheese, foods with hidden dairy content include breads, cookies, crackers, cakes, cream sauces and boxed cereals. Scanning the ingredients list is still the safest way to suss out milk.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Kefir and unsweetened yogurt are acceptable in moderation for those who are not allergic to milk. They are easier on the stomach as the lactose and proteins in the milk have been broken down by beneficial bacteria and/or yeasts.

5. Feedlot-Raised Meat

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Commercially produced meats are feed with grains like soy beans and corns, a diet that's high in inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids but low in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats. Due to the small and tight living environment, these animals also gain excess fat and end up with high saturated fats. Worse, to make them grow faster and prevent them from getting sick, they are also injected with hormones and fed with antibiotics. The result is one piece of meat which you and I shouldn't be eating.

Find them in: Unless otherwise stated, most, if not all, beef, pork and poultry you can find in the supermarkets and restaurants come from feedlot farms.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Organic, free-range animals that fed on their natural diet like grasses instead of grains and hormones contain more omega-3 fats. Having more room to roam freely, they are also leaner and contain less saturated fats.

6. Red Meat & Processed Meat

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Researchers at the [University of California San Diego School of Medicine](#) found that red meat contains a molecule that humans don't naturally produce called

Neu5Gc. After ingesting this compound, the body develops anti-Neu5Gc antibodies – an immune response that may trigger chronic inflammatory response. And low-grade simmering inflammation that won't go away has been linked to cancer and heart disease.

Processed meat, which refers to meat that has been smoked, cured, salted or chemically preserved, is not any better. In the [2007 report](#) by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research, processed meat, along with red meat, have been stated as a convincing cause of cancers of the colon and rectum, and possibly esophagus and lung cancer too.

Find them in: Common red meats are beef, lamb and pork, while processed meat include hams, sausages and salami.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: You don't need to avoid red meat totally, though the same thing can't be said for processed meat. No amount of processed meat is safe. Replace the bulk of your red meat with organic vegetables, poultry and fish, and relegate red meat to a weekly treat. When you do eat red meat, remember to choose lean cuts and preferably, that of grass-fed animals.

7. Alcohol

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Regular high consumption of alcohol has been known to cause irritation and inflammation of the esophagus, larynx (voice box) and liver. Over time, the chronic inflammation promotes tumor to grow and gives rise to cancer at the sites of repeated irritation.

Find them in: Beers, ciders, liquors, liqueurs, and wines.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: A refreshing and thirst-quenching glass of pure, filtered water, anyone? 😊 How about a cup of anti-aging and anti-inflammatory green tea? If you find the idea of swapping ethanol for water or tea implausible, at least limit your consumption to no more than one drink a day.

8. Refined Grains

Pro-inflammatory Agent: A lot of the grains we eat nowadays are refined. They are devoid of fiber and vitamin B compared to unpolished and unrefined grains that still have the bran, germ and the aleurone layer intact. This makes refined grains as good as refined sugars, which are practically empty calories. And like refined sugars, refined grains have a higher glycemic index than unprocessed grains and when they are consistently consumed, can hasten the onset of degenerative diseases like cancer and coronary disease.

Find them in: Refined grains and products made out of them are almost everywhere. The common ones are: white rice, white flour, white bread, noodles, pasta, biscuits and pastries. To make things worse, many products with refined grains undergo further processing to enhance their taste and look, and are often loaded with excess sugar, salt, artificial flavors and/or partially

hydrogenated oil in the process. A prime example is boxed cereals which contain substantial amounts of added sugar and flavorings.

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Go for minimally processed grains if you are not gluten intolerant. Note that just because the box says whole grains, it doesn't mean that the grains inside are 100% intact. The problem is due to a lack of an internationally accepted definition for the word 'wholegrain'. Admittedly, it's not easy to tell whether a product is truly wholegrain or not. When in doubt, if it doesn't look close to its natural state, don't buy.

9. Artificial Food Additives

Pro-inflammatory Agent: Some artificial food additives like aspartame and monosodium glutamate (MSG) reportedly trigger inflammatory responses, especially in people who are already suffering from inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Find them in: Only packaged foods contain artificial food additives. If you must buy them, read the labels carefully and weigh your risks. If you order Chinese takeaways, make sure you've the option to ask for no MSG. Otherwise, look elsewhere. As for sweeteners, there are plenty of great natural alternatives that come with less implications such as dates and beetroots. Why settle for poor and potentially health-destroying artificial substitute?

Inflammation-dousing Substitute: Besides limiting the consumption of processed foods, use herbs and sweet fruits to add flavor to your dishes instead of relying on food additives.