

Healthy foods like fish high in Omega-3 fats, leafy greens, and multi-color vegetables and fruits aren't just good for you - they're also delicious!

Inflammation is your body's natural response to infection, but your body can also become inflamed because of the foods you eat. Inflammation inside the body can be caused by eating foods that are processed or that contain saturated fats, trans-fats, refined sugars, refined flour, or high fructose corn syrup. These types of food also tend to pack on the pounds, speed up the aging process, and worsen inflammatory processes already at work in the skin such as acne and rosacea.

So instead of eating bakery, deli meats, fast foods, processed frozen meals, and fried foods filled with unhealthy ingredients that cause inflammation, try some anti-inflammatory foods that reduce inflammation and promote health:

- **Fish that is rich in omega-3 fats**, including wild Alaskan (not farmed) salmon, herring, halibut, snapper, striped bass and tuna.
- **Minimize consumption of animal-based proteins.** It would be best not to drink milk as there are much healthier dietary sources of calcium; but if you feel you must consume dairy, make sure milk is skim and organic and cheeses are low-fat. Any meats you eat should be hormone-free; although it is much easier to find hormone-free poultry than hormone-free red meat. If you eat red meat, it is best to choose grass-fed cuts over grain-fed cuts. Grass-fed meat is more flavorful, higher in omega-3 fats and lower in saturated, pro-inflammatory fats than grain-fed meat.
- **Extra-virgin olive oil** rather than vegetable oil
- **Salads that contain a variety of deep colors:** broccoli, tomatoes, red, orange, and yellow peppers, carrots, pomegranate seeds, strawberries, and blueberries
- **Dark green leafy vegetables:** spinach, kale, chard, and other vegetables that are rich in antioxidants, vitamin C and other nutrients that help to reduce inflammation
- **Fruits**, such as cherries, apples, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, pineapple, oranges, lemons and limes; cherries and blueberries are especially effective anti-inflammatory fruits that are packed with antioxidants and available frozen all year round.
- **Whole grain starches**, such as brown or wild rice, corn, sweet potatoes, quinoa, as well as whole grain cereals, pastas, crackers and breads (which are better sources of fiber and less inflammatory than refined cereals, pastas, crackers and breads made with white flour). When choosing bread and cereal products, look for the following ratio: (Protein plus Dietary Fiber) x 3 should be less than or equal to the Total Carbohydrates.
- Herbs and spices that flavor foods but are no- or low-calorie, such as **turmeric, garlic, ginger, thyme, parsley, rosemary, basil, cinnamon and mint**
- **Green tea, white tea, and red tea**, which contain natural anti-inflammatory compounds that may reduce your risk of heart disease or cancer.
- **Natural sweeteners such as agave nectar** taste better and are much less inflammatory than artificial sweeteners that have actually been found to increase appetite and may in fact be hazardous.

When you replace pro-inflammatory foods with anti-inflammatory foods you help clarify your skin. In addition, you reduce inflammation within your body, promote weight loss, decrease pain associated with inflammation, and lower your risk for chronic heart disease. Keep up with inflammation-reducing exercise and add some regular form of relaxation, such as reading or yoga, and you should be well on the road to experiencing improved whole body health.