

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY & PERSISTENT PAIN LIFESTYLE AND EATING GUIDE FROM THE PERRYMOUNT CLINIC



Inflammation is a natural chemical process within the body that is in simple terms the body initiating a healing and repair response. Inflammation does produce pain so we are careful of the injured area. However, this process can get out of control leading to long-term chronic inflammation which can be detrimental. Many modern lifestyle factors can create unnatural inflammation or make natural inflammation excessive. Modern science has shown that virtually every disease process has an element of inflammation attached to it. From a naturopathic perspective this is obvious as the body will always be trying to fix an area of dis-ease and therefore inflammatory chemicals will be present.

The Gut and Inflammation

The gut can contribute to systemic inflammation. For example, certain gut bacteria produce inflammatory triggers called endotoxin or lipopolysaccharide (LPS). These are breakdown by-products of “bad” bacteria. An unbalanced gut microflora is linked to the development of autoimmune conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis and many other diseases, much like inflammation is associated with many diseases. A surprising example of the wide spread affects of bacteria imbalance is that “bad” bacteria is even found in arterial plaques that form heart blockages.

If you have gut issues, like indigestion, acid reflux, constipation, bloating or IBS it would be very beneficial to investigate help with this as part of an anti-inflammatory and persistent pain health plan.

The rest of this guide will tell you more about calming inflammation and pain in your body and will work very well alongside physical treatments such as osteopathy, massage and acupuncture at The Perrymount Clinic.

Health Problems Associated with Inflammation



- Arthritis
- Skin (eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis)
- Asthma
- Mental health (depression)
- Cognitive function (Alzheimer's Disease)
- Cardiovascular health problems
- Diabetes (type 1 and 2)
- Obesity
- Autoimmune diseases
- Some forms of cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disorder (IBD, Crohn's disease, colitis)

Foods to include as part of your anti-inflammatory lifestyle

OMEGA-3 FATS

Wild oily fish (sardines, mackerel, anchovies, salmon & herring), walnuts, flaxseeds, hemp seeds and their oils, chia seeds, grass-fed meat and eggs from pasture-fed chickens

The dietary ratio of omega-3: 6 fats is key for inflammation balance. Most people consume too many omega-6 fats and not enough omega-3s. Increasing omega-3s is a great way to improve this ratio.



DIVERSE VARIETY OF PLANT FOODS

Including in your diet a diverse variety of plant foods helps to feed beneficial gut microflora which in turn help to keep inflammation in check. Eat a variety of colours to to give you a variety of plant nutrients that all have different benefits.



PROBIOTIC FOODS

Kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha

Prebiotic foods feed beneficial bacteria whilst probiotic foods provide beneficial bacteria. Regularly including these types of foods in the diet can support a healthy gut microflora, which in turn supports a balanced inflammatory process.

LOWER CARBOHYDRATE ALTERNATIVES TO BREAD, PASTA, POTATOES & RICE

Try cauliflower rice, courgetti, shredded cabbage.

These foods help to support even blood sugar levels which in turn supports inflammation balance.



CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

Broccoli, cauliflower, radish, watercress, cabbage, pak choi, kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli sprouts.

Inflammatory processes generate harmful free radicals which can cause tissue damage and destruction. Cruciferous vegetables contain bioactive compounds that have powerful antioxidant activity to help neutralise free radicals before they cause damage.

CULINARY HERBS

Parsley, coriander, basil, thyme, oregano, mint and especially rosemary (fresh or dried). Rosemary has significant anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity and may help to support beneficial gut microflora too. Culinary herbs in general contain many compounds that help to support antioxidant and anti-inflammatory pathways.





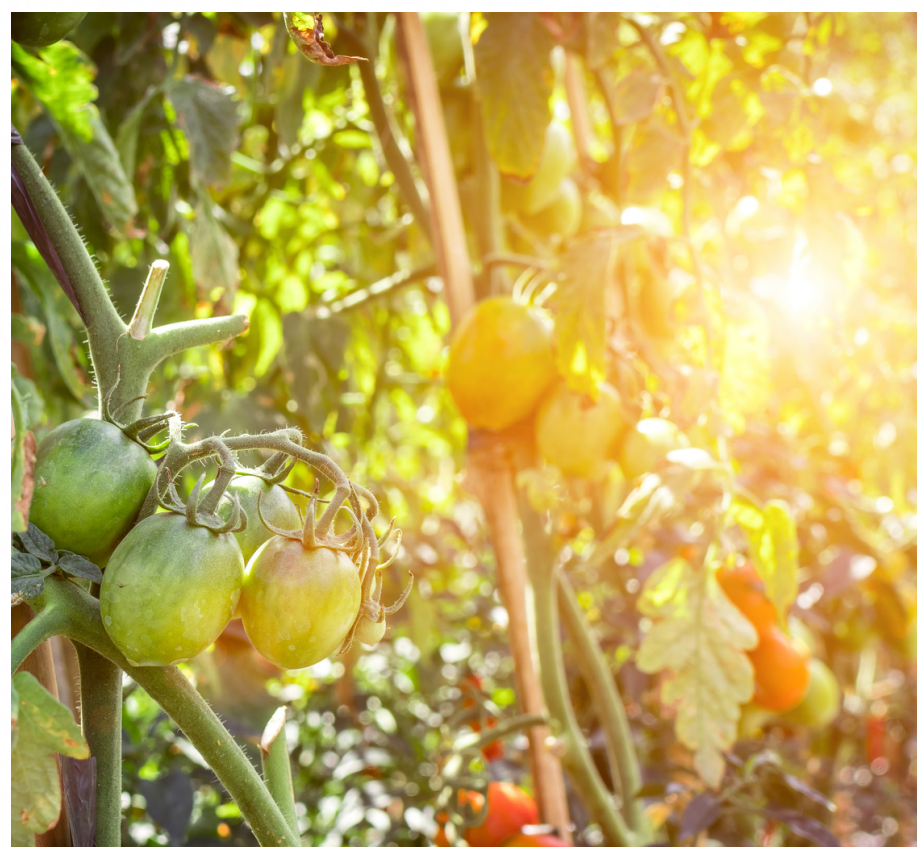
BERRIES

Strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, blueberries. Berries deliver powerful plant compounds that have significant antioxidant activity. They're also lower in naturally occurring sugars than many other fruits. Reducing sugar consumption overall (even from natural sources) is great news for inflammation balance.

GINGER, TURMERIC, CINNAMON

In food or drinks; fresh or ground

Both have significant anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Cinnamon helps to support blood sugar balance which in turns helps to balance inflammation through calming stress hormones.

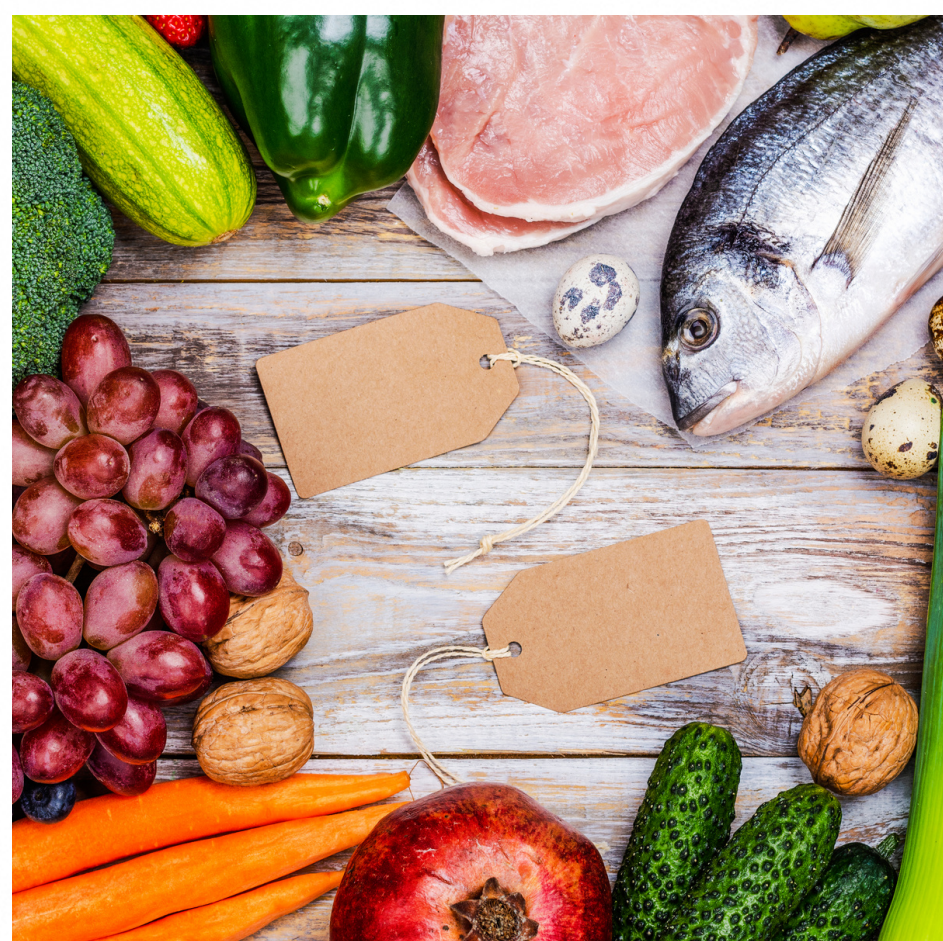


ORGANIC, FREE RANGE AND GRASS FED

For both plant and animal produce. Organic food is produced without harmful pesticides & herbicides and restricts the routine use of antibiotics in animals. Grass-fed meat and eggs from pasture-fed chickens tend to be higher in the more anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats. The "grain-fed" animals are higher in omega 6 as the grain they are fed is higher in this. All of this helps your body to keep inflammation in check.

FRESH WHOLE FOODS, COOKED FROM SCRATCH

When meals are cooked from scratch using natural fresh whole foods they provide essential nutrients the body needs to keep inflammation in balance whilst not containing pro-inflammatory ingredients such as added sugar, damaged fats or artificial additives.



USE FRESH FILTERED WATER

Install a good quality water filter for your home tap water (eg Berkey). This is to remove possible contaminants which may trigger inflammatory processes. This is obviously a great generally healthy lifestyle addition.

Foods To Avoid As They Promote Inflammation

OMEGA-6 FATS

Refined vegetable oils such as soybean, corn, safflower and sunflower, cashews, almonds, sunflower seeds, grains, grain-fed meat, poultry and offal, dairy products from grain-fed cattle.

Omega-6 fats tend to be more pro-inflammatory whereas omega-3 fats are more anti-inflammatory. We need both types in our diets but most people consume too many omega-6 fats and not enough omega-3s. Reducing intake of omega-6 fats whilst increasing omega-3s is an effective way to support a healthier balance.

REFINED, PROCESSED & CONVENIENCE FOODS AND TRANS FATS

Ready meals, take-aways, cakes, biscuits, convenience foods, margarine.

These foods are typically low in essential nutrients and often contain chemically altered or damaged fats that may be pro-inflammatory and generally harmful to health. Many highly regarded health professionals put the reducing of these highly processed fats as an absolute top priority to regaining health.

EXCESS INTAKE OF HIGH CARBOHYDRATE FOODS

Potatoes, breads, crackers, cereals, pasta, rice, couscous, cakes, biscuits.

Excessive intake of high carbohydrate foods may disrupt blood sugar levels and thus may be more pro-inflammatory. High blood sugar levels which then crash can cause increased stress hormone levels which are inflammatory and stressful.

SUGAR

Added sugar, sugary drinks & snacks. High fruit intake: Especially processed tropical, citrus & fruit juices

Refined sugar in any form may promote inflammation, as does high intake of even natural sugars found in fruits and fruit juices.

NON-ORGANIC FOOD, INTENSIVELY FARMED FOOD

Non-organic and intensively farmed foods may contain substances called endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), some of which may promote inflammation. Grain fed meat and poultry are higher in omega-6 fats which are more pro-inflammatory. The good news is that our body is able to detoxify these many of these chemicals once we stop consuming them in favour of natural foods.

Foods To Avoid As They Promote Inflammation

FOOD ADDITIVES

Artificial sweeteners (sucralose, acesulfame K, aspartame), emulsifiers, flavour enhancers (monosodium glutamate).

Artificial sweeteners may disrupt blood sugar balance and negatively affect the gut microflora, emulsifiers may damage the gut lining, contributing to inflammation and subsequently a higher likelihood of food hypersensitivity reactions. For example, studies have shown that food additives can make a person react more to dairy particles so triggering an allergy response.

ALCOHOL

Wine, champagne, Prosecco, beer, lager, spirits

Alcohol disrupts blood sugar balance, has adverse effects on the gut microbiota, increases fat storage and negatively affects sleep. All of which may have pro-inflammatory effects.

GRAINS

Grains are a really good place to start as far as eliminating a food group to help calm inflammation. Many books and Dr's just focus on eliminating grains to help many health issues.

These foods are grains that contain gluten:

Wheat, rye, barley, oats (if not certified gluten-free), spelt, kamut, bran, bulgar, couscous, orzo, semolina, seitan.

The grains do not contain gluten so may not give as much of a reaction:

Corn, rice, sorghum, oats (if certified gluten-free), wild rice, millet, teff

NIGHTSHADES

The Nightshade family foods are also well known to be inflammation trigger foods and are also worth eliminating for a period of time to observe how you feel. Often vegetables contain toxins to protect themselves that also have a detrimental affect on us. These are nightshade foods. Are there any that you eat a lot of?

Tomatoes (all varieties, and tomato products like marinara, ketchup, etc.), potatoes (white and red potatoes. However, sweet potatoes are not nightshades.), aubergine, all peppers (bell peppers, jalapeno, chili peppers, and hot peppers), red spices (curry powder, chili powder, cayenne powder, red pepper), paprika, pimentos, tobacco, goji berries, ashwagandha

Food intolerance reactions

Many common foods can cause a delayed (IgG mediated) hypersensitivity immune reaction, which then triggers an inflammatory response. Symptoms may happen anywhere from a few hours to a few days after ingestion which can make it a real challenge to pinpoint a specific trigger. This is not the same as the immediate, rare and life-threatening allergy reactions, for example from peanuts. This is called an IgE reaction.

To discover whether you have a food intolerance it is possible to have an at-home finger prick blood test that we have available for purchase at The Perrymount Clinic. It is also possible to take the same easy at home test for blood inflammation markers.

Lifestyle tips for inflammation balance

Sleep

Consistently getting good quality sleep is important for every aspect of health, not least for supporting excessive inflammation. Many research studies have now shown that lack of sleep contributes to a more inflammatory state.

Try these simple sleep tips

- Keep regular sleep hours
- Create a calming routine before bed (eg. chamomile tea & relaxing bath)

Switch off electronic devices an hour before bed

Keep electronic devices out of the bedroom (mobile phone, Wifi router)

- Get daylight exposure as early as possible each day
- Create a cool, dark, distraction-free sleep environment

De-stress

Bringing stress back into balance is often much easier said than done, yet chronic stress simply can't be ignored in the context of inflammation. We now know that ongoing stress is associated with inflammatory effects throughout the whole body, including in the brain.

Exercise is a great way to de-stress, as is mindfulness meditation, yoga, pilates, t'ai chi and spending time outside in nature. In fact, there are many different ways to de-stress; the most important thing to do is find what works for you and do it regularly.

Body composition

Achieving and maintaining a healthy body composition (fat: lean tissue ratio) is important for inflammation balance. This is because elevated fat stores are associated with increased inflammation. Body composition may be supported through a combination of diet and lifestyle factors.

Lifestyle tips for inflammation balance continued

Detox you and your environment

Toxins are everywhere, in our food, water, home, work and outdoor environments, and many can play a role in the inflammatory processes. It's impossible to avoid toxins completely, but there are steps you can take to reduce your overall load.

Check for and deal with underlying infections or injury

Chronic viral, bacterial, parasitic or fungal infections or unresolved injury may be factors underlying ongoing inflammation. These are stressors on the body internally that you may not necessarily feel as what you would normally consider "stress".

Sunlight

Spend time outdoors in daylight every day. Morning sunlight helps to strengthen your circadian rhythms, and bare skin exposure to midday sun helps with the skin's production of vitamin D; an essential nutrient for inflammation balance. Spending time outdoors in nature also supports feelings of calm and relaxation, is an effective way to de-stress and can help to improve your sleep. A real win-win.

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Nutritional status

The constant renewal and repair of cells and tissues requires an adequate supply of nutrients. Nutrients are needed for basic cellular biochemistry that may underpin and sustain more specific support. For example B vitamins are needed for cellular energy production – which is needed for all metabolic processes including repair.

Nutrients support the body to produce materials needed for structure and function or supply these directly. For example for the body to manufacture collagen, it needs an adequate supply of protein, vitamin C and other cofactors. Interestingly, anti-inflammatory medications block vitamin C and therefore the production of collagen. So while you may get pain relief you may be inhibiting the long-term, correct repair of a joint by taking these medications.

Nutritional deficiencies can manifest in lack of bone density and strength; also in the slow repair of tissues, including muscles and tendons. It is possible that patients who experience slow healing are nutritionally depleted, which restricts the ability of the body to repair damage

Some nutrients may also be relevant in helping to improve or relieve symptoms such as pain and inflammation associated with many musculoskeletal conditions.

The Nutrition Gap

The nutrition gap describes the difference between the levels of nutrients the average person, eating a reasonable Western diet, is obtaining from food, and the levels of nutrients identified by research as being needed for optimal health. Nutrient shortfalls are caused by a number of different factors including:

- Food choices and the foods natural nutrient density I.e. the difference between vegetables and meats
- Food growing, processing and preparation methods
- The nutrient content of the food we eat – this has decreased dramatically in the last 80 years with the development of intensive farming
- The ability of our bodies to digest, assimilate and absorb these nutrients into our system
- Lifestyle factors, such as smoking, stress, alcohol intake and medications which increase the needs of certain nutrients and use nutrients up quicker
- Our level of activity (energy expenditure) to name a few

Anti-inflammatory nutrients

Curcumin

The main active component of turmeric, curcumin has widespread anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity.

Ginger

Evidence suggests that ginger has significant anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties.

Boswellia

A traditional Ayurvedic remedy that has long been used to support a wide range of chronic inflammatory conditions and is now evidence-backed by scientific studies.

Rosemary

This popular herb has a long history of traditional use, with significant reported antioxidant, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties. Studies show that rosemary helps to balance key inflammatory pathways in the body.

Vitamin C & Citrus bioflavonoids

More than 50 years of research supports vitamin C's role in the immune system and as a powerful antioxidant. It also plays a role in cartilage production and helps calm stress. Citrus bioflavonoids have demonstrated antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

Green tea

A powerful antioxidant and helps to modulate several inflammatory pathways.

Anti-inflammatory nutrients continued

Glutathione

During inflammation, oxidative stress is higher, which increases the need for antioxidants. Often referred to as the body's master antioxidant, glutathione is a powerful compound produced naturally by the body in response to oxidative stress.

Alpha lipoic acid

Often referred to as the universal antioxidant because it is water and fat soluble; alpha lipoic acid can go anywhere in the body, even across the blood brain barrier. Alpha lipoic acid can also regenerate other antioxidant nutrients such as vitamins C, E, glutathione and Co-Q-10.

Vitamin D, Magnesium & B Vitamins

Many people are low in vitamin D and a large body of research has demonstrated anti-inflammatory effects of vitamin D. Magnesium is another key nutrient for inflammation balance; this important mineral is often low in Western diets and yet is needed (along with B vitamins) as a key co-factor for pathways that help to keep inflammation in balance. These nutrients will be supporting any "nutritional gap" you may have in your current diet.

Omega-3 fats

Typical Western diets, high in omega-6 and low in omega-3 fats contribute to a wide range of illnesses characterised by pain and inflammation. A daily supplement of high quality omega-3 rich fish oil may help to support a more beneficial ratio of omega-6: 3 dietary fats, which in turn supports inflammation balance.

The Perrymount Clinic has access to a huge range of supplements that can support the inflammatory process and many of health conditions. Please ask if you have any queries.

The Naturopathic Triad

The Naturopathic Triad shows how certain lifestyle factors can be detrimental to our health but also how we can help ourselves using a holistic approach. For example, a physical injury can be helped with osteopathy or a junk food diet can be corrected with a natural food healthier diet. This inflammation handout is looking mainly at helping on the "chemical" level as it talks about food and supplementation.

It also touches on the emotional level by recommending stress reduction and better sleep. The third aspect is "Physical" and The Perrymount Clinic can help here with many physical modalities including osteopathy, massage, acupuncture, shockwave and laser therapy.

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