

6 Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Written by Ian Hart

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There are many drugs and pills that claim anti-inflammatory properties, promise to reduce pain and quell harsh reactions to inflammatory foods. But as with almost every drug, there are long-term side effects that can lower the immune system and bring on other unwanted symptoms. Luckily, nature has provided us with all natural anti-inflammatories that are not only great tasting but provide other essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients that help boost the immune system.

The foods that I'm going to discuss can be easily found in your local grocery store, or you may already have them in your cabinet or refrigerator. They are:

1. Blueberries: Loaded with anti-oxidants, it has been asserted in a study by the Journal of Food Science that blueberries have cancer fighting properties. It's also been known to protect against dementia. Comparable fruit are strawberries, goji berries, cranberries and blackberries. Another thing that's great about blueberries - especially if you're trying to lose weight - is that a serving (about 50 berries) is only 39 calories.

Note: Buy organic berries, free of harmful pesticides.

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2. Extra Virgin Olive Oil: Virgin olive oil is rich in polyphenols, which protect the heart and blood vessels from inflammation. Unlike some other oils, the monounsaturated fats in olive oil are processed by the body and turned into anti-inflammatory agents that can lower the incidence of rheumatoid arthritis and asthma.

Note: Avoid partially hydrogenated vegetable oil as it contains trans-fatty acids. Trans fat lowers "good" HDL cholesterol and raises "bad" LDL cholesterol.

3. Green Tea: Many studies have shown that green tea contains polyphenol anti-oxidants that are naturally potent anti-inflammatories and which fight against diseases including cancers of the skin, esophagus, stomach, colon, pancreas, lung, bladder, prostate, and breast.

Note: Alternatives like processed, non-organic cow's milk contains components and hormone residues that have been known to irritate our immune systems if consumed over long periods.

4. Broccoli: Like blueberries, they're naturally low in calories, and are highly nutritious. Broccoli carries phytonutrients like sulforaphane that help our bodies dispose of potentially carcinogenic compounds. So it has anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer proponents.

Note: Cauliflower is a close relative to broccoli and helps detoxify the body.

5. Tumeric: This spice may not be as familiar in our everyday diets, but it's easily found at any

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grocery or health food store. Tumeric's main active compound is called curcumin and it is non-toxic. Studies have found that turmeric's anti-inflammatory effects are on par with potent drugs such as hydrocortisone and Motrin, without their side effects. Tumeric has been known to assist as a remedy for gastrointestinal issues such as irritable bowel syndrome, and raw turmeric is said to strengthen cartilage and bone structure.

Note: Ginger is a close friend of tumeric in terms of its anti-inflammatory benefits and are used to cure colds and relieve motion sickness and its symptoms.

6. Sweet Potatoes: The simple sweet potato is a great source of complex carbs, vitamin B and C, dietary fiber, beta-carotene and manganese, all of which jointly perform anti-inflammatory protection in the body.

Note: Stay away from processed and fried potatoes.

The key is eating fresh foods high in anti-oxidants that are as close to their all natural state as possible – no additives and preservatives –so your body can receive all the nutrients necessary to fight inflammation.

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