



## Northwest Healthcare Center

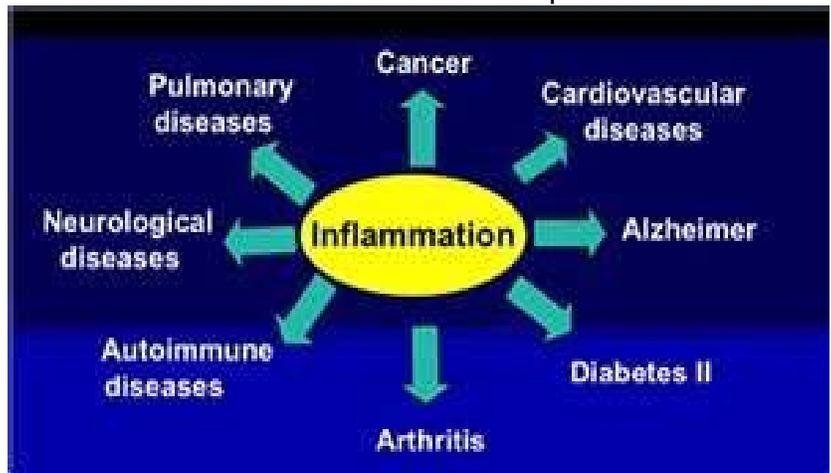
### *Is Your Diet Causing Inflammation?*

*Jacob W. Stegmaier DC*

I first want to define what inflammation is from a clinical standpoint. Inflammation is a protective tissue response to injury or destruction of tissues, which serves to destroy, dilute or wall off both the injurious agent and injured tissue. The classical signs of **acute** inflammation are pain, heat, redness, swelling and **loss of function**.

Although, the acute inflammatory process is essential for tissue repair, tissue remodeling and restoring function, when acute inflammation progresses to chronic, tissue healing cannot occur. In this situation, the inflammatory process should be looked at as more of a disease process.

It is interesting to know that many diseases are a manifestation of chronic inflammation. The list of diseases that are associated with chronic inflammation are as follows: acute respiratory distress syndrome, sarcoidosis, glomerulonephritis, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, atherosclerosis, gastritis, Crohn's disease, diverticulitis, ulcerative colitis, appendicitis, heart disease, cancer, cirrhosis, diabetes mellitus and vascular disease. If that isn't enough of a list to worry about, research has shown chronic inflammation promotes Alzheimer's disease and has had correlation with depression and anxiety disorders. It is also interesting to note that 6 of the 10 leading causes of death in Americans are coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes mellitus, atherosclerosis, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, all of which are inflammatory in nature.



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Now let's take a look at foods to avoid that can promote this pro-inflammatory state in the body. ([www.deflame.com](http://www.deflame.com))

- All refined grain products, including white bread, whole wheat bread, pasta, cereal, pretzels, crackers, desserts and any other product made with grains or flours from grains.
- Partially hydrogenated oils (Trans fats) found in margarine, deep fried foods (French fries, etc.) and most all packaged foods.
- Corn oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, cottonseed oil, peanut oil, soybean oil, and foods made with these oils such as mayonnaise, tartar sauce, margarine, salad dressings, and many packaged food.
- Sugar
- Meat and eggs from grain-fed animals (domesticated animal products). Modern meat is problematic because the animals are obese and unhealthy; they are loaded with excessive saturated fats and contain too many pro-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids.

This list unfortunately is all too familiar with the average American diet and creates an "inflammatory soup" in the body, which causes the pain receptors to become excited leading to pain and inflammation.

After scaring you through most of this, we will now look for some answers to help de-flame our bodies. Here is a good list that can get you started on an anti-inflammatory diet. ([www.deflame.com](http://www.deflame.com))

- All fruits and vegetables. Eat fruits raw and vegetables raw or lightly cooked. Vegetables and fruits possess antioxidant activity, modulate detoxification enzymes, stimulate the immune system, modify cholesterol metabolism, reduce blood pressure, and possess antibacterial and antiviral activity.
- Fresh or frozen fish. A recent study indicated that farmed-raised tilapia, catfish and bronzini had unacceptable omega-6 to omega-3 ratios, while all other fish had appropriate ratios. Shell fish are also a good option.
- Supplementing your diet with a minimum of 1-3g of omega-3 fatty acids per day as both a therapeutic and preventative measure.
- Meat, chicken, eggs from grass-fed animals. Go to [www.eatwild.com](http://www.eatwild.com) to find producers of grass-fed animal products. If you cannot acquire grass-fed products, do the best you can to get lean cuts of regular meats, which are available at all supermarkets.
- Omega-3 eggs. Common supermarket brands of anti-inflammatory omega-3 (n-3) eggs are Christopher Eggs (600mg n-3 per egg yolk), followed by 4-Grain Vegetarian omega-3 Eggs (300mg n-3 per yolk), Sparboe Farms omega-3 eggs (250mg n-3 per yolk), and Eggland's Best (110mg n-3 per yolk).

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- Nuts: raw almonds, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, etc.
- Spices like ginger, turmeric, garlic, dill, oregano, coriander, fennel, red chili pepper, basil, rosemary, kelp, etc.
- Oils and fats: It is best to use organic oils, as it is thought that nonorganic oils may contain pesticides. Use organic extra virgin olive oil and coconut oil. Butter is also a healthy choice and the best butter comes from grass fed cows. You will get the best available butter if you buy organic butter (Organic Valley indicates that their butter and heavy cream are from grass-fed cows).
- Salad dressing: extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar (or lemon juice), mustard if you like, and spices (Greek, Italian, ginger, dill, oregano, etc.; whatever suits your taste). When eating in a restaurant, use dressings sparingly, as most are made with soybean oil or worse, and most are rich in sugar.
- Whenever you are thirsty, drink water or organic green tea (non-organic green tea may contain pesticides and should be avoided).
- Alcohol: Red wine and stout beers are the best choices.

There have been studies that have shown that people who have been taking anti-inflammatory drugs have reduced risk of some of the inflammatory diseases I had mentioned previously. However, since most of these anti-inflammatory drugs can wreak havoc on our gastrointestinal system, ***why not use your diet to create this anti-inflammatory state.***

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