

Dr. Susan Mitchell (00:12.792)

Think of inflammation like a slow burn inside your body, draining your energy, stalling weight loss and making recovery harder. The good news, you can help put out that fire with what's on your plate. Don't go anywhere. I'll share eight everyday foods that act like a fire extinguisher for your inflammation. And you don't need to overhaul your diet, just small swaps that make a big difference.

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I'm bariatric dietician, Dr. Susan Mitchell. You're listening to the Bariatric Surgery Success podcast. I'm glad you're here today. It matters where you get your nutrition information. Here's what you need to know now. What do black beans, Bing cherries, avocado, and nuts have in common? Any guesses? These everyday foods fight inflammation in the body. Here's the deal.

Inflammation can be a good thing or a not so good thing. Inflammation is good if it's short term, such as when you cut yourself and your immune system sends in your white blood cells to jumpstart the healing process. Inflammation is not so good when it becomes chronic or ongoing inflammation in your body. This type of inflammation, which is invisible to your eye, it gets all the media attention.

because it's been implicated as an underlying cause of many common diseases, from heart disease and autoimmune illness like lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, to some cancers and diabetes and even stroke. Chronic inflammation can damage your blood vessels, which increases your risk for heart problems. In cancer, inflammation can damage your genes or increase the development of blood vessels that let

cancer cells spread and grow. Chronic inflammation and obesity are linked too. You might be thinking, well, how so? It seems that obesity may lead to chronic inflammation, which in turn causes insulin resistance. And you may have heard of that before. Insulin is a hormone that helps your cells take up sugar. If your body becomes resistant to insulin, your blood glucose or blood sugar remains high.

insulin resistance could be a factor in both diabetes and weight gain. So these effects make obesity and inflammation like a case of the chicken and the egg, which comes first. Obesity causes inflammation and chronic inflammation can eventually lead to obesity. This ongoing inflammation in the body, raises the level of a health marker known as C-reactive protein or

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CRP. So the liver produces this CRP during periods of inflammation. So it would make sense that if the body has chronic inflammation going on, the CRP level will be elevated. Doctors measure this level of general inflammation in the body with a blood test called high-sensitivity C-reactive protein or HSCRP.

So numerous foods and supplements are touted to single-handedly be the answer to fight inflammation, but that's just not how it works. For your diet to have an anti-inflammatory effect, the key is not to focus, not to focus on a single food or food component. The ultimate success of the anti-inflammatory diet approach is based on synergy. So think of your favorite

sports team, basketball, soccer, football, whatever it is. To win and to continue to win, the team must work closely together. In the same way, the synergistic effect of nutrients and bioactive compounds consumed together from a variety of healthy foods provides the best anti-inflammatory outcome. So the good news is that inflammation

can be reduced with a diet that includes lots of anti-inflammatory foods. Remember, these foods are for after surgery when you've progressed through the various diet phases and you

now eat a regular diet. So let's talk about eight. Eight everyday foods that act like a fire extinguisher for inflammation. No need to overhaul your diet. These small steps make a big difference.

Number one, this one is going to surprise you. Fiber. Yep, fiber ranks as one of the most anti-inflammatory food components. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that's not absorbed by your body, so it keeps you full without adding extra calories. Don't we love that? Foods rich in fiber and easy to add to your meals include whole grain, so oatmeal, quinoa, farro,

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Nuts, fruits, veggies. What about beans such as black beans, kidney, garbanzo, lentils? Yes, also a good source of fiber and low on the glycemic index, which means they help keep your blood sugar in check. And when you eat more beans and lentils, you tend to crave and eat less processed foods that have zero nutrition like cakes and cookies, chips and pastries.

Not only can these goodies make your blood sugar level spike, but don't miss this. They're tied to inflammation. Okay, today's special, a serving of Science 101. Beans and whole grains contain fermentable fiber, which may be particularly helpful to the microbiota of the colon. This fermentable fiber produces butyrate.

Butyrate is a fatty acid that we dietitians love because it assists in maintaining the intestinal wall and protecting it from substances that could increase inflammation. So that's why we like to have you eating those beans and lentils. Number two, garlic, herbs, and spices.

These contain various anti-inflammatory phytochemicals. And you'll hear the word phytochemicals a lot in nutrition. It means naturally occurring plant nutrients that usually have a positive health effect. Until we know exact amounts, you can include things like garlic, ginger, oregano, rosemary, thyme, pepper, as part of your daily diet and the foods that you're eating.

What condiments do you like on a hamburger? Did you say mustard? Do you buy the traditional bright yellow mustard? Well, guess what spices in it? Turmeric. By the way, turmeric is also in curry powder. It contains polyphenols. And remember, polyphenols are a phytochemical or naturally occurring plant chemical.

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You may have heard of polyphenols in grapes or wine, blueberries, even green tea. It's the polyphenols that provide the anti-inflammatory benefits you hear about in turmeric too. So yes, turmeric can help fight inflammation from a diet viewpoint, especially when you combine it with other anti-inflammatory foods. So if you want to add turmeric to your food, get the most out of it.

by adding it to a meal that has some fat or oil as well as some black pepper. This helps with absorption. Sprinkle it on scrambled eggs, add it to vegetable soup, even try it in a smoothie or combine it with coriander and cumin in a shaker and sprinkle it wherever you like to add a little bit of flavor. Say try it on fish. by the way, I have a recipe for a golden turmeric and

ginger latte if you want to try it. I'll put the link in the show notes, but you can find it on my website, [BreakingDownNutrition.com](http://BreakingDownNutrition.com). It's under bariatric tools, then recipes. Number three, veggies and fruit. For the best anti-inflammatory benefits, a wide variety of fruits and vegetables is the goal. Due to the powerful assortment

of naturally occurring phytochemicals found in them that we know fights inflammation. So one easy tip, if you choose a variety of colors in your fruits and vegetables, so I'm saying red

apples and green kale and purple grapes and orange, yellow mango, you get the idea. Choosing a variety of color, this is an easy way to know that you're also eating a

variety of these powerful plant nutrients. Spinach, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries are all good examples. I love to keep frozen berries on hand. For one reason, they're budget friendly and they're not going bad as quickly. I keep frozen blueberries and frozen cherries all the time for my smoothies. And I make smoothies pretty much every day for breakfast. It's a great way to get in my protein powder. Also a great way to get in a couple of different fruits.

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The Agricultural Research Service has conducted studies on bing cherries and found that regular consumption lowers that CRP marker, that CRP, C-reactive protein inflammation marker in the body. So what's not to love, add those frozen cherries into your smoothie. Anthocyanins, anthocyanins, I know that's a big, long, crazy word, but they are one of the natural phytonutrients in tart cherries.

that give them their bright red color and tame inflammation. Number four, seafood such as tuna, salmon, sardines, rich in omega-3 fats that help suppress inflammation. Eating fish once or twice a week is a really smart goal. And it doesn't have to be expensive, fresh fish. Canned salmon, sardines, and tuna are budget-friendly, easy ways you can find it in

easy little pouches that you can take with you, easy ways to eat more fish. Number five, flaxseeds, walnuts and pumpkin seeds. Now these contain plant sources of omega-3 fats. The plant source is called alpha-linolenic acid or ALA, ALA is how you'll hear it referred to. And in the body,

It's really cool because it converts from this ALA to omega-3 fats. But because it's a plant source, the conversion rate is low. It's about 10 or 15%. But still, by adding these into your diet, you're giving plant sources of omega-3 fats. Number six and seven together, avocados and nuts. I put them together because both are rich in monounsaturated fats.

the more heart healthy type of fat and both contain anti-inflammatory components. So eating these also helps you to cut down on saturated fat and saturated fat is known for raising that lousy LDL cholesterol and promoting inflammation. So bonus, both avocados and nuts are filling. So it helps you feel what we call satiety. Remember satiety that...

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feeling of fullness. By the way, there's a video on my website about how to quickly cut and slice an avocado. I'll put the link in the show notes as well. You can also find it at [BreakingDownNutrition.com](http://BreakingDownNutrition.com). That's my website under bariatric tools and then recipes. Last but not least, number eight, olives and olive oil, staples of the Mediterranean diet, rich in polyphenols that work

to tame inflammation. And an easy swap is to choose olive oil almost every time you typically choose butter or to add olives to salads or have them as a snack, easy little switches that can make a big difference. So your big takeaway today is that the secret to the success of the anti-inflammatory diet is the synergistic effect from a variety

of foods from beans and lentils to herbs and spices that go on those foods to different colors of fruits and vegetables, nuts, avocados, fish, all rich in vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, and those bioactive compounds. So here's what I want you to think about this week. If you're multitasking, come back to me for a minute, choose one or two of these anti-inflammatory foods this week.

and think about how you can easily include them at your meals. And then next week, do the same thing. Slow but sure, doesn't have to be all in one day, but picking and choosing things that we've talked about that you go, hey, I can add those small things to my diet. These small anti-inflammatory tweaks add up and make a big difference. Because remember, your health and you are worth it.