



Healthy Eating Initiative: Combatting Inflammation

Inflammation is a natural immune system response to keep the body safe by fighting foreign bodies and harmful microbes, or antigens. Inflammation can be very beneficial, for example, when the body is fighting off illness or healing wounds. Chronic inflammation is when an inflammatory response is triggered but stays active. This can slowly wear down the immune system. Certain lifestyle factors contribute to chronic inflammation, such as the overconsumption of sugary, fatty, and oily processed foods and meats, alcohol, smoking, and lack of regular activity.

Early Warning Signs of Inflammation:

Mental Health Signs

- Decreased motivation or ability to concentrate.
- Decreased enjoyment in life or anxiety.
- Persistent irritability.

Physical Signs

- Carrying excessive body fat, particularly around the abdomen
- Constipation, bloating, or gas.
- Eye puffiness or regular dark eye circles.
- Increased cravings for sugar, carbs, salt, or caffeine.
- Regular headaches.
- Stiffness, aches, or joint pain.
- Elevated blood pressure or elevated fasting blood glucose.

Anti-Inflammatory Foods:

Fighting inflammation can begin by incorporating healthy foods into your diet that naturally work to reduce and eliminate harmful inflammation. They include:

- **Fruits such as blueberries, cherries, and oranges**
- **Fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, and tuna**
- **Vegetables such as broccoli, avocados, tomatoes, and mushrooms**
- **Beverages such as green tea and staying hydrated with water**
- **Roots such as turmeric and ginger**

And so many more!

Consult with your doctor if you are experiencing symptoms of chronic inflammation as there may be various treatment options available to you.

Additional Resources:

- Awaken: <https://awaken.com/2022/11/what-is-inflammation-the-good-and-the-bad/>
- Health Line: <https://www.healthline.com/health/inflammation#diagnosis>
- Harvard Health Publishing: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/all-about-inflammation>

For additional information, email the DCPAS Work-Life Branch at:

Dodhra.mc-alex.dcpas.mbx.dod-worklife@mail.mil

