

INTRODUCTION

I have been in practice for 24 years and in working with patients I have increasingly come to see the huge role that inflammation is playing in their symptoms. Inflammation is believed to be a driver of disease and therefore slowing down the inflammatory process is imperative for a long life. Inflammation increases naturally as we age, so if we can reduce inflammation we will slow the aging process. I believe an anti-inflammatory diet is totally achievable whilst still living in the real world and indulging once in a while. In this book I will give you recipes that are easy, tasty, focused on reducing inflammation and I am including explanations and tips on how to achieve a longer, less inflammatory life.

Research is increasingly finding that inflammation is a driver of many diseases. From serious diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer to the more common diseases that are extremely debilitating, such as inflammatory bowel disease, polycystic ovarian syndrome, auto-immune disease and many more. Common presentations of inflammation that I see in clinic are tiredness and adrenal exhaustion, bloating, hormonal imbalance, acne and headaches. Generally I see many people of all ages who are carrying extra weight (usually around the middle), who feel they are prematurely ageing, and feel sluggish, achey and tired.

So what are anti-inflammatory foods? Generally speaking, an anti-inflammatory diet consists of vegetables, fruit, legumes, healthy fats, herbs and spices, nuts and seeds, fish, and unrefined complex grains. On the other hand, an inflammatory diet consists of refined sugar and flour, colours and preservatives, excesses of red meat, alcohol and bread, fried foods, and saturated fats. This is very general of course but I think you get the idea – natural, unprocessed foods that are high in fibre and nutrients are anti-inflammatory while processed and refined foods that are no longer fresh are inflammatory.

I believe in following the 80:20 rule – keep the diet really healthy 80% of the time and you will get away with indulging 20%. It is the dietary habits you adhere to the majority of the time that really affect the direction your health goes. So if you can follow an anti-inflammatory way of eating 80% of the time you will get away with indulging 20% and still keep inflammation down.

Indulge once in a while, it is really important for your sanity. Do remember though, that a lot of the foods we indulge in are quite addictive so know that when you do this you will need to rein yourself in, or next thing you know, these foods will become the majority. Often people need to mentally put the inflammatory foods that they like to eat into the 'treat' category. This can help as you are not depriving yourself but rather realising that these foods shouldn't be eaten too often.

One of the things I see in my practice which contributes to inflammation is that many people eat too often and too much. I believe we need to give our digestion a break from food every so often so that our body can carry out some general housekeeping. Reducing portion size is another good idea and the easiest way to start off weight loss. Reducing portion size and having small periods where you take a break from eating will also reduce inflammation. After you focus on this, you can then add in more anti-inflammatory foods and you will really start to feel better.