

Anti-Inflammatory Diet for Aching Joints and Tissues

By Donia Alawai

One of the most impressive researchers on inflammatory conditions is J. O. Hunter, M.D. Dr. Hunter believes that inflammatory conditions are caused by toxicity transmitted from the intestinal tract. For example, a parasitic bacteria such as a toxic form of E. coli, can affect the immune system in such a way as to create symptoms of inflammation (Bland, The 20-Day...., p.128).

Inflammatory conditions in general develop when the intestinal lumen becomes damaged, either due to malnutrition or infection. Bacteria can be transferred across the lumen into the bloodstream. The barrier of defense in the intestinal tract becomes so compromised that it can't even prevent bacteria from attacking the liver. The bacterial attack usually occurs when the intestinal tract is severely compromised, but it indicates how important a defensive barrier the intestinal lining represents in defending against serious illness (p. 128).

A recent study of hundreds of patients found gut inflammation in more than 80 percent of those with forms of reactive arthritis (Mielants H, et. al., Ileocolonosopic Findings in Seronegative Spondyloarthropathies, British Journal of Rheumatology, Vol. 27, pp. 95-105, 1988). Rheumatologists at the Health Sciences Center at McMaster University Medical School in Hamilton, Ontario confirmed that individuals with increased intestinal permeability have an increased risk of arthritis-like symptoms. (Rooney PJ, et al., A Short Review of the Relationship between Intestinal Permeability and Inflammatory Joint Disease. Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology. Vol.8, pp. 75-83, 1990).

Dr. Jeffrey Bland in his book Genetic Nutritioneering believes that inflammatory conditions, from intestinal inflammation to rheumatoid arthritis, is a result of a combination of genetic, lifestyle and nutrition factors. Therefore, an anti-inflammation program based on nutrition and good supplements can prevent and/or reduce inflammatory conditions (Bland, The 20 Day...., pp 170-184).

Following are nutritional and supplement strategies for inflammatory conditions:

I. Remove Offending "Trigger" Foods:

- Remove strong acid producing foods. Examples are beef, chicken and pork. If you must eat any of these meats, at least reduce the amounts significantly.
- Remove all dairy products (cheese and milk). These are also acid producing foods. If you can not avoid them, then buy goat-based cheese (the soft kind) or raw goat's milk.
- Avoid grains that are considered high-glycemic foods. Examples are corn chips, instant processed grain mixes (i.e., puffed wheat), cakes, pies, pastry, processed breakfast cereals, instant grain cereals, white rice, white flour and white flour pastas.
- Avoid breads containing yeast. It may be prudent to consume types of bread made from whole rye and leavened with lactobacillus.
- Remove hydrogenated oils and margarine from your diet. Use coconut oil (not heated) for cooking. Use extra virgin olive oil or raw butter for any cold spreads.
- Avoid nonfoods (i.e., salt, alcohol, artificial sweeteners, MSG, coffee, tea, soft drinks,etc.).

- Avoid soy products, except for old fermented soy products (miso, wheat free tamari sauce, and tempeh).
- Avoid the use of microwaves and avoid long cooked, baked or fried foods.

II. Your Daily Anti-inflammatory Diet: For the first 14 days:

Michael Klapper, M.D., recommends this strict diet for the first 14 days. Eat only: (In unlimited amounts)

- A) Brown rice (for energy and protein).
- B) Green and yellow vegetables (for vitamins and minerals).
- C) Low glycemic fruits such as apples and berries (for vitamins, minerals and fiber).
- D) Vegetable soups, broth, and fresh vegetable juices.
- E) Ample pure water, at least a 6 oz. cup or glass every 1-2 hours.

Reconstruct your diet after 14 days with “safe” foods. You can add oily fish, such as salmon, halibut or cod, soft goat cheeses, citrus fruits, all types of vegetables, some nuts like almonds, seeds...etc.

When you add such foods back to your diet, it is a good idea to add one food at a time, every two days. You need to observe carefully any effects on your joints and other tissues while keeping a food diary to record your body’s reaction (if any) to each single reintroduced food. Note any food that incites swelling, stiffness, pain in joints, or other adverse bodily reactions within 2 days. As your list of “safe foods” grows, base your daily meal choices on foods that cause no problems and that make you feel your best.

III. Improve the Digestive System:

- A) Friendly Bacteria supplementation:

Lynne McFarland, Ph.D....., from the Department of Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, WA., reported that oral supplementation of friendly bacteria such as acidophilus and bifidus can help recolonize the intestinal tract with good bacteria (Bland, Genetic....p. 133). This research helps expand the definition of nutrition to include consumption of friendly bacteria because of their beneficial role in assisting the function of “gut-associated lymphoid tissue and the liver” (p. 134).

One of the best friendly bacteria products in the market today is a wide-spectrum friendly bacteria supplement micro-blended with fructo-oligosaccharides. Following are its ingredients: Lactobacillus acidophilus DDS-1, Bifidobacterium bifidum, Lactobacillus bulgaricus, Lactobacillus casei, Lactobacillus plantarum, Lactobacillus salivarius, Streptococcus faecium, Streptococcus thermophilus, Acerola and Rose Hips blend, wild blue green algae, Jerusalem Artichoke, Lipase, Amylase, Protease, and Cellulase.

- B) Enzyme supplements:

Digestive enzymes are used to improve the breakdown and assimilation of food nutrients, reduce stress on the small intestine, help maintain normal body pH levels, promote the growth of healthy intestinal flora, and strengthen the body as a whole.

One of the best enzyme products in the market today is a wide-spectrum blend of 12 active enzymes with digestive-enhancing ingredients such as blue green algae (high mineral food), fennel, ginger and cayenne pepper. Take these digestive enzymes several times during the day on an empty stomach and 1-2 with each meal.

C) High quality dietary fiber:

To maintain intestinal hygiene, you need about 35 to 40 grams of different insoluble fiber sources everyday (i.e., bran, cellulose, lignin, pectin, etc.), all found in different organically grown, ripe seasonal fruits, seeds, whole grains, and vegetables. Dietary fiber helps improve the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). Dietary fiber is fermented into SCFAs by friendly bacteria like bifidus. One of the best fiber sources is from brown rice and it has no adverse reactions in the intestinal tract. Rice has both the insoluble and soluble fiber, which friendly bacteria ferment to SCFAs. SCFAs nourishes the critical lining of the large intestine and helps promote peristalsis; the natural rhythmic squeezing of the intestinal muscles necessary for healthy bowel movements.

Another source of good fiber is flax seed. Besides being a well-rounded source of both the insoluble and soluble fibers, flax contains another component called lignans. Lignans have antibacterial, anti fungal, and anti viral properties (grind flax seed immediately before you eat it or keep it for a short time in the freezer).

IV. Enhance Your Immune System Through Whole Food Supplements:

A) Wild-crafted blue Green Algae:

A specific amino acid, L-glutamine, is found to support the immune system. According to Douglas Wilmore, M.D., a trauma care surgeon at Harvard Medical School, the amino acid L-glutamine improves intestinal function and can help preserve the gut function (Bland, Genetic ..., p. 135).

One of the most amazing foods high in L-glutamine is wild-crafted blue green algae from Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon. It is nearly two-thirds protein, an unusually high proportion, particularly for a “plant” food. Dietarily essential amino acids compose 49.1% and non dietarily essential amino acids compose 50.9%. Supplementing with 4 capsules a day gives the body 78 mg. of L. Glutamine.

In addition, wild-crafted blue green algae provides a wide spectrum of vitamins and minerals. For example, blue green algae is a good source of vitamin B-complex, including vitamin B12. B12, normally only found in meat and other animal foods, is sometimes called the “rejuvenator and energizer” vitamin. It is used by the body to synthesize hemoglobin. It can increase energy and is a necessary ingredient for the nervous system (Abrams, pp. 50-51).

B) Virgin coconut oil:

Coconut oil may help with joint stiffness. In a study reported by Dr. S. Sadeghi, coconut oil might be useful in therapies involving a number of chronic inflammatory conditions (Sadeghi, S. et al, 1999, Dietary lipids modify the cytokine response to bacterial lipopolysaccharide in mice. Immunology 96(3):404).

Coconut oil has strong anti microbial effects and can reduce the harmful effects of toxic organisms and therefore may prevent/relieve inflammation (Fife, p.151).

To get a health benefit from consuming coconut oil, 3 1/2 tablespoons is the recommended daily intake. Some people can also incorporate more coconut meat and milk into your diet. For example, seven ounces of dried coconut provides 3 1/2 tablespoons of oil.

C) Wheat Sprouts:

Wheat sprouts as a whole food supplement provides one of the most potent antioxidant enzymes; superoxide dismutase (SOD). Since SOD requires copper and zinc as cofactors to initiate maximum effectiveness, a whole food supplement that combines other foods high in minerals would be the best type of supplement. One of the best whole food antioxidant products in the market today is made of organic wheat sprouts, wild-crafted blue green algae and red beta algae (*dunaliella salina*).

D) Turmeric and Ginger:

Take turmeric powder internally as an anti-inflammatory food. Taken internally, turmeric may inhibit TNF which is a chemical mediator of inflammation. Some people may take one teaspoon three times daily with or without meals. It may also be taken at bed time.

Ginger is considered an important anti-pain and anti-inflammation food in the very old Ayurvedic and Tibb system of medicine in India. Buy organic ginger powder and start by taking a heaping teaspoon per day. Mix the ginger with your favorite beverage. Or if you don't mind the taste, mix it in water or make fresh ginger tea.

Nutrition and the Inflammation Process:

If you suffer from chronic inflammatory symptoms, your first course of action might be to utilize the above recommended dietary changes and whole food supplements. Look for ways as to how your diet and lifestyle can interrelate to reduce the outcome of inflammation. By modifying your diet and lifestyle, you may be able to realize considerable improvements in your body's immune system function and thereby lower the level of "alarm substances" traveling in your bloodstream that trigger inflammation.

References:

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