

## INFLAMMATION

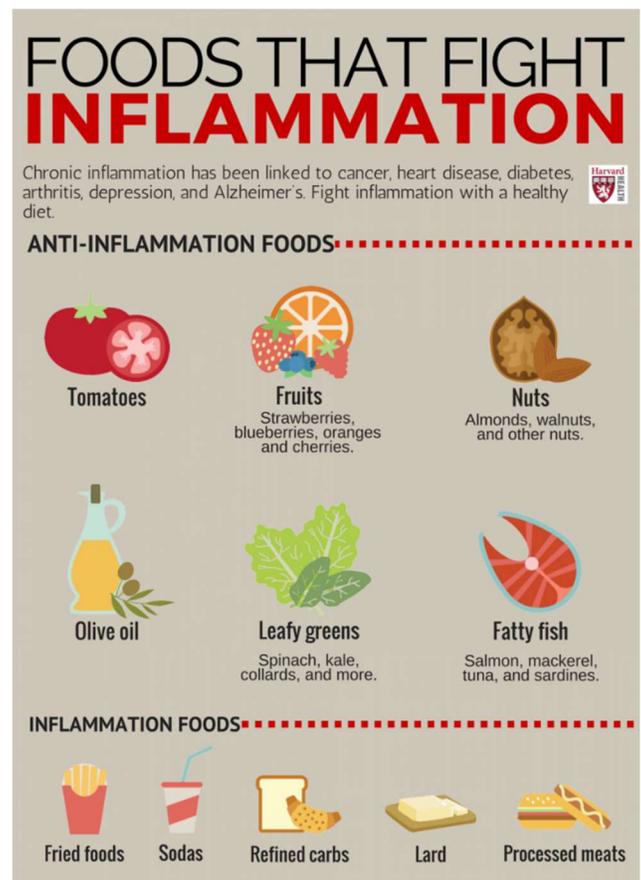
“Inflammation” is a very popular word - every store is selling “anti-inflammatory” supplements or restaurants serve meal and snacks that state they help “reduce inflammation”. But...what really is INFLAMMATION? Is it always bad?

**YES** – chronic (continuous) inflammation can have negative effects through the entire body impacting a persons organs and microbiome health. **BUT** – acute (short term) inflammation is the body’s natural response to injury or infection and plays a very important role in healing.

→The goal is to control **chronic** inflammation.

General causes of **chronic** inflammation include smoking, stress, obesity, limited activity and less than optimal dietary choices. Foods that have been linked to inflammation and which should be limited include:

- Refined carbohydrates
  - White bread, cookies and cakes – these foods may encourage growthy of inflammatory gut bacteria which increases risk for weight gain, insulin resistance and disease.
- Sugar and high fructose corn syrup
  - Added sugar in foods has been linked to increased inflammatory markers. Sports drinks, sodas, cereals and even bread are often very high in **added** sugar. Read food labels and look at the “Added Sugar” line.
- Processed meats
  - Hot dogs, sausages and certain deli meats often contain very high amounts of unwanted saturated fat and sodium. These factors can promote inflammation.
- Alcohol
  - Small amounts of alcohol may not be an issue but elevated amounts on a consistent basis has been found to increase inflammation. “Small amounts” is generally defined as 1 or 2 drinks and not everyday.



So what foods may help reduce inflammation (or at the least not increase inflammation)?

- Fatty fish
  - Omega 3 fatty acids in salmon, mackerel and anchovies have been shown to reduce inflammation.
- Oils and Nuts
  - Olive and avocado oil as well as almonds and cashews can contribute high energy calories to an anti inflammatory diet.
- Avocado
  - This fruit is packed with vitamins, minerals and nutrients which provide a wide variety of benefits and may help reduce inflammation.
- Fruits and vegetables with deep dark colors
  - Berries, peppers, tomatoes, carrots, leafy greens – these foods have Vitamin C and antioxidants that may reduce the risk of disease and lower inflammation.
- Spices
  - Turmeric, cinnamon, black peppers, ginger, cayenne and others make your food taste amazing and contain a variety of properties which may assist in lowering inflammation.

***NOTE: Just because a food or spice is considered anti-inflammatory it may not work for YOU. If you feel worse after incorporating certain items do not continue to include.***

Visual from Harvard School of Public Health: