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What You Need to Know About Chronic Inflammation

Mariam Turay | February 27, 2013 | 18 Comments

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Chronic Inflammation: The Root of Many Health Problems

Of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States (and many other developed countries) 7 out of 10 stem from chronic inflammation in the body. In the recent years scientists have come to understand that inflammation is a major contributing factor to a wide range of health problems. These health problems include diabetes, heart disease (the leading cause of death globally), Alzheimer's, asthma, arthritis, high blood pressure, kidney disease and certain types of cancer. So what causes inflammation in the body and why is it so prevalent?

Let's first begin by understanding what inflammation is:

Inflammation is a natural response by your body to help protect itself from harmful microorganism and to help heal wounds. For instance, any sort of trauma to your body, like a cut, bruises, an allergic reaction, a bacteria or viral infection (like the common cold) all trigger an inflammatory response. Depending on the injury or illness, you may experience pain, swelling, redness and /or warmth in that area. This response is known as acute

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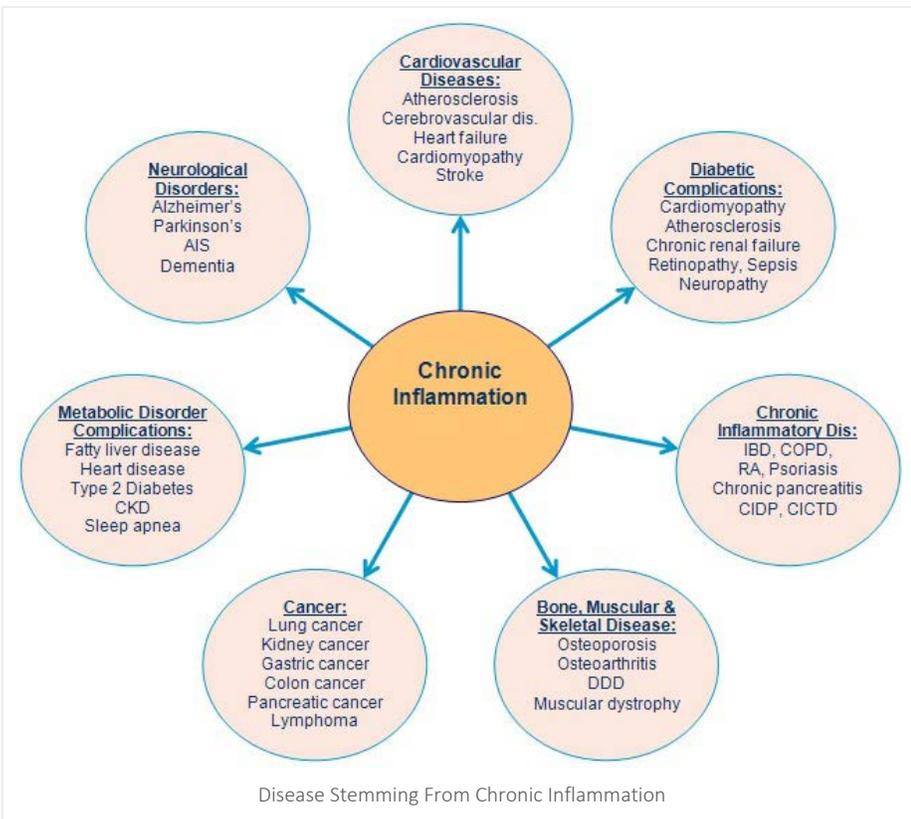
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inflammation, which means it's temporary and will subside once the problem is corrected by the body. Without inflammation, infections and wounds would never heal. In this case inflammation is necessary, however, **when inflammation becomes chronic, you are now opening yourself up to a multitude of health problems**, many of which I listed above.



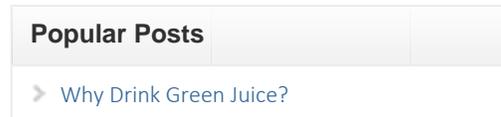
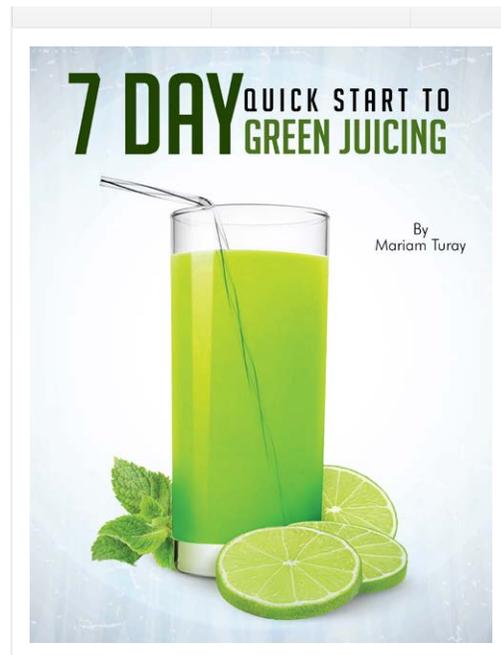
Tweetable: Simple solutions to prevent chronic inflammation & other health problems

Chronic Inflammation

Chronic inflammation means long term or constant inflammation. This type of inflammation can last anywhere from a few months to a lifetime. **One of the primary causes of chronic inflammation is an unhealthy diet.**

Specifically a diet high in refined sugars, processed foods, and fried & barbequed foods AKA the Standard American Diet (SAD). These sorts of foods create an overly acidic environment in your body. A poor diet followed with nutritional deficiencies and lack of enzymes all contribute to chronic inflammation.

When you consume unhealthy and unnatural foods inflammation is immediately triggered in your body. Therefore by constantly eating a poor diet, chronic inflammation will persist. In addition, the consumption of unhealthy foods also produces free radicals in the body. Excess amounts of free radicals in the body are damaging and have been linked to a number of diseases, such as, Alzheimer's, atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), cataracts, dementia, diabetes, high blood pressure, joint pain and stiffness, and kidney disease. The good news is that if you have any of the health



problems like high cholesterol, heart disease, arthritis and other diseases attributed by chronic inflammation it can be reversed. **Don't fret, there is a simple solution to preventing chronic inflammation in the body.**

Inflammation Diet (Causes / Contributors)

A healthy body is slightly alkaline. Those who eat a standard American diet have bodies that are generally over acidic. Over acidic bodies create chronic inflammation and other health problems.

Acidic Foods You Should Eliminate From Your Diet

- > **Fast Food** (McDonalds, KFC, Burger King, etc)
- > **Fried Foods and Trans fats** (Trans fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol and lowers your good (HDL) cholesterol. Scientist and medical doctors all agree that trans fats are the worst type of fats and should be avoided.

Alternative: Opt for baked, steamed, lightly sautéed clean foods.

***Anything that has hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils should be avoided, make sure to read the labels.**

- > **Foods with Trans Fats:**

-Commercial baked goods (Little Debbie is not your friend), crackers, cookies, cakes, French fries,
-Shortening and most margarine are high in trans fats.
-Corn, cottonseed, soybean, and safflower oils

Alternative: Cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil (best for cooking), palm oil, sesame seed oil, hemp oil, flax seed oil, truffle oil, hazelnut oil, walnut oil, pumpkin seed oil.

- > **High Sugar Diets**

Refined sugars, high fructose corn syrups, artificial sweeteners, aspartame, equal, sucralose, NutraSweet, pop (soda) are not your friends.

There are many scientific studies linking aspartame to cancer. [Study: Aspartame Linked to Blood Cancers](#)

"A newly published long term study that spans 22 years shows that drinking one or more aspartame-sweetened soft drinks per day increases the risk of several blood cancers in men. The study was led by Dr. Eva S. Schernhammer of the Channing

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Division of Network Medicine, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston."

Alternative: Whole fruit sweeteners (dates), coconut sugar, stevia, xylitol, yacon syrup, lucuma powder.

> Refined Grains

White flours, white rice, enriched flours & white potatoes.

Alternative: Whole grains, quinoa*, amaranth*, buckwheat*, millet*, oats, wild rice*, black, brown and red rice*, and teff*.

*=Non-Gluten Grains

> Red Meats & Processed Meats

Beef, pork, bacon & lamb

Processed Meats = smoked, cured, salted or chemically preserved
Researchers at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine confirm that red meat triggers chronic inflammatory response.

Alternative: Pastured raised chicken, wild caught fish, cold water fish: wild pacific salmon, ocean char, cod, halibut, haddock, sole, pollack, tuna, stripped bass. Sardines, anchovies.

If you decided to keep red meat in your diet, select grass-fed and wild meats, and keep it to no more than once per week.

> Dairy Products

60% of the world's population cannot digest milk. In fact the ability to digest milk as an adult is a genetic adaptation. This genetic adaptation is primarily present in people of Northern European ancestry. Africans, Asians & Native Americans generally do not have this genetic adaptation and should completely avoid milk and other dairy products.

Milk is a common allergen that causes systemic inflammation, weight gain, IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), constipation, acne, and abnormal digestion.

Alternative: Almond milk, hemp milk, coconut milk, hazelnut milk.

> Overweight & Obese

Research now shows that obesity and inflammation in the body is directly related to certain types of cancers.

> Poor Gut Health

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Poor gut health and lack of beneficial bacteria induces inflammation in the body as well as lowers our immune system. Also too many antibiotics wipes out both good and bad bacteria causing unhealthy microbes to invade your body.

- > **Chronic Stress**
- > **Alcohol & Coffee**

High consumption of these two create chronic inflammation and promote tumor growth and increases your risk for cancer.

Alternative: Consider subbing in green juices, green tea, yerba mate, smoothies & water. If you can't give up alcohol and coffee, consider reducing your consumption. The general recommendation for alcohol consumption: no more than 2 drinks a day for men and no more than 1 drink a day for women. Have your green juice before you grab a coffee also try out yerba mate instead of coffee.

- > **Lack of Physical Activity**
- > **Lack of Sleep**

A community study by researchers at Emory University School of Medicine found that people who don't get enough sleep or sleep poorly have higher levels of inflammation.

Anti Inflammatory Diet

- > **The first step to reducing inflammation in the body is limiting overly acidic foods.** 80% of the foods you consume should be alkaline and 20% should be acidic, known as the 80/20 rule. This should be followed for each meal you consume, instead of just trying to consume all alkaline foods for one or two meals and acidifying foods at other meals. This ratio gives the body what it needs to neutralize the acid residue and prevent any buildups in the body.

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Alkaline Forming Foods			Acid Forming Foods		
VEGETABLES	FRUITS	PROTEIN	DAIRY	ANIMAL PROTEIN	OTHER
alfalfa	apples	almonds	butter	beef	alcohol
arugula	apricots	chestnuts	cheese	chicken	artificial sweeteners
asparagus	avocado	lentils	cottage cheese	eggs (poached)	balsamic vinegar
beets	bananas	tempeh	cow milk	goose	beer
bell pepper	blackberries	pumpkin seed	cream	lamb	black tea
broccoli	blueberries	sesame seed	goat milk	mutton	chutney
brussel sprouts	cantaloupe	sprouted seeds	goat/sheep cheese	organs	cocoa (processed)
cabbage	cherries	sunflower seeds	ice cream	pork	coffee
carrots	citrus	duck eggs	milk	turkey	curry
cauliflower	currant	quail eggs		veal	fried foods
celery	dewberry			fish	gelatin
chlorella	grapefruit	GRAINS	FATS & OILS	lobster	honey
collard greens	grapes	japonica rice	almond oil	shell fish	maple syrup
cucumbers	honeydew	oats	canola oil	bear	nutmeg
dandelion greens	kiwifruit	quinoa	chestnut oil	boar	soft drinks
duice	lemons	wild rice	corn oil	eik	sugar
edible flowers	limes		cottonseed oil	pheasant	table salt
eggplant	loganberry	FATS & OILS	grape seed oil	rabbit	vanilla
endive	mango	avocado oil	palm kernel oil	venison	white vinegar
fermented veggies	nectarine	cashews	pumpkin seed oil	wild duck	yeast
garlic	orange	coconut oil	safflower oil		
ginger root	papaya	cod liver oil	sesame oil	BEANS & LEGUMES	
kale	passionfruit	flax oil	sunflower oil	aduki beans	GRAINS
kambucha	peach	hemp seed oil	lard	black beans	amaranth
kelp	pear	olive oil		black-eyed peas	barley
kohlrabi	persimmon	primrose oil	FRUITS	fava beans	barley groats
lettuces	pineapple	tahini	coconut	garbanzo beans	brown rice
lotus root	raisins		cranberry	green peas	buckwheat
mushrooms	raspberries	OTHER	dates	kidney beans	corn
mustard greens	strawberries	apple cider vinegar	dry fruit	lima beans	farina
okra	tangerine	umeboshi vinegar	figs	navy beans	hops
olives	watermelon	rice syrup	guava	pinto beans	kamut
onions		sake	jam	red beans	kasha
parsley	SEASONINGS	soy sauce	jelly	soy cheese	maize
parsnip	all herbs	spices	plum	soy milk	malt
peppers	chili pepper	baking soda	pomegranate	soybean	millet
potatos	cinnamon	unsulfured molasses	prune	tofu	oat bran
pumpkin	ginger	banchi tea	rhubarb	white beans	rye
rutabaga	ki sweet	dandelion tea			seitan
sea vegetables	miso	ginger tea	VEGETABLES	NUTS & BUTTERS	semolina
seaweed	mustard	ginseng tea	chard	brazil nuts	spelt
spirulina	sea salt	green tea	snow peas	hazelnuts	wheat
sprouts	stevia	herbal tea	spinach	peanuts	white rice
squash	tamari	nu tea	string beans	pecans	
sweet potatoes		kombucha	tomatoes	pine nuts	
taro root		mineral water	wax beans	walnuts	
turnip greens		grain coffee	zucchini		
watercress					

- **Eat plenty of vegetables with every meal.** Vegetables are one of the most alkalizing foods you can eat. Avoid overcooking; aim for more raw and lightly steamed vegetables to preserve nutrient content.
- **Incorporate a plant-based diet.** Plant-based diets are anti-inflammatory because they contain anti-inflammatory phytonutrients, which prevents our bodies from overproducing inflammatory compounds. There's no need to turn vegan overnight, just start by making a few meals a week all plant-based. Plant foods have 64 times more antioxidants than red meat, poultry, dairy and eggs.
- **Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are rich in many antioxidant compounds, which reduce inflammation in the body. Study shows that fruits and vegetables with the highest antioxidant levels reduce inflammation the most. Fruits and vegetables each contain unique phytonutrients compounds unique to them, we miss out when we just stick to a few types of fruits and vegetables.
- **Choose Healthy Fats and Oils.** Not all fats are bad for you. No more than 30% (preferably 20-25%) of fats should come from your diet. Important fats you should include in your diet daily are the essential fatty acids (EFAs). These fats are required for optimal health and must be obtained from your diet as your body does not produce them. The most important of the EFAs are the omega 3 and omega 6. **Omega 3 are especially**

important because they contain anti-inflammatory properties and other compounds to normalize cholesterol levels and help prevent stroke and cancer. The Standard American Diet lacks this essential nutrient.

Plant based source (excellent)

Pumpkin seeds, walnuts, flax seeds and chia seeds.

Animal source (excellent)

Wild-caught salmon, fish oil supplements and sardines.

- **Drink Pure Water Daily.** Approximately 70% our bodies are made up of water. Water is essential for many functions in our bodies, such as: proper metabolism and digestion, delivery of oxygen into the bloodstream, proper kidney and urinary tract infections, joint lubrication and muscle functions, healthy respiratory function, elimination of toxins and much more. **As a general rule aim for 1 quart (32oz) of water for every 70 pounds of weight.** Drink water through your day and always drink water or any liquids 30 minutes before a meal or after. Drinking a lot of water while you eat will interfere with digestion. My personal recommendation is to start your morning with a glass of fresh water upon rising.
- **Drink Fresh Green Juices Daily.** Juicing alkalizes the body and offers protection against unhealthy inflammation. Juicing also improves your body's ability to remove toxins, which is another cause of inflammation. **Have at least 1 quart (32oz) of fresh green juice a day.**

Special tip: Consider adding flax seed, hemp seed or chia seed oils to your favorite vegetable juices for an added anti-inflammatory boost.

- **Do Some Form of Physical Activity.** Maintain a body weight within a normal range. Try to get in at least 30 minutes of some form of physical activity each day. It can be as simple as a walk around your neighborhood.

Now that you have read this article, I hope that you have a better understanding of how and why healthy dietary habits are so important to your health.

“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.” Dr. Ann Wigmore

Feel free to post a comment or question below.

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Juice Recipes for Inflammation

- 5 Carrots, 1/2 Beet, 1 Cucumber and 1/2 Parsley bunch
- 1 Cucumber, 3 Celery stalk, 4 Kale leaves, handful of Spinach, 2-3 Granny Smith Apples, knob Ginger, 1cm turmeric & 1/2 Lemon (rind removed)
- 1 Cilantro bunch, 2 Cucumbers, 2 Celery stalks, 1 Lime & 2 Pears

Sources:

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About the author



Author: Mariam Turay is a passionate natural health advocator & health researcher. An expert in juicing, human nutrition and plant based nutrition, she has helped many lose weight naturally and regained their health. She has a strong passion to help transform the lives and health of her fellow human beings through whole living foods and the healing powers of fresh vegetable and fruit juices. This simple

approach has helped her lose excess weight and regain her health and vitality.

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