

The Anti-inflammatory (Longevity) Diet and How to Supplement

As Recommended in the book, *Healthy Aging*, by Andrew Weil, M.D.

Many diseases today are caused by inflammation, e.g., heart disease, asthma and autoimmune disorders. Stress and stress hormones can also cause inflammation and pain, not to mention the acidic food and drinks we may consume. Andrew Weil maintains that the Mediterranean and traditional Japanese diets are the healthiest, and that the typical American diet is the least healthy. Following are Dr. Weil's recommendations for an anti-inflammatory diet:

GENERAL

- Aim for variety.
- Include as much fresh food as possible.
- Minimize your consumption of processed foods and fast food.
- Eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables.

CALORIE INTAKE

- Most adults need to consume between 2,000 and 3,000 calories a day.
- Women and smaller and less active people need fewer calories.
- Men and bigger and more active people need more calories.
- If you are eating the appropriate number of calories for your level of activity, your weight should not fluctuate greatly.
- The distribution of calories you take in should be as follows: 40-50% from carbohydrates, 30% from fat, and 20-30% from protein.
- Try to include carbohydrates, fat, and protein at each meal.

CARBOHYDRATES

- On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, adult women should eat about 160-200 grams of carbohydrates a day.
- Adult men should eat about 240-300 grams of carbohydrates a day.
- The majority of this should be in the form of less-refined, less-processed foods with low glycemic loads (which affects blood sugar and insulin).
- Reduce your consumption of foods made with wheat flour and sugar, especially bread and most packaged snack foods (including chips and pretzels).
- Eat more whole grains (not whole-wheat-flour products), beans, winter squashes, and sweet potatoes.

- Cook pasta al dente (not too soft) and eat in moderation.
- Avoid products made with high-fructose corn syrup.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners that are known neurotoxins, except for stevia. Consider local honey.

FAT

- On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, 600 calories can come from fat—that is, about 67 grams. This should be in a ratio of 1:2:1 of saturated to monounsaturated to polyunsaturated fat.
- Reduce your intake of saturated fat by eating less butter, cream, cheese, ice cream, and other full-fat dairy products, unskinned chicken, fatty meats, and products made with coconut and palm kernel oils.
- Use extra-virgin olive oil as your main cooking oil. If you want a neutral-tasting oil, use expeller-pressed, organic canola oil. High-oleic versions of sunflower and safflower oil are acceptable also, preferable non-GMO (genetically modified organism).
- Avoid regular safflower and sunflower oils, corn oil, cottonseed oil, and mixed vegetable oils.
- Strictly avoid margarine, vegetable shortening, and all other products listing them as ingredients. Strictly avoid all products made with partially hydrogenated oils of any kind.
- Include in your diet avocados and nuts, especially walnuts, cashews, and almonds and nut butters made from them.
- For omega-3 fatty acids, eat salmon (preferably fresh or frozen wild or canned sockeye), sardines packed in water or olive oil, herring, black cod (sablefish, butterfish), omega-3 fortified eggs, hemp seeds, flaxseeds (preferably freshly ground), and walnuts; or take a fish oil supplement (see below).

PROTEIN

- On a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, your daily intake of protein should be between 80-120 grams. Eat less protein if you have liver or kidney problems, allergies, or autoimmune disease.
- Decrease your consumption of animal protein except for fish and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Eat more vegetable protein, especially from beans in general and soybeans in particular. Become familiar with the range of soy foods available or find ones you like.

FIBER

- Try to eat 40 grams of fiber a day. You can achieve this by increasing your consumption of fruit, especially berries, vegetables (especially beans), and whole grains. (If you're sensitive to beans, try Beano enzymes to prevent gas.)
- Ready-made cereals can be good fiber sources, but read labels to make sure they give you at least 4 and preferably 5 grams of bran per one-ounce serving and are not filled with sugar.

PHYTONUTRIENTS

- To get maximum natural protection against age-related diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative disease, as well as against environmental toxicity, eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, and mushrooms.
- Choose fruits and vegetables from all parts of the color spectrum, especially berries, tomatoes, orange and yellow fruits, and dark leafy greens.
- Choose organic produce whenever possible. Learn which conventionally grown crops are most likely to carry pesticide residues (see www.foodnews.org) and avoid them.
- Eat cruciferous (cabbage family) vegetables regularly.
- Include soy foods in your diet.
- Drink tea instead of coffee, especially good-quality white, green, or oolong tea.
- If you drink alcohol, use red wine preferentially.
- Enjoy plain dark chocolate (with a minimum cocoa content of 70%) in moderation.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

- The best way to obtain all of your daily vitamins, minerals, and micronutrients is by eating a diet high in fresh foods with an abundance of fruits and vegetables.
- In addition, supplement your diet with the following antioxidant cocktail:
 1. Vitamin C, 200 milligrams a day
 2. Vitamin E, 400 IU of natural mixed tocopherols (d-alpha-tocopherol with other tocopherols, or, better, a minimum of 80 milligrams of natural mixed tocopherols and tocotrienols)
 3. Selenium, 200 micrograms of an organic (yeast-bound) form
 4. Mixed carotenoids, 10,000-15,000 IU daily
- In addition, take daily multivitamin-multimineral supplements that provide at least 400 micrograms of folic acid and at least 1,000 IU of vitamin D. They should contain no iron and no preformed vitamin A (retinol).
- Take supplemental calcium, preferably as calcium citrate. Women need 1,200-1,500 milligrams a day, depending on their dietary intake of this mineral; men should get no more than 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day from all sources.

- If you tend to be constipated, add in 500 mg of magnesium citrate, which is a vasodilator, and take before bedtime or with calcium, per LJS.

OTHER DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

- If you are not eating oily fish at least twice a week, take supplemental fish oil, in capsule or liquid form, 1-2 grams a day. Look for molecularly distilled products certified to be free of heavy metals and other contaminants.
- Talk to your doctor about going on low-dose aspirin therapy, 1 or 2 baby aspirins (81 or 162 milligrams) a day.
- If you are not regularly eating ginger and turmeric, consider taking these in supplemental form.
- Add Co-Q-10 to your daily regimen: 60-100 milligrams of a softgel form taken with your largest meal.
- If you are prone to metabolic syndrome (weight gain around the abdomen or are insulin resistant), take alpha-lipoic acid, 100-400 milligrams a day.

WATER

- Try to drink 6-8 glasses of pure water a day or drinks that are mostly water (tea, very diluted fruit juice, sparkling water with lemon).
- Use bottled water or get a home water purifier if your tap water tastes of chlorine or other contaminants or if you live in an area where the water is known or suspected to be contaminated.

WEB SITE

For more information on the anti-inflammatory diet, including meal planning, shopping guides, and recipes, see www.healthyaging.com.

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