AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEAL PLAN

The follow diet suggestions help decrease inflammation, which can help prevent disease and achieve wellness.

1. Eat A Rainbow of Colorful Fruits and Vegetables. Aim to reach 4-6 cups/day.

- Brightly colored fruits and vegetables contain a myriad of phytochemicals that provide flavor, smell, and protection to plants. In humans, they defend us against inflammation and oxidative stress.
- Fruits and vegetables are also rich in antioxidant (inflammation-fighting) vitamins like Vitamin C and A.
- Choose a full rainbow of red, purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and white produce: each color has a different phytochemical!

A FEW ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

**Cruciferous Vegetables and Dark Leafy Greens**
- Broccoli, kale, cauliflower, cabbage, mustard...
- Contain phytochemicals that detox and fight cancer!

**Onions and Garlic**
- Heart-healthy, anti-viral, anti-bacterial.
- Cutting before cooking increases phytochemical content!

**Dark Colored Berries and Fruits**
- Cherries, pomegranates, blue/black/raspberries
- Rich in flavonoid phytochemicals, great for the heart!

**Citrus Fruits**
- Grapefruit, lime, lemon, pomelo, orange
- Rich in phytochemicals and antioxidant vitamin C!
2. Choose High Quality Fats: Omega 3’s and Monounsaturated

- Omega 3 fats, found in **wild fish** like salmon, sardines, trout, herring, cod, anchovies, halibut, albacore tuna and mackerel, as well as **walnuts and flaxseeds**, are the most anti-inflammatory.

- **Eat nuts and seeds every day**, preferably raw and unsalted, for heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. Try pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, walnuts, hemp, chia, and ground flax.

- **Choose avocados and cold-pressed olive oil** for heart-healthy mono-unsaturated fats!

- Avoid all Trans fats found in packaged and fried foods and margarines. Limit refined vegetable fats like soy, corn, safflower, and sunflower. All promote inflammation in excess!

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3. Eat Complex Carbohydrates, a Low-Glycemic Diet

- Refined grains and simple sugars promote inflammation and stress the body through unbalanced blood sugar. Limit white flour, white rice, sugars, artificial sweeteners.

- Choose complex carbohydrates **rich in fiber** for a low-glycemic load: whole grains, beans, lentils, winter squash, potatoes with peel, fresh fruit and vegetables.
4. Get Your Probiotics

- *Fermented foods* are an excellent source of probiotic bacteria which help to keep the digestive tract healthy. Food sources include kombucha, miso, sauerkraut, yogurt, tempeh, natto, kefir, and kimchi.

- Gut health is key for whole body health! A healthy gut (instead of a leaky gut) means allergens and inflammatory particles don’t cross into the bloodstream!

5. Spice up Your Life!

- Herbs and spices are highly concentrated sources of the same anti-inflammatory, brightly colored phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables!

- Keep a spice shaker on the table and apply liberally! Try ginger, garlic, turmeric, curry, rosemary, basil, cinnamon, nettles, cayenne, and thyme, to name a few.

- Turmeric contains *curcumin*, especially powerful at reducing whole-body pain and inflammation.
6. Drink Tea

- Black, green, red, and white teas are all high in inflammation-fighting polyphenol phytochemicals.

- One study showed people who drink 2+ cups green tea daily have about ¼ less chance of death from heart disease!

- Herbal tea infusions, such as hibiscus, lavender, chamomile, rooibos, cinnamon, and nettle, are also rich in health-promoting phytochemicals.

- Flavonoids in hibiscus tea have been shown to lower blood pressure.

7. Try Wild Foods!

- Foods grown in the wild are more nutrient-dense than cultivated ones. They fight to survive every day, and build up extremely high levels of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients as a result!

- Greens like nettles or dandelion, lady fern fiddleheads, huckleberries, blackberries, seaweed, sea beans and more—look for purveyors at your local farmer’s market or take a wild foods class to find food in your backyard!

- Seaweed, for example, is one of the richest sources of trace minerals on earth: 20-30 times the amount in land plants!
8. Avoid Irritants: Chemicals, Allergens, Highly Processed Foods

- Many industrial chemicals and pesticides can irritate the immune system. Choose organic foods and “green” personal care and cleaning products. Refer to the Environmental Working Group [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org) for more information.

- Learn if you have food allergies or intolerances, which can often worsen inflammation. Common irritants include milk, eggs, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, soybeans, and wheat/gluten.

- Choose whole foods, which only have one ingredient and are in their natural form. Processed foods can contain artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives that trigger a negative immune reaction.

- Moderate alcohol intake. While 1-2 glasses of red wine/day have been found to be anti-inflammatory, higher levels irritate the liver and digestive system.

9. Practice Stress Reduction and Other Non-Food Ways to Decrease Inflammation

- Physical activity, yoga, meditation, and other mindful movement promote peace and balance in the nervous system, counteracting the damage of psychological stress.

- A good night’s sleep (at least 7-9 hours) decreases inflammatory chemicals in the body and allows for self-repair.

- Nourish your body regularly with non-food pleasures which create endorphins for powerful healing: dancing, hot baths, massage, sex, laughter: whatever makes you feel really good.

- Remember that some stress can be a powerful motivator and allow you to create change in the world. Embrace necessary stress and let yourself find peace within chaos. See the TED talk “How to Make Stress Your Friend” for more inspiration!
Meal Tips for Increasing Phytonutrients

Breakfast
- Have a warm cup of green, black, or herbal tea. Try different teas every day!
- Add a cup of fresh or frozen berries to your cereal, yogurt, or plate.
- Add nuts and seeds like flax and walnuts to your bowl.
- Spice up oatmeal with a mixture of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger.
- Start the day with a phytonutrient packed fruit and vegetable smoothie!
- Focus on protein to keep blood sugar stable: plain greek yogurt or cottage cheese with fruit and nuts, vegetable frittata or tofu scramble, salmon and whole grain toast, huevos rancheros with beans.

Lunch and Dinner
- Include a big green salad every day with rainbow purple cabbage, kale, and other bright veggies.
- Try winter squash, carrot, creamed spinach, tomato, miso, or other vegetable soup.
- Add sautéed onions and garlic to any dish.
- Add shredded vegetables like carrots or zucchini to any pasta dishes or casseroles.
- Try baked sweet potatoes or winter squash instead of white potatoes, or swirl together!
- Use fruit sauces instead of gravy: such as trout with huckleberry sauce.
- Add a scoop of probiotics with fermented kraut or kimchi and a drizzle of yogurt.
- Try a salmon salad sandwich or lettuce wrap. Add veggies like avocado, tomato, spinach.
- Include a piece of whole fruit or a cup of berries with every lunch.
- Add herbs and spices like basil, rosemary, turmeric, or cinnamon to all dishes.
- Whip up a vegetable stir fry with tofu or fish served over quinoa for a quick weeknight dinner.
- Have a square of dark (70% or more) chocolate (rich in flavonoids) for dessert, or try stewed fruit with a drizzle of probiotic-rich yogurt.

Snacks
- Enjoy raw vegetables like red pepper, carrot, or thinly sliced beet dipped in hummus or bean dip.
- Try a fruit and nut smoothie, or add vegetables like frozen spinach or pureed pumpkin for even more nutrition punch.
- Reach for nuts or nut butter and a piece of fresh fruit; add a bite of dark chocolate for a treat.
- Prepare vegetable and/or fruit packed whole grain muffins like pumpkin, zucchini, applesauce, blueberry, or sweet potato. Add chopped nuts for healthy fat.
- Try half an avocado with a little lemon, salt, and a spoon. Filling and anti-inflammatory!
- Try sardines with whole grain crackers and cream cheese for extra omega-3 fats.
- Add protein or fat to snacks to keep blood sugar stable: string cheese, nuts, hummus, edamame, etc.
- Don’t forget to drink herbal tea throughout the day for extra phytonutrients!

Recipes
Check out these great books for more anti-inflammatory recipe ideas:

**The Cancer-Fighting Kitchen** by Rebecca Katz
**The Longevity Kitchen** by Rebecca Katz
**The Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook** by Tom Malterre and Alissa Segersten
**Feeding the Whole Family** by Cynthia Lair

**The Autoimmune Solution** by Amy Myers, M.D.
**Brassicas** by Laura B. Russell
**Healing Spices** by Bharat B. Aggarwal, PhD
**Wild Fermentation** by Sandor Ellix Katz
**Clean Slate** by the editors of Martha Stewart Living
What’s Your First Step?

Transitioning to an anti-inflammatory diet pattern can take time! Setting S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timely) goals can help keep you on track with diet and lifestyle changes.

List One Action Step You’d Like to Take with Diet in the Next Week:

*Think easy and attainable, like buying a box of green tea or a bag of frozen blueberries.*

1.

List One Action Step You’d Like to Take with Activity/Stress Management in the Next Week:

*Start small, 10 minutes of walking at lunch or 5 minutes of deep breathing before bed.*

2.

Visioning the Future

Now, list 5 bigger goals you have for diet and lifestyle. For example, drink a green smoothie every day or join a yoga class three times a week. Each week, check back in and set smaller steps to reach your big goals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Find a Cheerleader!

Who can help you stay on track? It is hard to make permanent change without regular support and check ins. Think of a loved one, a friend, a coworker, or a healthcare professional you can reach out to on a regular basis.

My cheerleader will be:

Another person who can help support my goals is: