

Inflammation – Is it Good or Bad?

Column

By **Julia Chiappetta**



Inflammation is a defense mechanism in the body, and when the immune system recognizes damaged cells, irritants, and pathogens, it activates a defense system to eliminate injured cells, clean them out and then promote healing. While this system of attack and repair is amazing, it also presents challenges for some who, because their bodies tend to stay inflamed, are unable to turn the off switch.

To illustrate, think of your body as a sports car with standard transmission in which the stick shift moves from first to

fifth gear. In those with compromised immune systems, the body is not able to downshift and stays in fifth gear, inflamed for long periods, as it attacks itself. Why consider any thought or research on inflammation? Because it is a risk factor for cancer, autoimmune disease, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression and Alzheimer's. All of these conditions have been linked to chronic or systemic inflammation.

In the report *Foods that Fight Inflammation*, published by Harvard Women's Health Watch, June 2014 and updated November 2018, Dr. Frank Hu, professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology in the Department of Nutrition, at the Harvard School of Public Health, states, "One of the most powerful tools to combat inflammation comes not from the pharmacy, but from the grocery store. Many experimental studies have shown that

components of foods or beverages may have anti-inflammatory effects, and choosing the right anti-inflammatory foods may be able to reduce your risk of illness. Consistently pick the wrong ones, and you could accelerate the inflammatory disease process."

Foods that promote inflammation include: refined carbohydrates, breads, pastries, fried foods, sugar, sweetened beverages, meats and nightshade vegetables. Common nightshades include: tomatoes, all varieties of peppers, eggplant, all potatoes, except sweet potato, and huckleberries. Although nightshade vegetables are completely healthy for most people, they act as a trigger for some individuals and may cause major immune reactions. Some natural foods that reduce inflammation are: organic, virgin, unrefined coconut oil, omega 3's (oily fish), curcumin.

I am looking forward to learning and sharing more with you about natural protocols for health, presented by doctors and scientists living around the globe, at the 13th Annual Complementary & Alternative Cancer Therapies Conference, in a few weeks. Until then, please drink your greens, always organic, as you take in the beautiful sunrise and the gift that each day brings to your doorstep. As we eagerly await spring to make its debut, let's stay warm and try to be kind and generous to those we know who are lonely, hurting or experiencing great loss. My heart is hopeful and with all of you.

Julia Chiappetta is the author of "Breast Cancer: The Notebook" (Gemini Media, 2006) and is also the owner of Julia Chiappetta Consulting. She lives in Cos Cob. More information and past columns can be found at JuliaChiappetta.com