



Philip Lai Qi Gong Association

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My dear QiGong friends:

Anti-Inflammatory Foods

In recent years it has been found that chronic inflammation in the body causes many serious diseases such as cancer, arthritis, heart disease and possibly Alzheimer's. Normal inflammation such as that around a recent injury is a natural healing response, which sends blood, nourishment and immune cells to speed healing. Chronic inflammation is destructive and can lead to disease. Eating a diet of anti-inflammatory foods can help protect against many diseases and actually slow the aging process. Food therapy is a large part of Chinese medicine and what we eat is an easy and powerful way to influence our health. We should always seek to eat food that is fresh and free of added chemicals. Local, fresh, organic food is the best and food grown in your own garden is ideal. It is also best to prepare foods simply and with a minimum of ingredients. Take your time when eating, chew well, be mindful and focus as you take in nourishment for your body.

The following are good foods to fight inflammation:

Vegetables

Eggplant, okra, onions, purple cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts and red peppers are highly anti-inflammatory, especially when lightly steamed. You can add a bit of turmeric or ginger to enhance the effect. Eat 5-6 servings of vegetables a day.

Grains

Barley, oatmeal, basmati rice, brown or wild rice, millet, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat and rye all have anti-inflammatory effects.

Use whole grains with high amounts of fiber as they contain naturally occurring anti-inflammatory phytonutrients. Grains digest slowly, keeping blood sugar levels stable and help to combat inflammation. Eat 3-5 servings a day. One serving is equal to 1/2 cup cooked grains.

Seeds and Nuts

Almonds, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds can be carried with you and eaten anytime. Flax and chia seeds can be added to smoothies or salads. Hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, cashews and walnuts are also packed with anti-inflammatory properties. Nuts and seeds are whole foods, and fight inflammation effectively because they offer healthy fats, fiber, protein and vitamin E. Nuts and seeds contain either monounsaturated or omega-3

fats which help to reduce inflammation. Eat 5-7 servings a day (one serving equals 1 teaspoon).

Legumes

Split peas, lentils, pinto beans, mung beans, chick peas, black beans and adzuki beans are very inflammatory. They contain folic acid, magnesium and potassium as well as soluble fiber. Legumes have a low glycemic index which makes them great for anyone concerned about high blood sugar. Make sure to eat legumes well cooked, as they can be hard to digest. Try to eat 1-2 servings (serving equals 1/2 cup cooked) per day.

Fruit

3-4 servings of fresh, colourful fruit per day are a wonderful source of antioxidants and are rich in flavonoids and carotenoids. The best fruit is organic, freshly picked and in season but frozen can be used as well. Raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, nectarines, peaches, red grapes, pink grapefruit, pomegranates, plums, cherries, apples and pears are good choices to fight inflammation.

Butter and Oils

Extra virgin olive oil is rich in polyphenols and antioxidants and smells wonderful. Use it for cooking or mix it with butter to boost the essential fats. Use organic sunflower or safflower oils, as well as walnut and hazelnut oils as a salad dressing for a different flavor.

Spices

Certain spices, like turmeric and ginger are loaded with anti-inflammatory properties. Some others are curry (which includes turmeric), parsley, savory, cardamom, garlic, chili peppers, thyme, rosemary, basil and cinnamon. You may use spices to add interest to any dish.

Teas and Water

It is important to stay hydrated to stay healthy and combat inflammation. Room temperature (or warmed) water is best but do not add ice or drink it cold out of the fridge as this is very hard on your spleen. A glass of lemon water in the morning is an excellent way to detox your body before you start your day. Drink herbal teas, preferably in the evening and sip them slowly. Tea is high in catechin, which reduces inflammation. Drink herbal teas 2-4 times per day. The best choices are high quality oolong, green and white teas. Each type of tea has its own method of preparation for maximum flavour and health benefits.

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