

Wellness

REVIEW

Pain and Inflammation



Is poorly managed pain and inflammation slowing you down and impairing your quality of life? The feeling of pain is your body's way of telling you that there is inflammation present. Inflammation is associated with the classic symptoms of pain, redness, heat and swelling. It frequently accompanies injury and tissue trauma, such as sprains, strains, cuts, bites and stings. However, what you may not realise, is that inflammation can be a contributing factor to many health conditions and is a key component in the joint pain of arthritis, back pain and muscular aches, digestive disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease, period pain, and many types of headaches.

The Firefighters Within

The term inflammation comes from the Latin word, 'Inflamatio' which means to set on fire. Inflammation is like a small biological fire designed to 'burn away' harmful stimuli such as pathogens, allergens, injury or other irritants. It is a protective mechanism designed to remove these causative factors and initiate the healing response. Inflammation can also be the result of diet, lifestyle factors and stress which can ignite, and keep this fire burning.

Inflammation Inside and Out

Inflammation can be easily identified when there are external signs of pain from arthritis, or joint and muscle injuries. However, inflammation can be occurring inside the body even when the warning signs are less obvious. For example, did you realise that obesity is an inflammatory state? Many digestive disorders such as food intolerances, irritable bowel disease, and coeliac disease are inflammatory conditions.

Putting Out the Body's Fire

For optimal health, it is important to dampen down the inflammatory response and put out this fire. Pharmaceutical anti-inflammatories are commonly used to help relieve pain and inflammation, however many of these carry risks such as causing damage to your digestive tract. Fortunately there are some safe and effective natural anti-inflammatory and pain relief solutions available:

- Turmeric - This Ayurvedic herb has been used traditionally for the treatment of traumatic injury, and to reduce swelling and pain in arthritic conditions.
- Boswellia - Has analgesic, anti-rheumatic and anti-inflammatory actions, as well as being effective for arthritis and traumatic pain, it may also assist with inflammatory conditions of the lungs, gastrointestinal tract and skin.
- Omega 3 essential fatty acids from fish oil containing EPA and DHA, may reduce acute and chronic pain and inflammation.

Anti-inflammatory herbs and nutrients are friendly to your gut and safe for long term use.

Food Can Produce or Reduce Inflammation

The typical Western diet may actually promote inflammation; high amounts of sugar and refined carbohydrates break down quickly into glucose and have been shown to induce inflammatory changes that are linked with many chronic diseases. In some susceptible people, foods such as dairy products and gluten-containing grains can trigger an inflammatory response within the digestive tract and throughout the body.

Foods that decrease inflammation	Foods that increase inflammation
Fresh fruits and vegetables	High intake of sugar and processed foods
Good fats from fish, nuts and seeds	Trans and saturated fats
Herbs and spices such as ginger, turmeric	Artificial flavours, colours and preservatives
Organic foods where possible	Excess coffee and alcohol
Eat mostly wholefoods	Allergenic foods - dairy, wheat and gluten

Simple Tips to Reduce Inflammation

As well as taking the right herbs and nutrients, there are simple diet and lifestyle changes that you can make that can help to reduce your inflammatory load:

1. Eat a diet plentiful in fresh fruit, a variety of vegetables and good fats from fish and nuts.
2. Minimise your intake of refined carbohydrates such as white bread, pasta, white rice, cereals.
3. Minimise your intake of red meat and opt instead for fish, chicken or vegetarian protein sources such as chickpeas or tofu.
4. Reduce your intake of alcohol, coffee, sugar and salt.
5. Avoid foods you may be reactive to, such as wheat and dairy foods.
6. Quit smoking.

The End to Inflammation

Don't let pain and inflammation reduce your quality of life! Talk to your Practitioner today about safe and effective natural medicines and simple dietary and lifestyle measures to reduce pain, and address the underlying causes of inflammation.