

Anti-inflammatory Foods: Natural Plants Foods Grown Under The energy Of The Sun

The natural foods which grow on the plants under the energy of the mighty sun are rich in vital micronutrients -vitamins, minerals, cleansing antioxidants, and phytochemicals. All of these elements protect the body from the disease-producing inflammatory process. The body cells use glucose and oxygen to make energy. This energy-making process requires vitamins and minerals. The energy making cycle creates waste products like carbon dioxide and oxygen free radicals inside the cells. The carbon dioxide gets eliminated through the lungs. The antioxidants and Phytochemicals take care of the remaining waste in the cells. Without the cleansing antioxidants and phytonutrients in the foods, the body cells will get damaged by the toxic waste. The antioxidants and phytochemicals are present only in the plant grown foods. Animal meats, milk, and factory-made synthetic foods do not have these life-sustaining elements. The modern city dwellers suffer from the epidemic of many of the above diseases because they are consuming mostly factory-made foods lacking in these essential micronutrients.

Common antioxidants include – Vitamin A, C and E, Beta carotene (present in yellow and orange vegetables and fruits), lycopene (present in tomatoes, watermelon, papaya and grapefruit), selenium and zinc (present in legumes, whole grains, seeds and nuts), lutein (present in grapes, spinach, oranges, and different kind of squashes). The anti-inflammatory food list includes:

- Fresh Vegetables, especially green vegetables with high ANDI (aggregate nutritional density index) – Spinach, Kale, Mustard greens, fenugreek leaves, Okra, and all colored vegetables.
- Fruits, mainly seasonal tropical fruits and berries – Nutritional value of fruits and vegetables diminishes with storage, and also by cooking at high temperature and under pressure. Do not pressure cook vegetables, including starchy potatoes and other root vegetables. Pressure cooking changes starchy root vegetables to easily absorbable sugars making these high glycemic. The glycemic index (GI) of food means how fast and how high the foods raise blood glucose level (Note: For Glycemic index details check the section of Practical nutrition on the website).
- Cold compressed cooking oils – Coconut, Sesame, Mustard (30-40 gm or 6-8 teaspoons/day) and Ghee (up to 10-15 gm or 2-3 teaspoons/day). Peanut oil should be used in smaller amounts as it has a high content of inflammatory Omega 6 fats. Never consumed refined oils made commercially in the factories.
- Nuts and Seeds (one fistful or 30 gm/day) – These are a rich source of anti-inflammatory omega three oils, and include- Almonds, Walnuts (highest antioxidant activity), Brazil nuts (a rich source of selenium), Pistachio, chia seeds, flaxseeds, sesame seeds, and melon seeds. Flaxseeds and sesame seeds have tough skin making these difficult to digest. These seeds should be freshly grounded and stored in a glass container for up to a month. The seed mixture with a pleasant nutty taste can be sprinkled on soups, salads or added to the chapati dough. Eat seeds and nuts raw, do not roast or heat, which causes loss of

essential oils and nutrients. Keep in mind that seeds and nuts are rich in calories, so keep these to recommended amounts up to 30 gm or a fistful in a day.

- Dry fruits – Brown raisins (munakka), Dates, and Figs. Keep in mind that dried fruits are high glycemic value and will raise the blood sugar; consume these in small amounts -1-2 pieces after thorough washing and soaking to remove the preservatives.
- Spices – Highest antioxidant activity is in cloves, cinnamon, turmeric followed by cumin seeds and fenugreek (methi) seeds. Fenugreek seeds and cinnamon have the elements which lower the blood sugar, so these are good for people with diabetes. The best way to eat fenugreek seeds is to sprout these after overnight soaking. The germinating process enhances the nutritional value of the seeds and lentils.
- Sprouted lentils and Seeds- Germinating process increases the protein content of lentils and adds vitamin B complex. In Ayurveda sprouted foods are considered Prana- Source of life foods.

Eat sprouted seeds, lentils and grain regularly



- Teas – Green and black tea have antioxidant properties. Unfortunately, the green tea market in India is unregulated, and it is difficult to know which preparations are safe. Interestingly, millions of cups of green tea have been drunk as a miracle accompaniment to a low- calorie diet solution to cure obesity. The epidemic of obesity, however, continues to multiply with each passing year. The black tea also becomes of questionable value because it gets prepared mostly with plenty of sugar and milk, limiting its nutritional benefit. The ideal way to make black tea is to brew it in boiled water and add a small amount of milk at the end to neutralize tannic acid liberated from tea leaves. Boiling the tea leaves makes the preparation acidic from the release of tannic acid.