

UNC Wellness Centers

Food For Thought

The Best Anti-Inflammatory Foods



Objectives

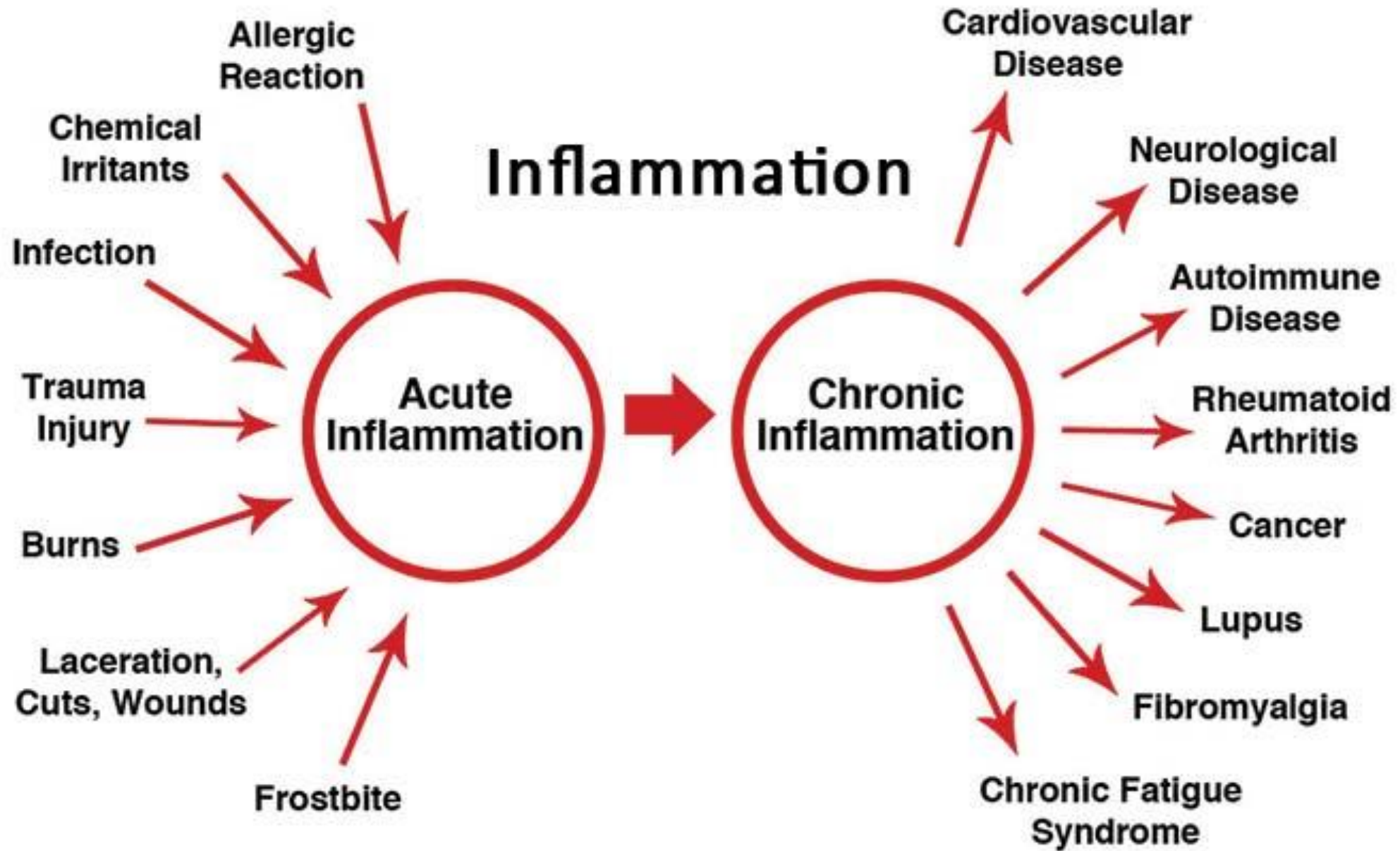
- What is inflammation?
- Why do we experience inflammation?
- What should I eat to reduce inflammation?

Inflammation: What is It?

- Inflammation
 - Helps the body fight illness and protect it from harm
 - Necessary part of the healing process
 - Antibodies rise when you have an immune response; which causes inflammation
 - Body sees food/pollen/chemical as a foreign body and starts working against it
 - Acute and chronic

Acute vs Chronic

- Acute Inflammation
 - Response to sudden body damage
 - Often lasts less than 2 weeks
 - Body returns to “normal” state after healed
- Chronic Inflammation
 - Body continues to send inflammatory cells even when there is not outside danger
 - Typically lasts longer than 6 weeks
 - Doesn't always end when healing is complete



What Drives Inflammation to Occur?

- Environment
- Genetics
- Drugs/medications
- Disease/illness
- Oxidative stress
- Repetitive injury
- Aging



Risk Factors

- Excess alcohol intake
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Chronic stress
- Smoking

Eating to Reduce Inflammation

- Technically, not an “anti-inflammatory diet”
- Focus on whole foods
- Try Mediterranean or DASH
- Anti-oxidants



FOODS THAT FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Chronic inflammation has been linked to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression, and Alzheimer's. Fight inflammation with a healthy diet.



ANTI-INFLAMMATION FOODS



Tomatoes



Fruits

Strawberries, blueberries, oranges and cherries.



Nuts

Almonds, walnuts, and other nuts.



Olive oil



Leafy greens

Spinach, kale, collards, and more.



Fatty fish

Salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines.

INFLAMMATION FOODS



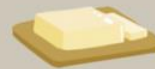
Fried foods



Sodas



Refined carbs



Lard



Processed meats

Foods to Include

- Tomatoes
- Fruits—particularly berries, oranges and cherries
- Nuts
- Olive Oil
- Leafy Greens
- Fatty Fish

Foods To Avoid

- “Processed” foods
- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- Fried foods
- Excessive alcohol

What Else?

- GENERAL recommendations
 - Hot/cold therapy to reduce swelling and discomfort
 - Exercise more often than not
 - Manage stress
 - Quit smoking
 - Treat preexisting conditions

Take Away

- Inflammation is a natural immune response
- Acute is normal part of healing
- Chronic can lead to and result in life threatening conditions
- Choosing more “whole” foods in the diet can help to combat inflammation
- See your physician if you suspect inflammation

Resources

- www.clevelandclinic.org
- www.healthline.com
- www.health.harvard.edu

Need additional support?

- Contact Liz at Elizabeth.watt@unchealth.unc.edu
- 984-974-2552
- www.uncwellness.com

- **Virtual and In-Person Nutrition Counseling is available.**
 - New members receive a complimentary 30 minute session.
 - Single session and packages available

Coming Up Next!

May 10 12-1 pm

Fresh and Fabulous

Spring is in the air and it's time for a bounty of North Carolina fruits and vegetables. These foods are rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that support a healthy lifestyle. Join Registered Dietitian Shelly Wegman as she demonstrates some fun and tasty ways to prepare local produce to brighten up your meals.