

## INFLAMMATION, DIET AND HEALTH: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Inflammation is a hot topic in the medical community. It has been shown to increase the risk of thrombosis (Blood Clots) and cardiovascular disease.

With this knowledge, you can be empowered to take control of your health. By understanding how your behavior contributes to inflammation, you can use this new information to reduce your own risk of developing health issues.

One way you can do that is by monitoring your diet.

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DIET AND INFLAMMATION

There are theories about the connection between different foods and inflammation. While many scientists know there is a connection, the details of the connection have not been discovered yet.

Inflammation can be caused by many different factors.

What scientists do know is that inflammation can be triggered by diseases that arise from unhealthy eating habits. We know that poor nutrition overall causes metabolic dysfunction, in particular insulin resistance and ultimately obesity. Similarly, a good diet can improve metabolic risk and separately lead to weight loss, which can dramatically improve inflammation.

The Mediterranean diet can help you battle inflammation. The most important thing is to focus on eating healthy foods. This involves a lot of healthy fats for fish, oils, nuts, and plenty of fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains. Not a lot of packaged or fast foods.

## MEDITERRANEAN DIET

This involves:

- ◆ Eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts.
- ◆ Replacing butter with healthy fats, such as olive oil and canola oil.
- ◆ Using herbs and spices, instead of salt to flavor foods.
- ◆ Limiting red meat to no more than a few times a month.
- ◆ Eating fish and poultry at least twice a week.



The diet also involves lifestyle changes, such as getting lots of exercise, eating meals with family and friends, and surprisingly drinking red wine in moderation.

A 2013 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* tested the power of the Mediterranean diet. Participants were divided into three groups. One group was assigned to eat a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil. The second group was assigned to eat a Mediterranean diet supplemented with nuts. Finally, the third group was assigned to a control diet. All of the study participants had no cardiovascular disease at enrollment but had either type 2 diabetes or at least three major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The study found that the Mediterranean diet lowered the risk of cardiovascular disease by 30% in trial participants. It also lowered participants' risk of stroke.

Researchers concluded," in this primary prevention trial, we observed that an energy-restricted Mediterranean diet, supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil or nuts, resulted in a substantial reduction in the risk of major cardiovascular events among high-risk persons. The results support the benefits of the Mediterranean diet for the prevention of cardiovascular disease".

## FOODS TO AVOID

By avoiding unhealthy foods, you can stop inflammation before it begins. The main things to avoid in the food system are starch, sugar and salt. Trying to reduce these things can be difficult, because they are found in many different food products. It can help to avoid buying pre-packaged overly processed foods. When shopping, you should also avoid buying white bread, white rice, and certain pastas, as they all contain high levels of starch.

The worst foods you could have are Soda's and sweets. If you want something sweet, have a little bit of ice cream, dark chocolate or have nuts covered in honey. Dark chocolate is made from cocoa beans and ice cream has milk in it. Sweets such as skittles and gummy bears have no such natural base.

## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

By eating healthy, you can reduce your risk of developing inflammatory risk factors, such as diabetes and metabolic syndrome. You also reduce your risk of developing bad cholesterol, raising your risk of a blood clot.

Choosing a healthy life will allow you to lay a solid foundation for your future. Its never too late to get started. Take control of your health by embracing nutritious foods and regular exercise. It will help you stay healthy and clot-free.

*This leaflet is for general information only and is not a substitute for medical advice.*



### Patient Information Leaflet



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