

Immune reactions to food cause inflammation

Research has shown that patients with rheumatoid arthritis who are exposed to foods they were allergic to experienced an increase in:

- Stiffness
- Pain
- Tender and swollen joints
- An increase in erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR), an inflammatory marker
- An increase in C-reactive protein (CRP), and inflammatory marker
- An increase in tumor necrosis factor alpha, an inflammatory marker
- An increase in interleukin-1 beta, and inflammatory marker (Karatay S, et al. 2004.)

Saturated fat, and especially trans fatty acids, have been shown to elevate CRP levels (King DE, et al. 2003. Baer DJ, et al. 2004).

Moderate to high coffee consumption has been shown to elevate CRP and several other inflammatory markers (Zampelas A, et al. 2004).

For these reasons it is recommended avoiding certain foods in order to help eliminate immune reactions for some people.

Avoidance is one way to find out if you have reactions to these foods. When they are reintroduced into the diet after avoiding them for awhile, it is easier to pinpoint what you don't tolerate. Instead it is recommended that you increase your intake of inflammation-reducing foods.

Inflammation-reducing nutrients

Fiber helps reduce inflammation

The amount of fiber in a meal is important because fiber slows down the absorption of the glucose in the food. Fiber intake is inversely associated with serum CRP concentrations, an inflammatory marker (Ajani UA, et al. 2004. King DE, et al. 2003).

While there are several factors affecting the glycemic index of a meal, as a general rule, the more fiber, the lower the glycemic index.

Foods with high fiber content and low glycemic index

- Vegetables
- Legumes
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Fruits

Greater frequency of eating fruits and vegetables is associated with significantly lower blood plasma CRP and homocysteine concentrations (Gao X, et al. 2004). Homocysteine is an amino acid linked to inflammation.

Omega-3 fatty acids are effective in reducing inflammation. Omega-3 fat is found in cold water fish and flax seeds.

Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to inhibit a variety of inflammatory chemicals including interleukin-1, interleukin-6 and tumor-necrosis factor alpha (Adam O. 2003).