

Inflammation: Lets Talk About It



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Acute inflammation is redness, swelling, pain, tenderness, heat, and disturbed function of an area of the body that occurs as a reaction of injury and/or tissue damage.

And while painful and uncomfortable, our bodies usually recover from acute inflammation after an injury and we move on.

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Chronic inflammation means our bodies are under 24/7 attack, and there's a lot more damage done. Take arthritis for example. There are several hundred forms including osteoarthritis, gout, and rheumatoid arthritis.

No matter what type of inflammation a person has they all cause pain, swelling, and sometimes joint disfigurement.

What causes chronic inflammation?

Being **overweight** or obese increases the risk (and pain) of osteoarthritis, a common type of chronic inflammation.

Excess weight not only puts more pressure on joints, but **fat tissue** also plays a role in inflammation. Dubbed “meta-inflammation”, low-grade inflammation occurs throughout the body due to adipose tissue. It's initiated by macrophages that live in the colon, liver, muscle, and fat tissue.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory condition that impacts people of all ages. In RA, the body's immune system attacks itself and causes joint damage and dysfunction over time. The cause of RA is unknown, though researchers believe it may be **genetic, environmental, or related to the previous infection.**

One study found that heart disease occurs in 50% of patients with RA. Scientists believe it's related to **inflammatory cytokine activity**, which advances ischemic heart disease and risk for stroke.

In addition, **endothelial cells in the body may become activated through inflammation.** When these cells are turned on, they may lead to atherosclerosis.

How to lower inflammation

Lose weight if overweight. Even a 5 lb weight loss reduces 20 lbs. of pressure on your knees if you have OA. When patients with OA lose weight, they also reduce pain.

Eat less saturated and trans-fat. Solid fats have been found to be pro-inflammatory and are also associated with heart disease and cancer.

Stock up on **a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.**

Have your vitamin D level checked and replaced if deficient. Low vitamin D is common in patients with autoimmune disease and the deficiency is linked with joint pain in both OA and RA patients.