

As therapists, patients ask us all kinds of questions all day long. We're asked about exercises, medications, pillows, ergonomics, posture, footwear, and the like. One question therapists also should be prepared to answer is the impact of diet on pain.

There is evidence that chronic inflammation can contribute to a persistent pain state. Therefore, anything that impacts inflammation, either by increasing or decreasing it, can impact an individual's pain. Diet has been shown to be one of these things.

According to a [blog post](#) by Harvard Health Publishing, certain foods have been found to be pro-inflammatory and should be avoided. These include:

- **refined carbohydrates**, such as white bread and pastries
- **French fries** and other fried foods
- **soda** and other sugar-sweetened beverages
- **red meat** (burgers, steaks) and processed meat (hot dogs, sausage)
- **margarine**, shortening, and lard

On the other hand, some foods actively reduce inflammation such as:

- **tomatoes**
- **olive oil**
- **green leafy vegetables**, such as spinach, kale, and collards
- **nuts** like almonds and walnuts
- **fatty fish** like salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines
- **fruits such as** strawberries, blueberries, cherries, and oranges

As physical therapists, we often find ourselves as the healthcare practitioner that is most available to ask questions, since we get so much time with our patients. However, if patients have more in-depth questions, or need help implementing a diet change, they should be directed to a registered dietician.

# 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

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**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

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**Fried foods**



**Sodas**



**Refined carbs**



**Lard**



**Processed meats**