

*Keith Wilkinson, ND, Naturopathic Physician at an integrated rheumatology practice, Arthritis Health in Scottsdale, AZ. [www.arthritishealth.net](http://www.arthritishealth.net)*

**Inflammation is a component of Sjögren's and essentially all autoimmune disease.** From a naturopathic perspective of treating the cause of disease, one of the first ways to address this is through an Anti-Inflammatory Diet. This upstream approach to treatment focuses on avoiding pro-inflammatory foods and eating a diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods. Additionally, since medical research is converging on inflammation as the common link in most diseases (i.e., heart disease, Alzheimer's, asthma, diabetes, cancer, etc.), eating an anti-inflammatory diet is a great model of dietary health for everyone.

Avoid most packaged foods with a long list of ingredients. When preparing foods select raw, fresh, steamed, or broiled options over fried, BBQ'd, or highly-processed choices. Specific recommendations are:

### ► Eat More

- **Colorful Whole Fruits and Vegetables** – Eating foods with deep red, yellow, orange, and green colors provide vitamins and minerals, phytonutrients, fiber and potent antioxidants that minimize inflammation. Eating foods as close to their unrefined state preserves the content of these beneficial nutrients.
- **Healthy Fats** – This includes the omega 3 oils found in fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines) and foods such as avocados, extra virgin olive oil, raw nuts and seeds.
- **Fiber** – Fiber promotes adequate bowel movements, creates a favorable environment for healthy bacteria in your gut, and supports the body's overall detoxification process. A few tablespoons of ground flax seeds daily are a great way to add soluble and insoluble fiber.
- **Moderate Amounts of Organic Meat** – Grass-fed beef or bison is higher in anti-inflammatory essential fats. Organic free-range chicken tends to be lower in antibiotics and are fed a vegetable/grain-based diet which tends to offer cleaner sources of protein.
- **Spices/Herbs** – Seasonings such as garlic, ginger, and turmeric add an anti-inflammatory component to the diet.

### ► Eliminate / Eat Less

- **Trans or Hydrogenated Fats** – The body has no mechanism to use these unnatural fats that ultimately cause inflammation. These should be eliminated from your diet.
- **Refined Oils** – Commercial safflower, corn, and canola oils have had much of their health-promoting content removed for shelf-storage purposes and tend to be high in omega 6 fats that can be converted to inflammatory arachidonic acid, a type of fat that stimulates inflammation in the body.
- **High Glycemic or Processed Foods** – Highly processed carbohydrates such as breads, pastas, cakes, candy, fruit juice, and corn syrup are quickly digested leading to a rapid rise in blood sugar and a subsequent inflammatory cascade stimulated by insulin.
- **Red Meat** – Avoid these meats when possible or eat organic grass-fed meat to reduce ingesting high levels of pro-inflammatory arachidonic acid.
- **Common Food Allergies** – Milk products, eggs, gluten from wheat, and peanuts can cause inflammatory reactions in many people and are best avoided.
- **Artificial Sweeteners & Preservatives** – These additives have no nutritional value and tend to promote inflammatory reactions.