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Eat For Life

By: Hesh Goldstein

Inflammation is a double-edged sword. While it is critical for the healing of wounds, it is also a bodily response that can become too much of a good thing. Any infection, injury or toxicity problem inflicted on our bodies is handled by the inflammatory response that occurs automatically. Unfortunately, if certain substances in our bodies become unbalanced, the inflammation switch can come “on” at the wrong time or forget to go “off” when no longer needed.

When inflammation occurs, it can be seen externally as a rash or swelling. A more dangerous kind is that which occurs internally. If it goes on too long it can damage organs or organ systems. People with autoimmune and chronic inflammatory problems are very familiar with this. Diseases in which inflammation plays a role are heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer’s, cancers, arthritis, gingivitis and other “itis” disorders.

On the positive side, since the growth of such diseases can be linked to our increased diets of fast, processed, convenient, flesh foods, it is possible to end the inflammation process with dietary changes. Not only do we need to eliminate saturated and trans fats, refined sugars, refined grains and starches, and artificial sweeteners, but we can reverse problems of chronic inflammatory diseases by choosing certain foods and herbs available at the natural foods’ stores. Also, the traditional therapy for inflammation - pharmaceuticals – has been a miserable and costly failure.

Hippocrates said, “Let food be thy medicine”. Ok, which ones?

Many edible plants contain dietary polyphenols, which have anti-inflammatory properties. Fruits like blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, pomegranates and cranberries are great. If you drink these in juices be sure to read labels to avoid added sugars.

Then there’s the omega-3’s, which are found in flax, hemp, pumpkin seeds and walnuts and their oils. Also, the high fiber, non starchy vegetables like dark green leafy greens, spinach, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, collard greens, tomatoes and onions. Turnips and radishes work well in aiding digestion by cooling and soothing inflammation and phlegm. Quercetin, a flavonoid, which aids in cell respiration, is found in red grapes, red and yellow onions, garlic, broccoli and apples.

Antioxidant properties in some foods help fight inflammation by protecting the body from free radicals. Vitamin C rich foods fall into this category and the list is endless. Some are carrots, squash, bell peppers, tomatoes, cashews, guavas, berries, mangos, kiwifruit, cherries, persimmons and oranges. To reduce swelling and inflammation quickly, eat half of a fresh pineapple containing the enzyme bromelain or a papaya containing the enzyme papain, daily. Getting away from salt and learning to cook with herbs and spices would be great. Turmeric,

for example, aids in reducing inflammation, as does ginger and garlic.

Nature has given us the tools. Life has given us conditioning. We were not designed to eat flesh and blood. Besides, we can survive very nicely without it. Eat only organically grown produce and grains and let what nature has provided wash the poisons out of our systems so we can regain our health, become more vibrant, and not become a life victim of the pharmaceutical industry. Get away from microwave ovens that reportedly change the molecular composition of foods to such a degree that our bodies have no clue as what to do with them. Do not sacrifice convenience for health.

If you do these things you will notice in a very short period of time that foods will take on an all together taste that is not dependant upon “flavors” to eat. Eat to live, not to die before your time.

Aloha!