

14 Warning Signs That There's Hidden Inflammation in Your Body (and how to get rid of it)

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Chronic inflammation has been called out for its role in hundreds of diseases including cancer, Alzheimer's, gout, depression, autoimmune disease and more. It is something anyone who wants to be healthy (so... everyone!) should be educated on and understand.

Why? Because chronic inflammation is **WITHIN OUR CONTROL** to change, heal and prevent. People simply should not have to suffer for their entire life with inflammation because it is quite often within their power to fix!



What Is Inflammation?

You have an incredible and complex immune system whose main purpose is to protect you from harmful substances. One of the ways it does this is through inflammation.

There are two types of inflammation: Acute and Chronic.

So what's the difference?



Acute

When tissues in your body are injured, the cells release chemicals that cause swelling and attract white blood cells to help remedy the situation and prevent it from spreading to other areas of the body.

Acute inflammation is the kind we experience after an injury, like when my 6th grade girlfriend pushed me off the swing and I sprained my ankle. It was swollen for 2 weeks. The acute inflammation in my ankle was my body's way of saying, "let's be careful with this area for a while, while we work on repairing the damage."

Acute inflammation is part of the normal detoxification and repair process. Every day when you walk, eat, exercise, stress out or breathe – your body must *cleanse and eliminate toxins* and repair any cellular injuries that may have happened to you.

When inflammation is hard at work, you will not necessarily experience any pain or even be aware of it.

Inflammation is your body's natural response to a foreign invader. This could be cells, viruses, fungi, bacteria, chemicals, toxins, etc. In all these cases, *inflammation is a good and natural thing.*

Chronic

When acute inflammation fails to be resolved, it becomes chronic.

Maybe you are one of many who have experienced the following scenario: your body becomes swollen, immobile, in pain and you resort to going to the doctor only to be given pills that make the pain go away. Now, if you are on painkillers long enough, which most people are... your doctor will order regular liver blood panel tests. This is because many of the pain medicine out there can actually shut off the primary pathway of detoxification, making the vicious cycle of pain even worse!

Taking pills for something that is obviously due to chronic inflammation will not solve the issue... it is like throwing a blanket over a growling dog or putting a bad-aid over a gaping wound.

Chronic-inflammation is **very different from acute inflammation**. It contributes to 7 out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the United States.

In 2004, Time magazine dedicated the whole front cover to inflammation, calling it “*The Silent Killer*”. Chronic inflammation is like having a swollen, red, puffy part of your body, usually internally, for weeks, months, or even years. This kind of inflammation has been shown to cause a whole host of complications and diseases such as autoimmune diseases, arthritis, asthma, obesity, premature aging and even heart disease and cancer.

What Causes Chronic Inflammation?

So what is causing our bodies to become chronically inflamed? *We're overtaxed.*



Although your body can process a surprising number of toxins (over one million toxins a day – that’s insane!), it is most likely overwhelmed by the overabundance that is present in our modern society. According to the Global Healing Center, we are taking in roughly two million toxins daily – *twice the amount our body can handle!* Your grandmother didn’t have to deal with half of the chemicals that you are facing on a daily basis. There are even more chemicals in our environment than ever before – from our food, to our beauty products, even the air we breathe... and that also includes *the thoughts we think*.

How about this for perspective? **Just one packet of synthetic sugar can contain more than ten thousand toxic molecules in its ingredients!**

Your body’s immune system is exhausted and overworked. Plain and simple.

The Standard American Diet (SAD) is chock-full of inflammatory foods. Gluten, wheat, refined sugar, chemicals, additives, artificial dyes and processed foods naturally trigger the body’s inflammatory response in the gut. You can imagine the damage that can happen when you are trying to ingest these foods on a daily basis (hello, autoimmune disease).

We're also stressed.

Stress (especially chronic stress) also contributes to inflammation in the body. We live in a very go-go-go, ambitious world. A lot of us are living more IN stress than out of it. Stress plays a big role in our health. Cortisol, the main stress hormone, is considered to be one of the primary factors in the connection between stress and disease.



Although in small amounts it is helpful (fight-or-flight, triggering adrenaline and helping us in sudden unexpected situations), large amounts of cortisol can slowly wear down our systems and cause big problems.

When you are in a stressed state, energy is directed away from your immune, digestive, endocrine and reproductive systems and to areas the brain believes are more important in the moment.

As energy is constantly being taken from these systems due to chronic stress, *the body can become weaker and more inflamed.*

Our bodies are also starving for real nutrients.

A lot of people are walking around completely unaware that they are *starving themselves*. Yes, you may be eating lots of food... but how much of it contains actual REAL nutrients that can fuel and heal your body?

Think about what you've eaten the past 24 hours. Write it down if you want to. How much of it consisted of...

- Fresh veggies
- Leafy greens
- Fruits
- Raw nuts and seeds
- Healthy fats like avocado, coconut and olive oil, organic butter or ghee and organic eggs
- Organic, grass-fed meats
- Wild-caught fish
- Superfoods like spirulina, goji berries, raw honey and quinoa
- Sprouted grains
- Fermented, probiotic-rich foods
- Water

Was at least 80% of what you ate from the food groups above? How much was from...

- Processed foods
- White bread
- Conventional dairy products
- Processed drinks and sodas
- Fried foods
- Fast foods
- Wheat products
- Starchy products made from corn or potatoes
- Refined sugary foods
- Processed meats

In order to FEEL GOOD, LOOK GOOD and enjoy vibrant health, *you have got to give your body REAL FOOD with REAL nutrients, micronutrients, vitamins and minerals.*

When a huge percentage of our diet comes from list #2, you are NOT giving your body what it needs to thrive. Even if you don't notice negative symptoms right away, your body will suffer and be more likely to develop chronic inflammatory-based diseases. Eye-opening, isn't it?

Signs of Inflammation

There are many signs and symptoms that long-term inflammation is happening inside your body. Here are just a few things to look for:

- Constant fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Ulcers
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Bloating
- Acne
- Flushing
- Water retention
- Food cravings
- Binge eating
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Joint pain
- Stiffness
- Unexplainable weight gain

Remember, pain is not always a bad thing! For two reasons.

One: It reminds us that we are truly alive! And better yet, that with life comes choice and we all have the choice to live our very best life, pain free, if we decide to do so.

Two: It's like the warning light in your automobile. It tells you that something is going on and often times, the pain is a manifestation of something deeper. These warning signs allow us the power to listen and honor those signals for optimal health and happiness. If you challenge yourself to get deep and go places you have not gone before, I assure you – you will come out of this thing.

So don't let the symptoms you have make you sad and hopeless – celebrate that you are ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY. Recognizing symptoms of inflammation is the first step to healing.

Diseases Associated With Inflammation

Autoimmune and Auto-Inflammatory Disease

The role of the immune system is to protect us from illness and disease and it does so by attacking any foreign invaders that creep in, such as bacteria, parasites and viruses. When it's working as it should, it acts as a line of

defense against the “bad guys.” A healthy immune system is able to differentiate between the body’s own healthy tissue and unhealthy tissue.

When the immune system becomes compromised, such as in the case of autoimmune disease, the body has a hard time telling the difference between the good and bad tissues and begins to attack both. This causes increased inflammation.

Chronic inflammation is said to be one of the main consequences of autoimmune disorders.

Heart Disease

Heart disease is not caused only from plaque buildup in the arteries, but from a combination of the plaque buildup *and inflammation*. Your body views plaque as a foreign material, therefore, the immune system tries to prevent the plaque from flowing along with the blood. In worst cases, the plaque can rupture and anything that has been walled-off will come into contact with the blood and form a blood clot. In turn, your body triggers the inflammatory response and the arteries begin to swell, constricting blood flow to the heart.

Depression

Recent studies have found a major link between inflammation and depression. Researchers in Denmark found that increased levels of C-reactive protein (produced by the body when inflammation is present) is associated with “an increased risk for psychological distress and depression in the general population.”

In her new book entitled, *A Mind Of Your Own*, Kelly Brogan states the theory that depression is not a disease, but a symptom of imbalance in the body; *inflammation being a root cause*.

A study published in the *Journal of Neuroinflammation* in 2011 found a link between levels of quinolinic acid (another bodily response to inflammation) and chronic depression.

Many doctors are beginning to treat depression with methods whose purpose is to reduce inflammation in the body and promote natural healing.

Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia

Free radical damage and inflammation of brain tissue have been linked to both Alzheimer’s and Dementia.

Researchers have found that by looking at the patient’s history, they are able to connect the dots with Alzheimer’s and inflammation, such as those who have had a serious head injury. Researchers have also found that people who have taken anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen, have a lower chance of having Alzheimer’s.

A main component of Alzheimer’s is the presence of plaques. These plaques are seen as foreign invaders and the body tries to destroy them, therefore, causing chronic inflammation.

This study found that omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants (both anti-inflammatories) may act as a protection against these diseases. Nourishing the brain, lowering cholesterol, and loading up on antioxidants as protection from free radicals may be beneficial.

Diabetes

With diabetes, inflammation is *internal*.

Recent research suggests that the inflammation inside your body can play a role in the development of type 2 diabetes. Individuals with type 2 diabetes don’t produce enough insulin, or their bodies can’t use the insulin adequately. Insulin can have a negative effect on the tissue in the body, one of which includes obesity and having an extra accumulation of fat around the belly and other major organs.

Researchers have discovered that people with type 2 diabetes have a higher level of cytokine, which is an inflammation-boosting protein that is released by cell that have a specific effect on the interaction between cells; basically, the communication between one cell and another.

Fat cells act like a factory for cytokine. The more fat cells, the more cytokine.

Cytokine triggers cells response to inflammation and response to infections. When a person's cytokine level is elevated, this causes *chronic internal inflammation*. When a person starts to develop type 2 diabetes, their body becomes less sensitive to insulin and results in insulin resistance, which causes inflammation. This is a vicious cycle that continues. **More inflammation causes more insulin resistance.**

Cancer

As we already know, chronic inflammation can wreak havoc on your body. It can create the best environment for rogue cells. If a rogue cell travels through the body, it can eventually damage a healthy strand of DNA causing it to mutate. As the small mutation starts growing inside your body, it tries to get enough oxygen and nutrients that it can from its surroundings. As the cells mutate, it becomes a cancerous tumor.

Cancers, such as colon cancer and breast cancer, are some that can be caused by chronic inflammation. Colon cancer can occur in individuals who have inflammatory bowel disease, which is the inflammation of all or part of the digestive tract.

A type of breast cancer called, Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC), may also be caused from chronic inflammation. This cancer is caused when cancer cells block the lymph vessels in the skin. Lymph vessels are thin, valved structures that carry lymph, a fluid that contains white blood cells and drains through the lymphatic system. If these lymph vessels become blocked, the cancer has nowhere to go and can continue to grow.

Allergies

Allergies can be caused by inflammation, and inflammation can cause allergies. Toxins can activate the immune system causing an inappropriate response in the body and leading to chronic inflammation. Allergy symptoms come in different forms, from skin, eyes, nose, or airways. The key with allergies is to decrease the inflammation, allowing the body the space necessary to filter the bad guys (toxins) and do its job appropriately.

Gout

Gout is a type of arthritis that occurs with a buildup of uric acid in the blood, causing inflammation in the joints.

Steps To Reduce Inflammation And Promote Amazing Health: Fill Your Diet With Anti-Inflammatory Foods

One of the best ways to control and prevent inflammation is through *adopting healthy eating habits*. Focus on a plant-based diet, full of nature's most powerful medicine, straight from the earth. Also organic, grass-fed meats and fatty fish, organic butters and healthy oils.

Here are some foods that contain particularly strong anti-inflammatory properties:

Fatty Fish: Full of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.

Leafy Greens: Green veggies and superfoods are rich in phytochemicals, enzymes and nutrients. Taken on an empty stomach, these nutrients can bolster and repair your cells. This is why we tell people to start their day with a glass of warm water and lemon to get those digestive processes going and follow it up with a glass of green juice.



Nuts and Seeds: While sunflower seeds are super high in vitamin E, all nuts and seeds contain anti-oxidants. These play an enormous role in the fight against inflammation by repairing the self-inflicted cell damage it causes. Nuts and seeds are a great source of essential vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, amino acids and healthy fats.

Beets: Another veggie super high in antioxidants, beets have been shown to fight inflammation and help thin the blood. It's also a good source of vitamin C. (Don't freak out if after eating a bunch of beets your trips to the bathroom result in a pink hue – this is totally normal for most people and nothing to be afraid of.)

Berries: A great source of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties – and also delicious.

Mushrooms: Used for thousands of years for their medicinal properties. Ones that are particularly potent anti-inflammatories include: reishi mushrooms, caterpillar fungus, bamboo fungus, maitake mushrooms, almond mushrooms and lion's mane.

Garlic: Studies have shown that garlic suppresses leukocyte inflammatory cytokine production, making it a potential treatment for inflammatory bowel disease and other similar disorders.

Raw Tomatoes: Contain anti-inflammatory nutrients like carotenoids and bioflavonoids. Easy to find and easy to incorporate into your favorite dishes!

Turmeric: There are over 1000 different case studies showing turmeric as one of the most powerful natural anti-inflammatories on the planet. I take a turmeric supplement daily.

Ginger: According to a PubMed, "*The anti-inflammatory properties of ginger have been known and valued for centuries...*" Ginger has anti-inflammatory phytonutrients known as gingerols that have been used in traditional medicine as a painkiller for arthritis and other inflammatory disorders.

Tart Cherry Juice: Montmorency cherries have the highest anti-inflammatory content of any food. Research done at Oregon Health & Science University proposes that tart cherry juice may be a better and safer alternative to over-the-counter anti-inflammatories.

Cayenne: Contains an active ingredient called capsaicin, which is known in some cultures as a "destroyer of inflammation".

Coconut Oil: The lauric acid in coconut oil contains anti-inflammatory properties. Plus, coconut oil is a healthy fat, which keeps your cells fueled, your brain alert and your digestion running smoothly. Healthy fat also helps to *burn fat!*

Olive Oil: A substance found in extra-virgin olive oil has been found to be an effective anti-inflammatory. However, olive oil becomes rancid when cooked above medium heat so it is best to consume it raw or used at low-med temps only in cooking.

Teas: Especially White Willow Tea and Matcha Green Tea.

Ginger: For millennia, this root has been used to treat pain, swelling, allergies, stomach ulcers, and even cancer and heart disease with positive results across many cultures.

Herbs: Especially rosemary, sage and ashwagandha.

Take Probiotics Daily

Various studies have shown that probiotic intake is associated with significant anti-inflammatory effects. Here are some ways to get your daily dose of probiotics:

Supplement with a probiotic – Aim for at least ten strains per capsule and make sure that the one you choose contains strains of *L. acidophilus* or *B. bifidum*, which are the most potent of all the strains available.

Include BILLIONS of CFU's (colony forming units) – It sounds like a lot, but when you think of the human body and the fact that it contains roughly 37 trillion cells, the idea of *billions* doesn't seem like much.

Anywhere from 1 to 100 billion will work. Given the ridiculous amount of toxins we're exposed to every day, many people note feeling an improvement with 20-50 billion daily. The trick is to start slow and work your way up. The typical dose for beginners is between 10-20 billion CFU's daily.

Eat fermented/cultured foods – if you'd rather not supplement, foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha and miso all naturally contain probiotics. It's fine to do both—supplement and eat fermented foods—but it's not always necessary. Find what you feel works best for you and go with it.

Eliminate or Reduce Inflammatory Foods

Foods that are high in (refined) sugar and fat, wheat products and dairy are all big triggers for inflammation. Therefore, decrease or eliminate soda, refined carbohydrates and processed foods. Basically, anything that can contribute to weight gain can contribute to inflammation. **EAT REAL FOOD!**

Here's a list of inflammatory foods to keep in mind:

- Processed foods
- Processed meats
- Dairy
- Gluten
- Soda
- Caffeine
- Refined sugars
- Trans fats
- Simple carbs
- Lard

Eliminate Toxins In Your Environment

There is evidence that environmental toxins such as mold can cause a chronic inflammatory response in the body.

Water

Proper hydration is key! The human body is largely water – 60%+! So having enough water matters more than many people realize. The easiest rule of thumb is to drink half your bodyweight in ounces of water each day (example: 150 pound person would aim for 75 ounces, minimally). More if you're active (more like equal to your bodyweight).

Reduce Stress

We talked earlier about the effect chronic stress has on the body. Now let's look at a few ways to better cope with and reduce stress in your life!

Regular Exercise – Boosts endorphins and overall mood, reduces stress and relieves you of that worry-anxiety-restless energy.

Physical Contact – Make an effort to connect with those close to you. Hugs, holding hands, sitting close. They all make a difference.

Endorphin production can *increase 200% during intimate activity!*

Dark Chocolate – Known by the Greeks as “food of the Gods,” chocolate actually mimics marijuana's soothing effects on the brain.

Always go for **dark, real chocolate** (above 70% cacao) as it contains the most benefits. Watch out for popular chocolate brands that contain a lot of “stuff” besides actual chocolate. The less ingredients, the better. Just like all other food!



Chili Peppers – The natural spiciness of peppers increase the body’s production of endorphins. Chili peppers also help to boost immune system and can literally burn infections and viruses right out of your system. Have a low tolerance for spiciness? Add a little cayenne to your morning lemon water. You will barely notice it’s there!

Ginseng – Has been shown to balance the release of stress hormones and boost the production of endorphins.

Meditation – An obvious way to slow down, decrease stress, release anxiety and become more present. Getting started can be tricky so begin with 5 minutes each day and increase your time as you become comfortable.

Guided meditations are also a great way to begin. I love using these regularly. Check out some good ones here.

Laughter – Hang out with people who make you laugh. Go to comedy shows. Laugh at yourself instead of being embarrassed or discouraged!

Acupuncture – Research has shown the acupuncture can help to increase endorphin production as well as strengthen the immune system.

Massage Therapy – A powerful tool for finding and releasing areas of stress in the body and has been shown to increase endorphin production.

Chiropractic Adjustment – Another healing modality that has been shown to help with healing and endorphin production.

Hydrotherapy – The medicinal use of water increases blood circulation, boosts the immune system and increases the body’s production of endorphins.

Aromatherapy – A study done at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center took patients undergoing MRIs and measured their anxiety levels while either scenting the air with vanilla or leaving it as normal. Those doing an MRI while smelling the vanilla reported *63% less anxiety* than those who weren’t privy to the vanilla smell.

Sleep

If you ask the average person if they got 8 hours of sleep the previous night, a surprising amount of them would say no. It is extremely important to your health and stress levels to get 7-9 hours of sleep every single night.



Sleep deprivation causes an elevated immune response as well as increased inflammation in the body. This can cause type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and a myriad of other conditions. Lack of sleep has been linked to cognitive decline and memory problems. It’s hard to be positive when your mind is exhausted.

Exercise

Recent studies have found that exercise may help with reducing inflammation in the body:

“It is well established that physically fit individuals have a reduced risk of developing CDC (cardiovascular disease) and other age-related chronic disorders... Chronic low-grade systemic inflammation may be involved in atherosclerosis, diabetes and in pathogenesis of several chronic pathological conditions; recent findings confirm that physical activity induces an increase in the systemic levels of a number of cytokines and chemokines with anti-inflammatory properties...”



One of my favorite sayings is: **Movement is life.**

I know a lot of people groan when they hear the word “exercise” so I will simply refer to it as *movement*.

Our bodies were born to move. To walk. To run. To feel. To become stronger and more powerful. When we choose not to take advantage of our body's love of movement, we become stagnant. Think of what happens to a pond of water that has no in or out flow. It becomes murky... cloudy, right? *The same thing happens inside your body when you refuse to move it.*

Have you ever spent several days or week cooped up only to feel your joints and muscles tightening up, maybe even causing pain? This is because the gel like substance – synovial fluid – in between your joints thickens the less you use it. When you are not actively mobile, you could actually start to feel more pain (I know because I experience this whenever I miss a workout, which I don't allow to happen too often).

If you are not working out actively, a great place to start and what we have our coaching students do, is to simply walk 10 minutes a day. This also helps to lower cortisol (remember that stress hormone I talked about). You don't have to love the gym or run 5 miles a day. Find ways that YOU love to move. Take up martial arts, fencing, ice skating, swimming, dancing or another pastime that will get your heart pumping. Or just take the time to walk out in the fresh air and soak up some vitamin D. It will do wonders for your health.

Mindfulness

The truth is, it is often the little voice inside our own head—the story that that we tell ourselves—that causes us to experience the greatest amount of stress. Rarely do the feelings have anything to do with the actual situation or person. By letting go of these negative thoughts and allowing ourselves the space necessary to find gratitude in the situation, we can find peace, focus on what we've learned and move on.



While mindfulness may not seem like that big of a deal, consider this: negative thoughts create a stress in the body. Too much stress creates inflammation, which, when chronic (constant, persistent), creates the perfect home for illness and disease. So essentially, *negative thoughts, over time, create disease in the body.*

The good news is that *we get to choose* what we let in and how we react. So even if thinking positively doesn't come naturally for you, consider the benefits of doing so the next time you allow your mind to shift to the dark side and commit to raising your level of mindfulness—*awareness*—to improve your circumstances.

Steps to take RIGHT NOW to change your thoughts and upgrade your health:

1. **Seek Out What Is Seeking You** – Notice your environment, including the people around you. Commit to focusing on at least one positive thing about each thing, person, or situation. Do this regularly, daily if possible. Notice how your thoughts shift with this exercise.
2. **Be Present** – In a world of multi-tasking and to-do lists, being present can be tricky. It's time to train your mind to focus on the task or person in front of you. Put away any distractions, including your cell phone and be okay with the silence that being present often brings. Really engage, be inquisitive and be open to the process.
3. **Daily Gratitude** – Each morning upon waking, or each night before you go to bed, state 3 things you are grateful for. You can say these things aloud to yourself or keep a gratitude journal. It's amazing how this simple exercise can begin creating a sense of peace in your life.

Turmeric: Mother Nature's Most Powerful Anti-Inflammatory

For thousands of years, people all over the world have been using turmeric to alleviate pain, improve mental acuity, “de-bloat” and improve digestion, as well as eradicate chronic inflammation. Interestingly enough, we've only really begun to understand the enormity of this amazing spice in the US over the last 30 years or so.

Turmeric is a medicinal magician and a great way to combat inflammation. Turmeric has an active ingredient called **curcumin**, which is the main spice in curry. It has amazing antioxidant properties and since turmeric is an

anti-inflammatory, it is often used to help relieve inflammation for arthritis, muscle sprains and other types of injuries. It has also been said that turmeric may prevent and even *slow cancer growth*.

Hundreds of studies have been done on the anti-inflammatory benefits of turmeric. Seeing that the BULK of chronic illness is caused by some sort of inflammation, this is very significant for a lot of people.

There are so many ways you can incorporate turmeric, but many of us are busy, and supplementing has proven to be one of the easiest ways to ensure we're getting an adequate amount in your daily routine to reap all of the amazing benefits.

How To Pick The Right Turmeric Supplement

When looking for a turmeric supplement be sure to choose one that meets the following qualifications...

NO Chemicals. Some turmeric suppliers remove nutrients and antioxidants from their turmeric in their faulty factories. These turmeric capsules use chemical solvents in the separation process. In top quality turmeric, all of the early vitamins, minerals and antioxidants are included.

Veggie Caps. Have you ever had an upset stomach when taking supplements? That's usually because of all of the chemicals and solvents within the caps. Always choose supplements that use capsules made from natural vegetable-derived materials.

Full Spectrum Formula. A lot of supplements are made from incomplete extracts, which only provide partial nutrients. Other bottles claim to have curcuminoid extract, which is blended in with the turmeric. This depletes the actual percentage of active compounds that you're getting in each dose. When looking for a turmeric supplement, choose a full spectrum formulation. This ensures it contains all the phytonutrients, making it *4 times more useable* by the body. This means that nothing was taken from your turmeric.

Certified Organic & Raw. Some turmeric capsules have dangerous poisons from pesticides used on the farm they were cultivated on. Always choose organic. Some turmeric capsules are oven dried, cooked and heated. This depletes the nutrients in those turmeric supplements. This also makes them less absorbable. Choose turmeric that was never cooked or heated in processing.

