

Understanding Inflammation and Chronic Illness

What is Inflammation?

Inflammation is your body's natural defence mechanism.

When you cut your finger, get a cold, or strain a muscle, your immune system kicks in to help you heal. This is called acute inflammation, and it's usually short-term and helpful.

Chronic inflammation, on the other hand, is low-grade and long-term. It can simmer under the surface for months or even years. This ongoing inflammation is not helpful – in fact, it can contribute to or worsen many chronic health conditions.

How Does Inflammation Affect Chronic Illness?

Chronic inflammation is now recognised as a key player in many long-term health issues, including:

- Autoimmune conditions (like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, MS)
- Cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and other gut issues
- Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME)
- Mental health conditions (depression, anxiety)
- Skin conditions (eczema, psoriasis)
- Ongoing inflammation can:
 - Disrupt hormone balance
 - Damage healthy tissues
 - Suppress energy production in your cells (mitochondria)
 - Affect digestion and nutrient absorption
 - Interfere with the nervous system

How can I lower my inflammation?

1. Anti-Inflammatory Foods:

Leafy greens (spinach, kale, rocket)
Berries and colourful vegetables
Oily fish (like salmon and sardines)
Herbs and spices (especially turmeric, ginger, rosemary)
Olive oil, nuts, and seeds

2. Reduce Inflammatory Triggers:

Minimise ultra-processed foods and sugary snacks
Reduce alcohol and refined carbohydrates
Identify and manage food sensitivities

3. Support Gut Health:

Eat fibre-rich plant foods
Include fermented foods if tolerated
Consider probiotics and gut-healing nutrients where needed

4. Lifestyle Practices:

Prioritise regular, good-quality sleep
Move your body gently but consistently
Manage stress with breathwork, journaling, nature time, or mindfulness
Connect with others – emotional support reduces inflammation too!

Why It Matters

When we reduce chronic inflammation, people often report:
More energy, less pain or stiffness, better digestion, improved mood, calmer skin, clearer thinking...

Your body wants to heal – it just needs the right support.

I offer personalised nutrition and lifestyle support to help you understand and reduce inflammation in your own body. If you live with a chronic illness and want to explore how food and lifestyle can help, let's talk.

This handout is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice.

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