

# 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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