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8 Inflammation-Causing Foods to Avoid When You Have Arthritis

Rheumatology and Allergy Institute of Connecticut, LLC > Blog > 8 Inflammation-Causing Foods to Avoid When You Have Arthritis

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In its earliest stages, arthritis makes everyday activities mildly annoying. Stiffness in your joints makes it tough to grab, hold, bend, reach, and lift. In advanced stages, it's downright painful and debilitating. Although there are more than 100 specific types of arthritis that attack different body parts, they all share one characteristic — inflammation.

Dr. Reinhard Kage and Dr. Barbara Kage at Rheumatology and Allergy Institute of Connecticut are experts in treating all types of [arthritis](#), including the most common:



But before any of these measures become necessary, (or as a complement to your treatment) you can help ease your own pain and stiffness by simply watching your diet. Here are eight foods known to contribute to inflammation and the aggravation of your arthritis symptoms.

1. Sweets

Consuming too much sugar increases inflammation in your body. All it takes is 40 grams, about the amount in one can of soda, to trigger the response. Cutting out soft drinks, candy, and pastries may relieve some of your arthritis pain.

2. Dairy

You may be surprised to see dairy on this list, since it has many beneficial nutrients like calcium and protein. But it also contains casein, which may contribute to inflammation. Limiting the amount of dairy products you consume could reduce inflammation in your joints.

3. Fatty foods

All fats are not created equal. You need some good fats, like those found in avocados, olive oil, and nuts, to help protect your heart and maintain other organ function. But trans fats, like those found in processed foods, fried foods, fast foods, and donuts, can cause inflammation.

4. Carbohydrates

Your body uses carbohydrates from your food and converts them to energy. That's why some athletes "carb load" before a competition. But refined carbs in high-glycemic foods like bread, crackers, white rice, and potatoes are a specific type of carb that, if not converted to energy to help you run a marathon, can stay in your body and cause inflammation, as well as weight gain and other chronic conditions.



When you grill or fry your food or consume foods that have been cooked at high temperatures, including pasteurized foods, your body produces toxins called AGEs. These toxins can damage proteins in your body, which triggers your immune system to destroy the AGEs with cytokines. Cytokines cause inflammation.

7. Gluten

Even if you don't have celiac disease, the condition in which gluten damages your small intestine, you may want to consider eliminating gluten from your diet, as it may also lead to joint inflammation. To do this, avoid foods made with wheat, barley, and rye.

8. Additives

Packaged food is convenient and makes your busy lifestyle just a little easier, but it can also make your arthritis worse. Manufacturers add things like monosodium glutamate (MSG), aspartame, and salt to preserve food and make it taste better, but these chemicals have also been linked to increased inflammation. It's a good idea to avoid processed foods, diet sodas, and other convenience products.

Replace these inflammation-causing foods with healthy, anti-inflammatory vegetables, fruits, and plant-based proteins. If you have arthritis and have more questions about how nutrition can help you reduce your inflammation, [call us or request an appointment online](#) at either of our two Rheumatology and Allergy Institute of Connecticut locations today.



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