

Session 6: Our Bodies and Inflammation



- Check your vitals
- Centering meditation
- Go around
- Home practice review
- Health topics:
 - Inflammation
 - Nutrition Spotlight: Omega-3s
- Mind-body:
 - Sitting Meditation
- Review home practice assignments for coming week
- Recipe
- Healthy lunch

Our Bodies and Inflammation

What is inflammation?

Inflammation is the body's way of signaling that something inside of you is hurt or needs attention. Inflammation can be acute (temporary, for instance when you have a scraped knee), or it can be chronic. When inflammation is acute it can help you heal. But when it is chronic it can lead to or aggravate many illnesses. We will discuss ways to help reduce this chronic inflammation.

Acute (temporary) inflammation occurs in the body to help:

- ✓ to fight off infections
- ✓ to increase blood flow to places that need healing
- ✓ to generate pain as a signal that something is wrong with the body



Chronic inflammation is inflammation that:

- ✓ Extends over a longer period of time
- ✓ It can occur in places that we often can't see or feel
- ✓ Can cause significant damage to different parts of the body.



What causes inflammation?

- ✓ **Acute inflammation** can be caused by temporary injury or infection, such as a sprained ankle, infection, or bruise.
- ✓ **Chronic inflammation** can be caused by poor diet, stress, and lack of physical activity.

Many medical conditions are linked to increased inflammation in the body, *including:*

- ✓ *Chronic pain*
- ✓ *Alzheimer's disease*
- ✓ *Asthma*
- ✓ *Cancer*
- ✓ *Breathing problems*
- ✓ *Type 2 diabetes*
- ✓ *Heart disease*
- ✓ *Diseases where the immune system attacks the body*



What are some ways that I can decrease inflammation in the body?

Manage stress levels:

Chronic stress can lead to a compromised immune system. A compromised immune system can contribute to the development of many diseases.

- ✓ When you're feeling tense throughout the day, pause and take 5 to 10 deep breaths.
- ✓ Adopting a daily practice that quiets the mind and body can help us learn how to consciously respond to stressful situations and in turn, reduce inflammation.



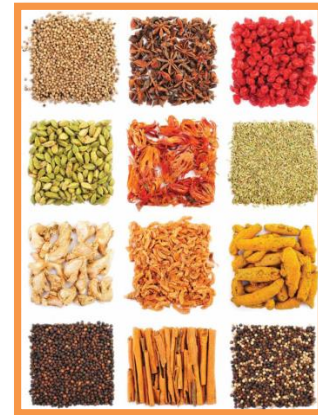
Get active:

- ✓ **Choose activities that you like and are fun:** dancing, gardening, brisk walks, yoga...
- ✓ **Make it social:** Find an exercise partner to help each other stay on track and motivate each other.
- ✓ **Take the stairs** whenever possible.
- ✓ **Walk an extra stop.** During your bus or subway commute, get off a stop or two earlier and walk the rest of the way!
- ✓ **Set short-term achievable goals** and reward yourself when you reach them!

References: National Academy of Sciences
Food User Manual, Center for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Wellness, Bastyr University
Harvard School of Public Health, *The Nutrition Source: 20 Exercise Tips.*

Eat a healthy diet:

- ✓ *Pay attention to your intake of saturated and trans fats.*
- ✓ *Increase your intake of plant-based foods and foods high in omega-3 fatty acids (see table on next page).*



Foods to eat more of:

Foods high in omega-3 fats:

- Cold water fish (like salmon)
- Ground flax seeds or flax oil
- Leafy green vegetables
- Tofu
- Walnuts
- Avocados



Foods high in antioxidants:

- Yellow, orange, & red vegetables
- Dark leafy greens
- Citrus fruits
- Black & green teas
- Onions & garlic



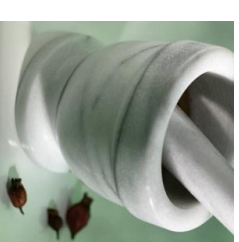
Foods high in fiber

- Whole grains
- Whole fruits and vegetables
- Nuts and seeds



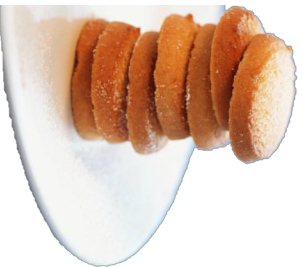
Certain Spices

- Ginger
- Rosemary
- Turmeric
- Oregano
- Cayenne
- Clove
- Nutmeg



Foods to avoid:

<p>Foods high in trans- and omega-6 fats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red meats• Dairy products• Partially hydrogenated oils• Corn, cottonseed, grapeseed, & peanut oils	<p>Foods high in simple carbohydrates and high glycemic index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• White breads or bagels• English muffins• Instant rice• Rice and corn cereals	<p>Foods with a long shelf life: Packaged chips, crackers, cookies & candies</p> <p>Artificial flavors and colors: Aspartame, FD&C dyes</p>
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Nutrition Spotlight: Omega-3 Fatty Acids

What are omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are healthy fats that are essential for human health. Our bodies cannot produce omega-3s, so we need to add them to our diet by food or supplement form.



Why are omega-3 fatty acids important for my health?

Omega-3 fatty acids support the body in many important ways and may help reduce the risk of several chronic diseases and conditions including heart disease, arthritis, and mood disorders.

- *Reduce inflammation in the body*
- *Support cardiovascular health*
- *Support brain function*
- *Support skin health*
- *Support vision*
- *Reducing high blood pressure*

How do I get omega-3 fatty acids?

- ✓ *Fish (salmon, tuna, halibut, sardines)*
- ✓ *Flax seeds (ground)*
- ✓ *Chia seeds*
- ✓ *Walnuts*
- ✓ *Tofu*
- ✓ *Greens (spinach, kale, salad greens)*
- ✓ *Soybean and canola oil*
- ✓ *Supplement form (flaxseed oil, fish oil, algae, and krill)*



Tips for adding omega 3-s to your diet:

- ✓ *Sprinkle a spoonful of ground flax seeds or flaxseed oil over yogurt or add to smoothies for a boost in fiber and healthy fats!*
- ✓ *Note: make sure to store ground flax seeds in the fridge or freezer; the nutritional benefits breakdown with exposure to heat and they can spoil!*
- ✓ *Add a small handful of walnuts to oatmeal or salads*
- ✓ *Try to add fish to your diet once a week! Note: canned fish is a cost-efficient and nutrient-dense option!*

Sources: University of Maryland Medical Center and Harvard School of Public Health: The Nutrition Source.

Home Practice: Session 6



MIND-BODY PRACTICE

- Alternate practicing the body scan and yoga every other day, 6 out of 7 days
 - OWL audio: body scan and yoga
 - OWL video: yoga
- Practice the longer meditation 6 out of 7 days.
 - OWL audio: meditation (long)

DAILY LIFE PRACTICE

- Bring awareness to moments of *reacting* and explore options of *responding* with greater mindfulness. Remember to use the breath as an anchor. It's a way to increase your awareness of your usual habits and to slow down to make more conscious choices.

MANUAL ACTIVITY

- Fill out the Challenging Communications Chart

HEALTH TOPIC VIDEO

- Inflammation

Challenging Communications Chart

Directions: Each day, complete the *communication* chart by answering the questions for each box.

Date	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Describe the communication.							
Who was it with? What was it about?							
What did you really want from the person or situation? What did you get?							
What did the other person want? What did they get?							
How did you feel during and after this communication?							

Rainbow slaw

Serves 4 as side dish

This colorful, nutrient-packed dish offers many benefits for the immune system, digestion, and energy levels!

Ingredients salad:

1 bunch kale, thick stems removed and leaves thinly sliced
4 cups cored and shredded red cabbage (about 1 small head)
2 oranges, peeled and cut into slices (reserve ½ of an orange for the dressing)
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 large bell pepper, cored, seeded and thinly sliced
1/3 cup sunflower seeds

Ingredients dressing:

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons fresh squeezed orange juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper



Photo credit: <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipe/rainbow-kaleslaw>

Preparation:

1. In a large bowl, combine kale, cabbage, orange segments, red onion, bell pepper and sunflower seeds.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together mustard, olive oil, apple cider vinegar and pepper. Pour over the kale mixture and toss to coat. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 2 days.

*Tip: soak sliced onion in bowl of cold water for 15 minutes before serving to make sweeter!

Health Benefits

- ✓ Apple cider vinegar has been used for centuries as a healing tonic for the body. Among its many benefits, it reduces inflammation externally and internally. Tip: dilute a splash in 8 ounces of water to soothe the gastrointestinal tract, or add to salad dressing, like in this recipe.
- ✓ Colorful, raw vegetables possess strong anti-inflammatory properties, while ensuring that you are getting a healthy range of vitamins, minerals, and disease-fighting antioxidants.
- ✓ Spare the salt: this nutritious and delicious dressing was made without added salt. Too much sodium in our diets can increase the risk of developing complications like high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease.
 - Alternative: Experiment with herbs (dried or fresh), spices, and vinegars to make delicious and nutritious marinades and dressings.