



## Were you pain free this morning when you got out of bed?

Did your hips and knees ache? Did your hands feel stiff when you poured your morning brew? Many brush off these kinds of aches and pains, thinking they're just normal signs of aging. But, as the years pass, some find the pain intensifies, and begin to rely on regular doses of aspirin in the morning — NOT a good choice or a solution.

As we experience pain and swelling in our fingers, wrists, knees or any joint, it's easy to jump to the conclusion that our joints are "wearing down" from use, like car parts. We may even think we're developing arthritis. But our bodies are not made up of mechanical pieces with built-in obsolescence; they are made up of living cells that can actually strengthen and grow when fully nourished and used properly.

Many things can lead to chronic joint pain. More often than not, it is the simmering fires of inflammation, not old age. The pain that you feel is your body's way of telling you that it's irritated and needs your help. So instead of brushing it off or tuning it out with pills, take the time to listen to your body. Chronic inflammation plays a central role in some of the most challenging diseases of our time, including rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and even Alzheimer's.

**Make healthy food choices:** Our diets play an important role in chronic inflammation because our digestive bacteria release chemicals that may spur or suppress inflammation. The types of bacteria that populate our gut and their chemical byproducts vary according to the foods we eat. Some foods encourage the growth of populations of bacteria that stimulate inflammation, while others promote the growth of bacteria that suppress it. Fortunately, you are probably already enjoying many of the foods and beverages that have been linked to reductions in inflammation and chronic disease. As long as you are not allergic to any of these foods or beverages, they include the following:

- **Fruits and vegetables.** Most fruits and brightly colored vegetables naturally contain high levels of antioxidants and polyphenols — potentially protective compounds found in plants.
- **Nuts and seeds.** Studies have found that consuming nuts and seeds is associated with reduced markers of inflammation and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
- **Beverages.** The polyphenols in coffee and the flavonols in cocoa are thought to have anti-inflammatory properties. Green tea is also rich in both polyphenols and antioxidants.



*This healthy living information is provided by  
your Doctor of Chiropractic and the  
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