



Anti-Inflammatory Diet: Food Pyramid



1. VEGETABLES

How much: 4 to 5 servings per day minimum (one serving is equal to 2 cups salad greens or ½ cup vegetables cooked, raw, or juiced)

Healthy choices: Lightly cooked dark leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, kale, Swiss chard), cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kale, bok choy and cauliflower), carrots, beets, onions, peas, squashes, sea vegetables and washed raw salad greens

Why: Vegetables are rich in flavonoids and carotenoids with both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity. Go for a wide range of colors, eat them both raw and cooked, and choose organic when possible.

2. FRUITS

How much: 3 to 4 servings per day (one serving is equal to 1 medium-size piece of fruit, ½ cup chopped fruit, ½ cup of dried fruit)

Healthy choices: Raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, peaches, nectarines, oranges, pink grapefruit, red grapes, plums, pomegranates, blackberries, cherries, apples, and pears – all lower in glycemic load than most tropical fruits

Why: Fruits are rich in flavonoids and carotenoids with both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity. Go for a wide range of colors, choose fruit that is fresh in season or frozen, and buy organic when possible.

3A. WHOLE AND CRACKED GRAINS

How much: 3 to 5 servings a day (one serving is equal to about ½ cup of cooked grains)

Healthy choices: Brown rice, basmati rice, wild rice, buckwheat groats, barley, quinoa, steel-cut oats

Why: Whole grains digest slowly, reducing frequency of spikes in blood sugar that promote inflammation. Whole grains means grains that are intact or in a few large pieces, not whole-wheat bread or other products made from flour.

3B. PASTA (AL DENTE)

How much: 2 to 3 servings per week (one serving is equal to about ½ cup cooked pasta)

Healthy choices: Organic pasta, rice noodles, bean-thread noodles, and part whole-wheat and buckwheat noodles like Japanese udon and soba

Why: Pasta cooked al dente (when it has “tooth” to it) has a lower glycemic index than fully cooked pasta. Low-glycemic-load carbohydrates should be the bulk of your carbohydrate intake to help minimize spikes in blood glucose levels.

4. BEANS AND LEGUMES

How much: 1 to 2 servings per day (one serving is equal to ½ cup of cooked beans or legumes)

Healthy choices: Beans like Anasazi, adzuki and black, as well as chickpeas, black-eyed peas, and lentils

Why: Beans are rich in folic acid, magnesium, potassium and soluble fiber. They are a low-glycemic-load food. Eat them well cooked either whole or pureed into spreads like hummus.

5. FISH AND SEAFOOD

How much: 2 to 6 servings per week (one serving is equal to 4 ounces of fish or seafood)

Healthy choices: Wild Alaskan salmon (especially sockeye), herring, sardines, and black cod (sablefish)

Why: These fish are rich in omega-3 fats, which are strongly anti-inflammatory. If you choose not to eat fish, take a molecularly distilled fish-oil supplement that provides both EPA and DHA in a dose of 2 to 3 grams per day.

6. HEALTHY FATS

How much: 5 to 7 servings per day (one serving is equal to 1 teaspoon of oil, 2 walnuts, 1 tablespoon of flaxseed, 1 ounce of avocado)

Healthy choices: For cooking, use extra-virgin olive oil and expeller-pressed grapeseed oil. Other sources of healthy fats include nuts (especially walnuts), avocados, and seeds, including hemp seeds and freshly ground flaxseed. Omega-3 fats are also found in cold-water fish, omega-3 enriched eggs, and whole-soy foods. Organic, expeller-pressed, high-oleic sunflower or safflower oils may also be used, as well as walnut and hazelnut oils in salads and dark roasted sesame oil as a flavoring for soups and stir-fries.

Why: Healthy fats are those rich in either monounsaturated or omega-3 fats. Extra-virgin olive oil is rich in polyphenols with antioxidant activity.

7. COOKED ASIAN MUSHROOMS

How much: Unlimited amounts

Healthy choices: Shiitake, enokitake, maitake, oyster mushrooms (and wild mushrooms if available)

Why: These mushrooms contain compounds that enhance immune function. Never eat mushrooms raw, and minimize consumption of common commercial button mushrooms (including cremini and Portobello).

8. WHOLE SOY FOODS

How much: 1 to 2 servings per day (one serving is equal to ½ cup tofu or tempeh, 1 cup soy milk, ½ cup cooked edamame, or 1 ounce of soynuts)

Healthy choices: Tofu, tempeh, edamame, soynuts, soymilk

Why: Soy foods contain isoflavones that have antioxidant activity and are protective against cancer. Choose whole-soy foods over fractionated foods like isolated soy-protein powders and imitation meats made with soy isolate.

9. OTHER SOURCES OF PROTEIN

How much: 1 to 2 servings a week (one portion is equal to 1 ounce of cheese, one 8-ounce serving of dairy, 1 egg, or 3 ounces cooked poultry or skinless meat)

Healthy choices: High-quality natural cheese and yogurt, organic, omega-3 enriched eggs, skinless poultry, grass-finished lean meats

Why: In general, try to reduce consumption of animal foods. If you eat chicken, choose organic, cage-free chicken and remove the skin and associated fat. Use organic dairy products moderately, primarily yogurt and natural cheeses such as Emmental (Swiss), Jarlsberg, and true Parmesan. If you eat eggs, choose omega-3-enriched eggs (from hens that are fed a flax-meal-enriched diet) or organic eggs from free-range chickens.

10. HEALTHY HERBS AND SPICES

How much: Unlimited amounts

Healthy choices: Turmeric, curry powder (which contains turmeric), ginger and garlic (dried and fresh), chili peppers, basil, cinnamon, rosemary, thyme

Why: Use these herbs and spices generously to season foods. Turmeric and ginger are powerful natural anti-inflammatory agents.

11. SUPPLEMENTS

How much: Daily

Healthy choices: High quality multivitamin/multimineral that includes key antioxidants (vitamin C, vitamin E, mixed carotenoids, and selenium); coenzyme Q10; 2 to 3 grams of a molecularly distilled fish oil; 2,000 IU of vitamin D3

Why: Supplements help fill gaps in your diet when you are unable to get your daily requirement of micronutrients.

12. TEA

How much: 2 to 4 cups per day

Healthy choices: White, green, oolong teas

Why: Tea is rich in catechins, antioxidant compounds that reduce inflammation. Purchase high-quality tea and learn how to brew it correctly for maximum taste and health benefits.

13. HEALTHY SWEETS

How much: Sparingly

Healthy choices: Unsweetened dried fruit, dark chocolate, fruit sorbet

Why: Dark chocolate provides polyphenols with antioxidant activity. Choose dark chocolate with at least 70 percent pure cacao and have an ounce a few times a week. Fruit sorbet is a better option than other frozen desserts.