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# ANTI-INFLAMMATION COOKBOOK

the delicious way to reduce inflammation *and* stay healthy

Amanda Haas with Dr. Bradley Jacobs

*photographs by Erin Hunkel*



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**ANTI-INFLAMMATION  
COOKBOOK**

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The Delicious Way to Reduce Inflammation and Stay Healthy

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AMANDA HAAS  
WITH DR. BRADLY JACOBS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN KUNKEL



**CHRONICLE BOOKS**  
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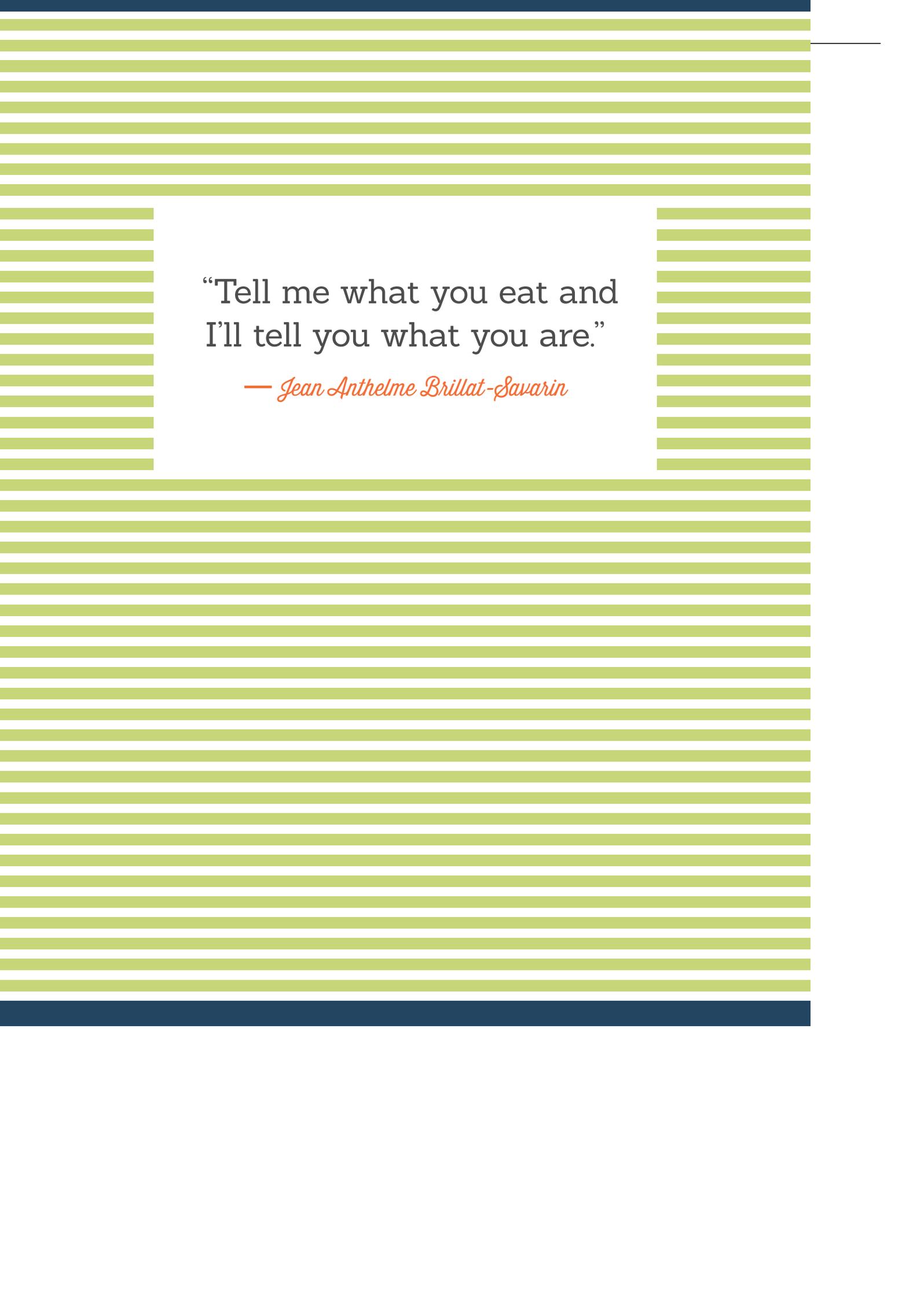
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“Tell me what you eat and  
I’ll tell you what you are.”

— *Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin*

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# PREFACE

by Dr. Bradley Jacobs

I went into medicine to treat the whole person and was deeply motivated to understand my patients in the context of their personal life experiences, which requires listening attentively to their life stories, learning about their family lives, recognizing the early symptoms and triggers, and understanding how stress, food, exercise, sleep, relationships, and finding purpose all influence their lives.

Although my medical-school professors would like to have convinced me otherwise, I learned from years of martial-arts study that we are energetic bodies, not limited to flesh, bone, and blood, and that we are capable of self-renewal. As a teenager, I recall my grandmother saying, “If you don’t have your health, you don’t have anything. . . . No amount of power or money can counter poor health.” In 1989, as a second-year medical student at Stanford University, I came to appreciate this truth firsthand when my healthy, fifty-year-old father suddenly developed difficulty finding his words and was subsequently diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor called a glioblastoma multiforme.

Through personal loss, I learned from the inside out when and how to apply conventional medical therapies (such as medications, procedures, and surgery), alternative medicine therapies (such as acupuncture and herbal medicine), and lifestyle therapies (such as nutrition, mind-body therapies, exercise, and cultivating quality relationships).

Based on these life experiences, I became committed to expanding my medical training to become a more well-rounded and effective physician (the word *doctor* has the same Latin root as *teacher*), one with a grasp of disciplines and perspectives other than what I had learned in medical school. In so doing, I hoped to become a better healer, listener, and communicator. Two of the most important topics I studied were nutritional and functional medicine. I learned the profound role that food plays in maintaining our health.

I have spent the past fifteen years caring for thousands of people with a vast range of health issues, including cancer, cardiovascular conditions (stroke and heart attack), autoimmune conditions (inflammatory bowel disease, sprue, multiple sclerosis, lupus, and type 1 diabetes), and lifestyle-related diseases (type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis, elevated cholesterol, generalized anxiety, and

sleep disturbances). Despite the diversity of conditions and health issues, a couple irreconcilable truths emerged: “upstream events” (factors that have occurred before a person seeks medical treatment) matter, and lifestyle modifications can have a profoundly positive effect.

A set of upstream events appears to cause each person’s seemingly different medical conditions, for example, high blood pressure or sprue. Some of these factors are modifiable by changing lifestyle, environment, or both; others, resulting from family history, childhood/early adult exposures, travel-related events, and genetic mutations, are not.

Modifiable factors, such as lifestyle (diet, activity, stress, sleep, and tobacco use) and environment (exposure to infectious agents, toxins, and pollutants, and community safety) have a dramatic impact on health and well-being. Research has demonstrated that lifestyle choices can prevent more than 55 percent of deaths each year. Put very simply, with every vegetable serving eaten daily, the risk of dying of any cause is reduced by about 6 percent per year. These modifiable factors are the magic pill that we all are looking for.

Put into practice, here’s how considering the effects of upstream events and modifiable factors influenced one patient’s care: It was a warm autumn day in September. I had completed my general internal medicine residency and research fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and begun seeing patients as assistant clinical professor and founding medical director for the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine.

One of the first patients I worked with at the Osher Center was Maria. The thirty-four-year-old mother of two toddlers had experienced two years of chronic intermittent abdominal pain, headaches, light-headedness, bouts of shortness of breath, muscle aches, and “brain fog.” Her previous general internal medicine doctor had worked diligently to assign a diagnosis to these complaints, to no avail. In the search for an answer to the underlying causes of her seemingly disparate complaints, she had seen a neurologist, endocrinologist, cardiologist, rheumatologist, pulmonologist, and gastroenterologist. She had undergone CT scans of her abdomen and chest, MRI scans of her brain, endoscopy, colonoscopy, small

bowel follow-through, echocardiography, tilt table testing, pulmonary function testing, and myriad laboratory tests. Unfortunately for Maria, despite the extensive work-up and brainpower of this collection of well-meaning physicians, no diagnosis had been given. Each referring specialist would write something similar to this: “All tests are negative. Her complaints are not related to my area of specialization.”

Maria would not take “we don’t know” for an answer and began going to the emergency room during episodes when her symptoms escalated. During one of these visits, she complained of feeling anxious and depressed (understandably) as a result of her symptoms, at which point she received an evaluation by a psychiatrist, who appropriately stated that she was suffering from situational anxiety and depression. Once the words *depression* and *anxiety* were inscribed in the medical chart, it became much easier for the admittedly frustrated physicians to ascribe her symptoms to being “all in her head.”

Consequently, her primary care doctor prescribed antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications, and her specialist doctors then were able to assign her symptoms to the “nonphysical” domain of “depression and anxiety,” thus getting them off the hook for continuing the search for a root cause of her complaints. Since she still had physical pain, she was prescribed pain medications, which led to dependence problems. At that moment, the tremendous collective energy and resources dedicated to finding the answer ceased. No longer were doctors interested in doing further diagnostic testing, let alone going back to square one and listening carefully to her story.

I had the advantage of seeing Maria after she had undergone a full battery of diagnostic tests and seen nearly a dozen doctors. After reviewing her medical chart, I realized that no one had asked her about her life experience prior to developing these symptoms. In preparation for my visit with Maria, I decided that I would ask her to tell me her story and would give her as much time as she needed to recount her life experience. In the first forty minutes of our visit, I learned that her mother had told her she had “stomach problems” ever since she was a kid.

Maria remembered becoming friendly with the school nurse because she would visit her so frequently in elementary school, most often within an hour after lunch recess. Her mother was a “health nut,” so her breakfast was usually cereal or eggs, and lunches consisted of peanut butter and jelly or tuna sandwiches on whole-wheat bread, or whole-wheat pasta with tomato sauce. She can remember one summer in Hawaii, when her stomach complaints and headaches vanished. Her mother reasoned that her environment was causing problems, but her symptoms didn’t seem to improve when she traveled to visit their relatives in the Midwest. In college, her doctors considered celiac disease, but her tests came back “negative,” and she was told that was not her problem. By the end of our visit, it became clear that food had been a major trigger to her symptoms, and she agreed to try an elimination diet for one month.

Within three months, Maria discovered that wheat, oats, tomatoes, and eggplant were the culprits for 90 percent of her symptoms. After I prescribed a modified diet, probiotics, select nutrients, and mind-body therapies, she no longer required pain medication. After six months, she was off antidepressants and living what she called a normal life.

Although we have long recognized the importance of food in promoting good health, only in the past ten years have we come to appreciate how food can *damage* our health. The industrialization of food production has successfully modified foundational food products like grains and meats in ways that render them novel foodstuffs to our highly evolved digestive tract and the bacteria within it. As a result, some people experience unanticipated changes in the normal function of their digestive tract in the immune response to foods considered staples in our ancestors’ diets. Consequently, people are experiencing myriad seemingly unrelated symptoms like headaches, fatigue, and joint pain.

Amanda Haas’s life experience is similar to Maria’s and countless others who have seen too many doctors and undergone too many diagnostic tests, only to be given a wrong diagnosis or to be told that the symptoms are “all in their heads.”

While many people are able to eat a full range of food types without problems, other people experience symptoms that, while minor for some, may

be severe and disabling for them. Often, disabling symptoms are the result of multiple events, such as genetic mutations combined with an infection compounded by persistent exposure to foods that cause inflammation for that individual. Thankfully, Amanda has found her path to wellness and imparts her wisdom as a gifted professional cook, providing us with delicious recipes based on the ingredients that will engender improved health as well as a happy palate.

Together, we hope to provide you with insight into how to use specific ingredients to get certain nutrients you may be lacking and to guide you to the ingredients and recipes that will help you better manage symptoms and conditions that are affected by inflammation. Here's to using food as your path to living a vibrant, joyful, and long life.



# MY STORY

by Amanda Haas

The joke in my family is that I look healthy. The truth is I've been sick all my life. Allergies, asthma, eczema, and back spasms have sidelined me since childhood. Apparent "stomach bugs" have landed me in the hospital more than half a dozen times. Chronic heartburn, endless stomach pain, and bouts of sudden nausea arrived about a decade ago. The final straw was six years ago, when I contracted parvovirus—a fairly innocuous virus for children but often havoc wreaking on adults. A rheumatologist explained I was one of the unlucky ones. The virus latched on to me and wouldn't let go, leaving me with symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis. Day in, day out, I'd be hurting all over and feeling like a hypochondriac. Every year since, I've woken up on New Year's Day vowing to figure out my health problems in the year ahead.

I have tried everything to find a cure for my pain, ranging from Western medical treatments to alternative healing practices. My contact list reads like a who's who of the health treatment world: acupuncturist, massage therapist, rheumatologist, gastroenterologist, allergist, orthopedist, physical therapist, osteopath, and even my dad (psychiatrist). When I had a second flare-up of the virus in 2010, blood work showed that my sedimentation rate (SED)—a measure of inflammation in the body—was significantly elevated. I finally agreed to let my rheumatologist start me on a traditional yet depressing routine of steroids and rheumatoid arthritis drugs, including a big ol' shot I had to give myself biweekly and a pill form of chemotherapy. My SED rate dropped, but I still hurt like crazy. That's when I decided to get one more opinion.

In 2011, I walked into an allergist's office at the end of my rope. As I sat there in tears, I listed my litany of problems. I explained how I'd tested negative for celiac disease even though I had a hunch that gluten was the cause of my heartburn and stomach problems. I showed him the drugs I was taking. He sat patiently and asked me question after question, including what I did for a living. When I told him I was a cook and recipe developer, his eyes lit up like a Christmas tree. He pointed out that my list of ailments read like a catalog of inflammatory disease-related issues. (This was good news?) Then, he asked me the most obvious question of all: If food was my life, why hadn't I looked to it for the answers?

If I had been listening to my gut—as I have done for most of my crucial life decisions—I would have known that what I was eating was my problem. Yet I feared that examining my food intake would make my life less enjoyable. Or that it could sideline my career working with chefs and others in the food industry. I also thought I couldn't afford all the supplements and foods I'd need to make changes. After explaining the different types of gluten reactions, my allergist sent me away with strict instructions: Remove all gluten from my diet, see how I felt, and start reading up on the connection between inflammation and food.

Eliminating gluten made an incredible difference. I saw an astounding improvement in my health. The stomach pain, vomiting, heartburn, and, most remarkably, back spasms subsided immediately. I was able to get off my medications. I felt so much better, that I didn't even miss my favorite foods. After getting over the self-consciousness of telling coworkers I had become gluten-free (it was impossible not to sound like I was hopping on the latest diet trend), I began looking beyond gluten to understand the foods that cause inflammation and the foods that fight it. I read everything I could get my hands on, from studies by experts on inflammation to nutritionists who use food to heal patients.

I became enthralled with the personal success stories I heard anytime I'd mention to friends my curiosity about the relationship between diet and inflammation. Avoiding gluten was the first necessary change for me, but for someone who loves food as much as I do, I was reticent to remove other categories of food from my diet. Like many others, I use food for comfort and relaxation and can easily overdo it. Although I was no longer sick to my stomach or having back spasms, I'd wake up frequently with joint pain, headaches, and general back pain. I finally realized that my pain always occurred after a big meal. Again, my gut was trying to tell me something. I was doing better, but I still had work to do.

That's when I decided to write this book. I realized that if I could create recipes that stave off inflammation, I would literally cook my way out of pain and into a healthier, happier life. I informed my family that we were going to shake things up, but I promised them that my food would still taste great. As I began work on this project, I was lucky enough to be connected with Dr. Bradly Jacobs. After a long

conversation about my health, he supported my health-improvement plan and agreed to partner with me on this book. We worked together to identify the foods that were causing my symptoms of back and joint pain and fatigue.

My first step was to empty my pantry of the clearly documented trigger foods and replace them with alternatives. I reined in my bacon habit and worked hard to make sure processed foods were a very small part of my diet. I made more space in my refrigerator for fresh produce and proteins. I reduced my alcohol intake. Plus, to stay true to my mantra that you can cook delicious food on a budget, I insisted on sticking to one.

This book shares what I learned as I cooked my way back to health, and how I eliminated the foods that were causing me pain, while creating delicious, simple recipes that calmed my inflammation. By finally trusting my instincts and listening to my gut, I turned to better habits in the kitchen that also made me a better cook. In turn, I have more energy than ever, and my sons have started lists of *their* new favorite recipes. Though I have been a professional cook for nearly two decades, the discoveries and practices in this book have become the most meaningful work of my career so far.

Even if you don't have life-altering symptoms, as I did, but simply want to lower your level of systemic inflammation for general wellness, the information and ideas here will improve the quality of your life when you understand how the right whole foods can be the best medicine for you and how delicious such healing cooking can be.





# ABOUT INFLAMMATION

At its most basic, inflammation is the body's response to outside irritants and stresses. Inflammation is a natural part of our immune system, and without it our wounds wouldn't heal. But when inflammation becomes chronic, it upsets the natural balance of our internal ecosystems, wrecking havoc on our digestive and nervous systems. Innumerable factors bring on chronic inflammation, and more and more people are becoming aware of its effects, electing to eliminate known irritants, such as gluten, in an effort to feel better. Yet while gluten sensitivity has gone mainstream, gluten is not the only irritant causing chronic inflammation. The typical Western diet of processed foods, excessive sugar, regular alcohol consumption, and too little of the foods that naturally counter inflammation, such as fresh vegetables, seeds, nuts, and oily fish, is contributing greatly to widespread chronic inflammation.

Chronic inflammation can prompt or worsen diseases such as heart disease, inflammatory diseases (i.e., rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, celiac disease), diabetes, or many others (the list is long). At its lesser effect, chronic inflammation can manifest as gastrointestinal upset, lethargy, or overall malaise. You'll see cancer frequently referenced in the information about beneficial and problematic foods. Put very simply, cancer loves inflammation, so reducing systemic levels of inflammation can be one way to positively manage or possibly prevent cancer. As a first step, informed, intentional eating can play a material role in promoting overall wellness and curbing the onset or progression of diseases that are negatively affected by inflammation.

## — oxidation and inflammation —

Oxidative stress results from an inability of antioxidants (for example, superoxide dismutase, glutathione, vitamin C, and vitamin D) to sufficiently eliminate waste products (such as free radicals and reactive metabolites) that are typically generated during the normal cellular energy production process. Under chronic stress conditions, our bodies have both increased demand to generate energy and decreased capacity to repair the body, which results in a chronic inflammatory state. Examples of food-based sources of chronic stress on the body include

exposure to pesticides and herbicides, trigger foods, high-calorie and added-sugar diets, and alcohol consumption. Chronic health problems, particularly autoimmune conditions (such as inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, diabetes, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus), also have this effect.

## — the digestive tract is key to improved health —

Although the digestive tract is inside the body, it is readily accessed by the outside world because the gastrointestinal lining is regularly exposed to billions of chemicals, organisms, and nutrients through the food and drink that we consume daily. Therefore, you can understand the importance of maintaining good gut health. Research has demonstrated that microorganisms living in our gastrointestinal tract not only influence our ability to digest and absorb food properly and regulate bowel function but also regulate other pathways, including the body's immune system development and function and vascular system, as well as its inflammatory and oxidative pathways.

As it turns out, poor gut health affects just about every organ, bodily system, and condition, and conversely better gut health can meaningfully improve a range of autoimmune conditions as well as diabetes, obesity, chronic back pain, and migraines. Some conventional practitioners may consider these improvements unrelated or spontaneous cures, but more of them are incorporating this thinking into their patient care.

Meet with your health-care practitioner to determine what you should be monitoring and recording, which diagnostic tests you should consider, and what modifications you might make in the short term. Ask for sources of reliable information on new findings relevant to your specific variables. Establish a timeline for exploration and assessment. Determine your immediate and long-term goals for treatment. If you are not yet working with a health-care provider, you can use a four-step process to help you identify potential triggers and patterns that perpetuate, worsen, or improve how well you feel.

## — the 4R program —

The 4R Program is a diagnostic and guidance tool that is useful for the vast majority of people living with chronic disease. Designed for gut health, it is adapted from a program originally developed by Jeffrey Bland, PhD, at the Institute for Functional Medicine, and is a variant of the naturopathic approach called the 3R Program. Each “R” stands for a step in the process.

### *remove*

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Remove from your diet all foods that may have toxins; for example, dietary supplements that contain high heavy-metal content, fish from known or potentially polluted waters, and corn-fed meat raised on antibiotics and growth hormones.

Remove all foods to which your body reacts poorly—that is, those you notice don’t agree with you. These include foods to which you seem to have a sensitivity. For example, remove dairy if you experience symptoms of lactose intolerance or wheat if you suffer from the effects associated with gluten intolerance whenever you consume these products. Remove all foods with added (not naturally occurring) sugar, artificial colors, and preservatives.

Eliminate irritants to the gut lining, such as coffee, alcohol, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications.

When the natural gut flora becomes unbalanced—which can disrupt nutrient absorption and/or cause persistent low-grade inflammation, restoring the natural balance is essential. Such imbalance can range from mild to severe and has a multitude of causes. Similarly, symptoms can be mild or severe, ranging from mild gastrointestinal (GI) upset to severe malabsorption, sometimes requiring hospitalization.

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### *replace and supplement*

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The second “R” stands for Replace and Supplement and refers to people who have a diminished capacity to make digestive enzymes. Pancreatic insufficiency, as it is termed, leads to an inability to digest food and absorb nutrients and often is associated with bloating, gas, and general stomach discomfort. Using digestive enzyme replacements or stimulating stomach acids (another key to digestion) with betaine Houttuynia cordata injections (HCI) or herbal bitters are excellent remedies.

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### *reinoculate and restore*

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The third step is to rebalance the microbiome in the digestive tract to ensure that health-promoting bacteria predominate over potentially harmful microbes. Go slowly when replacing the healthy bacteria to avoid gas formation and gut cramping. Start by consuming foods with 3 billion colony-forming units (CFU) daily and escalating to 15 billion CFU of healthy bacteria (lactobacillus and bifidobacteria species) or yeast (saccharomyces boulardii) daily. Foods should serve as your primary source. Look for foods in containers with the “Live & Active Cultures” seal, established by the National Yogurt Association, the industry’s nonprofit trade organization in the United States. The seal indicates that a refrigerated product has at least 100 million cultures per gram and that a frozen product has at least 10 million cultures per gram. Remember to read the label to ensure there is substantially more than the minimum before purchasing.

Kefir, another source of CFU, has an enriched group of organisms, including bacteria and yeast. Because kefir undergoes a fermentation process, very little lactose remains, and therefore lactose-intolerant people tolerate kefir well. Sauerkraut and kimchi are other excellent sources. These foods are thought not only to inoculate the gut with healthful bacteria but to provide additional food (called fructo-oligosaccharide and inulin) for the bacteria already living in your gut, thereby improving the health and numbers of the existing healthy bacteria.

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