

How to fight hidden causes of inflammation

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(HealthDay)—Tamping down inflammation is a must for people with a chronic inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis or lupus. But you can be exposed to damaging inflammation without having a specific

medical condition.

Inflammation prevents the body from adequately reacting to stressors and puts the aging process on an unwanted fast track, increasing the likelihood of problems like [heart disease](#). The negative effects of inflammation can be so significant that leading researchers from the University of Bologna in Italy coined the phrase *inflamm-aging*. So making anti-inflammation lifestyle choices is good for everyone.

How to Avoid Inflamm-aging

- Eat a heart-healthy diet focusing on foods like fatty fish, fruits and vegetables. Keep in mind that sugar is highly inflammatory.
- Get active with moderate cardio exercise. Remember: Good health guidelines call for 30 minutes a day on at least five days per week.
- Lose excess weight, especially if you're carrying those pounds around your middle.
- Avoid exposure to all forms of secondhand smoke, and of course, if you smoke, quit.
- Limit alcohol to one drink per day if you're a woman, two if you're a man.
- Clock seven to eight hours of sleep every night. Some people need more, others need less, but this is the [sweet spot](#) between not enough and too much.
- Manage stress. Stress is often unavoidable, but you can minimize its effects with techniques like deep breathing and meditation.
- Stay social with [strong connections](#) to friends and family.

Also, talk to your doctor about ways to boost heart health and any other steps appropriate to your needs to counter [inflammation](#).

More information: Learn more about [preventing inflammation](#) from Berkeley Wellness.

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