

Inflamm-aging: Inflammation and Aging



- 87+ years, started by Railway Mail Carriers
- Exclusively for federal and postal workers, annuitants and military retirees
- 2+ million members worldwide
- Extensive nationwide network of doctors, dentists, hospitals and other providers



GEHA Government Employees
Health Association

Webinar tips

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Agenda

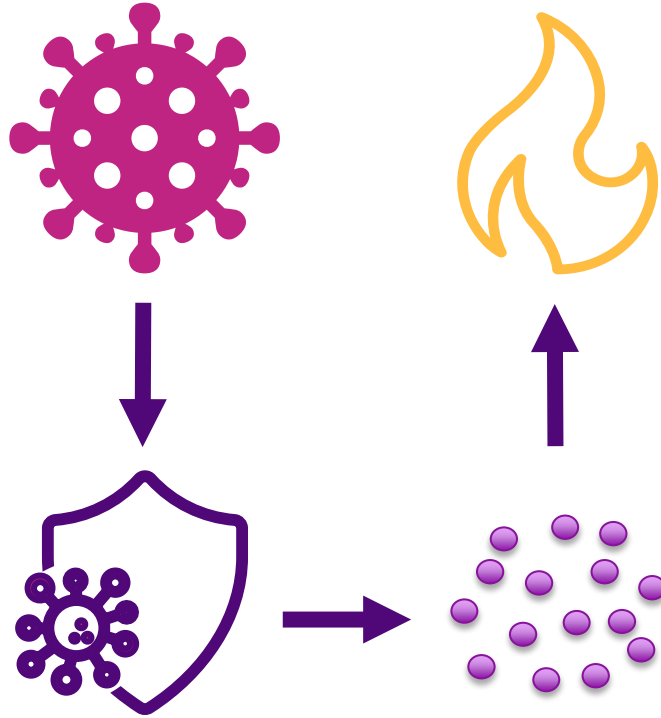
- What is inflammation?
- Inflammation and aging connection
- Inflammation prevention
- Fighting inflammation



What is inflammation?



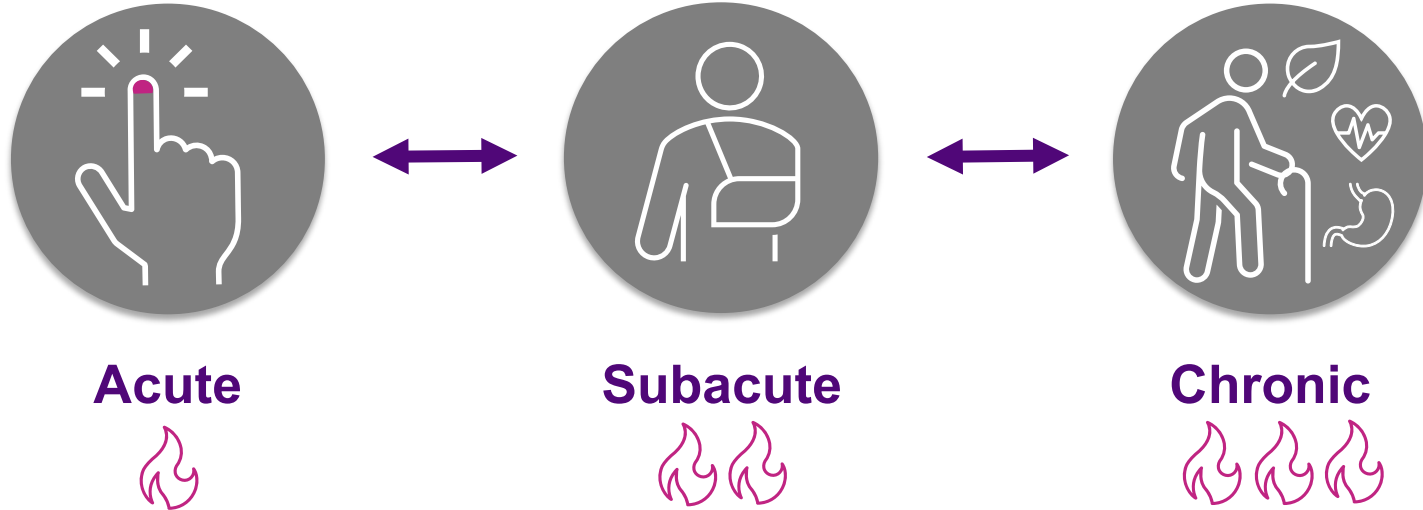
Inflammation – an immune response



Inflammation can be...

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Redness
- Invisible to the eye

Inflammation – how it shows up



Do you have signs of chronic inflammation?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Frequent exhaustion
- ☐ Unexplained muscle aches and joint pain
- ☐ Stomach issues (constipation or diarrhea)
- ☐ Weight gain
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Skin rashes
- ☐ Diagnosis of asthma, heart disease, diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis



Inflammation prevention



Inflammatory foods

- Saturated + trans fats
- Sodium
- Refined carbohydrates
- Sugar
- Foods/drinks to limit:
 - Highly processed treats
 - Fried foods
 - Sugary drinks
 - Alcohol

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)





Inflammatory lifestyle

- High alcohol consumption
- Excess weight
- Inactivity
- Chronic stress
- Poor sleep
- Smoking

Source: [National Library of Medicine](#)

Do you have any of these pro-inflammatory habits?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ High sugar intake
- ☐ Frequent eating out
- ☐ Sedentary lifestyle
- ☐ Smoke
- ☐ Drink alcohol daily
- ☐ Have a high stress work or home life (or both)



Inflammation: fighting the flame





Anti-inflammatory diet

- Reducing or eliminating those inflammatory foods
- Aim for balance with MyPlate
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ plate produce
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ plate (whole) grains
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ plate protein
- Boost your antioxidants
- Fill up on fiber
- Increase your Omega 3's

Source: [Hopkins Medicine](#)

Add antioxidants

Antioxidants prevent or slow damage to cells caused by free radicals.

- Produce: fruits and vegetables
- Aromatics: herbs and spices
- Drinks: coffee, tea and wine
- Dark chocolate





Fruits and veggies

Antioxidant rich, fiber filled:

- Best Sources:
 - Beets
 - Blueberries
 - Broccoli
 - Red grapes
 - Oranges
 - Dark leafy greens



Herbs and spices

All Stars: Delivering more antioxidants per 100g than any other food

- Look for brightly-colored spices
- Best picks include rosemary, ginger, turmeric, cayenne and cinnamon



Coffee, tea and wine

Powerful antioxidants in every cup but with limitations

- Coffee: 3–5 cups can provide up to 60% of daily antioxidant requirement
- Tea: Offering 8–10 times the polyphenols found in fruits and vegetables
- Red Wine: Resveratrol has been shown to prevent chronic systemic inflammation



Cocoa and dark chocolate

More antioxidant activity, polyphenols and flavanols than any other fruit

- The source of all chocolate is the cacao fruit
- White and milk chocolate have added sugar and fats – so they do not offer same benefits

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving

Calories **230**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 8g **10%**

Saturated Fat 1g **5%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 160mg **7%**

Total Carbohydrate 37g **13%**

Dietary Fiber 4g **14%**

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars **20%**

Protein 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%

Calcium 260mg 20%

Iron 8mg 45%

Potassium 240mg 6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Fill up on fiber

Fiber helps with weight patience and loss, feeds probiotics in gut and reduces “bad” cholesterol

- Found in plant-based foods
- Aim for 20 to 35 grams per day
- Fiber supplements



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Plants = fiber

Good sources include:

- Fruits: bananas, oranges, apples, mangoes, strawberries, raspberries
- Vegetables: the darker the color, the higher the fiber
- Beans & legumes
- Whole grains
- Nuts & seeds

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container

Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)

Amount per serving

Calories 240

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4g **5%**

Saturated Fat 1.5g **8%**

Trans Fat 0g

Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g

Monounsaturated Fat 1g

Cholesterol 5mg **2%**

Sodium 430mg **19%**

Total Carbohydrate 46g **17%**

Dietary Fiber 7g **25%**

Total Sugars 4g

Includes 2g Added Sugars **4%**

Protein 11g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%

Calcium 260mg 20%

Iron 6mg 35%

Potassium 240mg 6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Choose healthy fats

Unsaturated fats – particularly Omega-3 fatty acids – are associated with lower levels of inflammation

- Choose oils: poly/monounsaturated
 - Liquid at room temperature
- Avoid solids: saturated, trans fat
 - Solid at room temperature but melt under heat



Omega-3

Your body can't make Omega-3 fatty acids

- Found in:
 - Fatty fish
 - Vegetable oils
 - Avocados
 - Nuts and seeds
- Aim for 2–3 servings per week
- Choose food over supplements

What's your easy add to fight inflammation?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Produce – for fiber and antioxidants
- ☐ Spice up my meals and snacks
- ☐ Swap milk chocolate for dark
- ☐ Brew up some tea – green or black
- ☐ Choose more liquid oils
- ☐ Add more seafood to boost Omega 3



Lifestyle factors to fight inflammation





Sleep

- Consistent schedules reinforce the circadian rhythms that govern our immune function
- Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep nightly to help avoid low-grade, systemic inflammation that's associated with aging and chronic disease



Stress reduction

- Chronic psychological stress is associated with the body losing its ability to regulate the inflammatory response
- Think about ways you might be able to reduce stress like yoga, meditation, prayer or immersion in nature



Movement

- 20 minutes of daily exercise can have significant benefits on the body's immune system
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderately intensity physical activity a week or 30 minutes per day, five times a week

Which lifestyle habit do you struggle with most?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Maintaining healthy eating habits
- ☐ Smoking
- ☐ Getting enough sleep
- ☐ More than recommended alcohol intake
- ☐ Too much stress day to day
- ☐ I don't move enough (exercise)



- What is inflammation?
 - Immune response
- Inflammation and aging connection
 - Common symptom as we age
- Fighting inflammation
 - Balanced diet and lifestyle



GEHA member resources

- Elevate and Elevate Plus plans
 - Rally digital health platform
 - Learn more at geha.com/WellnessPays
- High, Standard, and HDHP plans
 - GEHA Well-being portal
 - Learn more at geha.com/HealthRewards
- All GEHA plans
 - Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
 - Learn more at geha.com/Blog
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