



## Anti-Inflammatory Diet Myths and Facts

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L, and Julie Eller

Guest: Ginger Hultin, MS, RDN

When it comes to eating well with arthritis, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. But that doesn't stop the rumor mill from spreading countless myths about the best arthritis "miracle" foods or diets. With so much information about what to eat and avoid, it can get confusing. In this episode, originally broadcast in November 2020, with the help of a registered dietitian, we'll dispel or confirm some of the most popular myths about eating right for arthritis, as well as discuss proven healthy eating tips and how to tailor a diet for your individual needs.

Our guest, Ginger Hultin, MS, RDN, has a master's degree in nutrition and is a registered dietitian nutritionist. She specializes in plant-based diets, integrative/holistic nutrition, oncology nutrition, supplements, alcohol and health, and nutrigenomics. She owns the Seattle-based concierge nutrition practice, Champagne Nutrition, LLC, where she helps clients optimize their health with an integrative approach.

Ginger currently serves as adjunct clinical faculty at Bastyr Center for Natural Health, teaching masters students as a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is also the author of "[Anti-Inflammatory Diet Meal Prep: 6 Weekly Plans and 80+ Recipes to Simplify Your Healing](#)," which helps take the guesswork out of eating a healthy diet and fighting inflammation with simple recipe plans and meal prep tips for any budget.

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## **Anti-Inflammatory Diet Myths**

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### **New Intro recorded 11/2/2021**

Thanks for joining us on the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast. We're doing our last throwback to some of our favorite episodes that have been popular with our listeners while we take a short break. So of course, we have to have an episode that talks about arthritis and diet – one of THE MOST popular topics in our community. Can food affect your arthritis symptoms? We, as arthritis patients, are constantly bombarded by people offering us advice on what we should and shouldn't eat when we have arthritis. It can be hard to figure out what actually works. But one thing to always remember is that we all respond differently to any treatment whether it's diet related, exercise or some other alternative treatment.

Listen in to this episode to help sort through all the facts and fiction as it relates to your arthritis and nutrition so you can make the food choices that work best for you.

### **PODCAST OPEN**

*Welcome to Live Yes! With Arthritis, from the Arthritis Foundation. You may have arthritis, but it doesn't have you. Here, you'll learn things that can help you improve your life and turn No into Yes. This podcast is part of the Live Yes! Arthritis Network — a growing community of people like you who really care about conquering arthritis once and for all. Our hosts are arthritis patients Rebecca and Julie, and they are asking the questions you want answers to. Listen in.*

Rebecca Gillett:

Welcome to the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast. I'm Rebecca, an occupational therapist living with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

Julie Eller:



And I'm Julie, a JA patient who's passionate about making sure all patients have a voice.

*MUSIC BRIDGE*

Rebecca:

Thanks for joining us on this episode of the Live Yes With Arthritis podcast. Today, we are going to bust some myths about arthritis foods. Every time you look on the internet and you look up what foods are good for me with my arthritis, there is a lot of stuff out there that claims to cure your arthritis or that can help you with your arthritis. And so even though it's true, some food choices can have an impact on your disease management and controlling inflammation, there is a lot of misinformation out there. So, that's why we're excited to have our guests today, Julie.

Julie:

Yeah, that's right. How do we identify the right things that are good to add in or aren't? We're going to dispel some of that frustration, dispel some of the misinformation, with our guest today. Ginger Hultin owns the Seattle-based concierge nutrition practice: Champagne Nutrition, where she helps clients optimize their health with an integrative approach.

She specializes in plant-based diets, integrative and holistic nutrition, oncology nutrition, supplements, alcohol and health, and nutrigenomics. She has a master's degree in nutrition and is a registered dietitian nutritionist. She currently serves as adjunct clinical faculty at Bastyr Center for Natural Health, teaching master's-level students as a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Her new book, "Anti-Inflammatory Diet Meal Prep: 6 Weekly Meal Plans and 80+ Recipes To Simplify Your Healing," helps readers take the guesswork out of eating a healthy diet and fighting inflammation with simple recipes and meal prep tips for any budget.

Rebecca:

Thanks so much for joining us, Ginger, welcome to the podcast. I have to ask, does Champagne Nutrition include champagne? (Laughs)

Ginger Hultin:



Thanks for having me, first of all. I'm a registered dietician, and so a lot of people think that I'm a nutrition food police. But that's actually not the case. The way that I work is really with trying to include as many foods that people enjoy as possible. That could include champagne or, you know, chocolate, other things that people enjoy. So, it's about living your best life and including the foods that you enjoy while also hitting your goals.

Julie:

I think it's helpful to think about your role, not as the food police, but as the food empowerer. It's helpful to think about how we can find the things that are going to bring us joy in our eating but also for our joints. So, we're so excited to get to talk to you today, Ginger. Thanks for joining us. We'd love to kind of just present some myths to you or some facts. And you can tell us what the information is. Thumbs up, thumbs down, give us the skinny on the food facts. I will stop making food puns at some point, I swear.

Rebecca:

No we can't. Keep going.

Julie:

So, our first myth or fact: Is gluten bad for arthritis? Give me the facts.

Ginger:

I was lucky enough to be able to dive into all this research really, really deeply. My book, "Anti-Inflammatory Diet Meal Prep," just came out this summer, and so the first part of the book is completely full of the research. And diving into the research on exactly how gluten affects arthritis, there's no good evidence that says people with arthritis specifically shouldn't eat gluten. And actually, if we're trying to calm inflammation and lessen inflammation in the body, there's some research that says that whole wheat and whole grains are really beneficial for being anti-inflammatory. That being said, of course, everything's a bit more complex than just a simple yes or no.

If you're celiac disease, that means absolutely you cannot eat gluten. But then there are some people who are either allergic to wheat or who might have some sort of sensitivity. And one thing you're going to hear from me over and over today is that a diet that helps one person might not help the other. And what you really need to do is



listen to your body. What I often suggest is, if somebody really thinks they might have a gluten issue, that we remove gluten for a period of time, test it out, see how you feel. You know, if you eat gluten and you notice that your arthritis or your pain is worse, then it really might not work for you. But removing a big group of foods that could be helpful is also a mistake. So, there's a balance there.

Rebecca:

So, we mentioned celiac disease, Ginger. Can you explain to our listeners what exactly that is?

Ginger:

Yeah. Celiac disease is a condition where you have a very severe reaction to gluten. And gluten is a protein specifically in wheat and a few other whole grains. But what happens is, it really damages your intestines and causes a lot of inflammation in that area. So, the only treatment right now for somebody with celiac disease is complete gluten elimination.

Rebecca:

That is helpful. So next myth: Dairy causes inflammation and I need to cut it out of my diet.

Ginger:

Right. This one's very interesting. And there is some research actually that shows that dairy could cause some irritation or inflammation in some people, but the majority of the research actually shows that dairy is anti-inflammatory. So, here's another way that we see some conflicting information. It's very simple, generally these days, to cut out something like gluten or dairy because there's so many incredible alternatives and replacements.

So, I will say, when I wrote this cookbook, specifically for people with inflammation and pain, a lot of it is gluten-free. Because I'm using grains like oats or quinoa; those are great whole grain options that don't have gluten. And I use a lot of dairy alternatives, maybe soy milk or olive oil instead of butter, just in a natural way. The way that I



presented this is to be dairy- and gluten-free for the most part, just because a lot of people do tend to go that way. But dairy has a lot of protein, it has a lot of calcium, it has other vitamins and minerals that could be really beneficial. So, if it's a problem for you and it causes pain and inflammation, you might need to cut it out, or if you're lactose intolerant, things like that. But if it doesn't, it could be an important, healthy food for you.

Julie:

I think it's helpful to hear your perspective that maybe it's not cutting out all of dairy or all of gluten, but balancing a diet so that when you are cooking, you're not cooking with only cheese. Or you're not only eating a loaf of bread for dinner, or whatever it might be, that fits into those squarely glutinous- or dairy-rich meals.

Rebecca:

When you talk about dairy, though, is it what's better? Low-fat versus full-fat dairy?

Ginger:

The research shows again and again that a lower-fat diet is generally more anti-inflammatory. Research is pretty clear that having less saturated fats seems to be better.

Julie:

One myth that we have here is that citrus foods cause inflammation. What do you think?

Ginger:

Well, the research is really clear on that one. Citrus is anti-inflammatory, you know; it is so high in vitamin C, and that's a powerful antioxidant vitamin, high in potassium for regulating blood pressure, full of water and fiber. I will say any person can be sensitive to any food, so if you're a person that, you know, citrus sets you off, then I respect that. But the vast majority of people, and the research backs this up very clearly, they should be eating citrus. It's an important food.

Rebecca:



Alright, next myth: Nightshade vegetables make inflammation worse. Fact or fiction?

Ginger:

This is probably the most important myth we're going to talk about today. It's so clear. You know, if you dive into the research and you look at nightshades and the research on them over time, they're very anti-inflammatory foods.

It's a pretty big group of foods. I'd say eggplant, potato and tomato are the most commonly consumed. And they have a compound called solanine in them. And so there was some old myths that said, oh, solanine causes inflammation in the body. But when you look at the research that they've done on humans, eating these foods and looking at inflammation, they're not saying it causes inflammation. They're actually seeing the opposite. Tomatoes, they're so full of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, fiber. They're so good for you. So, I would really not want you to exclude those if you can eat them.

Rebecca:

Well, that's good news. Because salsa and bruschetta are two of my favorite things, so I will keep eating them.

Julie:

That's absolutely right. I love tomatoes You've just made my whole day, my whole week, much brighter.

### **New PROMO**

**When it comes to fighting arthritis, adjusting your diet could go a long way in providing some relief from pain and inflammation. Learn more in our many diet-related webinars. Visit [arthritis-dot-org-slash-webinars](http://arthritis-dot-org-slash-webinars) to skim topics and find webinars that can help you. That's [arthritis-dot-org-slash-webinars](http://arthritis-dot-org-slash-webinars).**

Julie:

Our next myth is that fat is bad, or for some folks, a high-fat diet can be good. Let's settle the myth on fat.



Ginger:

Yeah, this is another complicated one. And in order to really understand where this comes from, we need to go back to the 1990s. That is when we saw this low-fat trend. All of a sudden, they're saying eat low fat; but they didn't just eat low fat, they replaced it with a bunch of sugar. So, we saw like low-fat cookies and ice cream. I think that caused a backlash because Americans' health got worse, right? And people gained weight and saw worse health outcomes.

So, all of a sudden, there's been a big trend in the past decade of, oh my gosh, no, never mind. That is good; we need to eat more fat. But what's happening is, we're swinging wildly in both directions. But actually we need to land some more in the middle. You have to have fat; it's very important. A lot of us need more Omega three anti-inflammatory fats: That's from like fish or walnuts, chia seeds, hemp seeds, flaxseeds. We often don't get enough of those, and we have too much saturated fat. So, there is a happy medium. Fat is important, but a lot of people eat too much.

Rebecca Gillett:

So, what about one thing that people worry about is, like avocados. I love them. Is an avocado a good fat?

Ginger:

It is. So, when we talk about good fats, we're typically talking about fats that are heart healthy, and that is unsaturated. So that's like the olive oil, nuts and seeds, and I always put avocado in there. A lot of us are like, let me eat an avocado, let me eat two avocados. And all of a sudden, maybe a thousand calories of avocado; it's easy to do. So, if you're working on weight management, you might just need to look at the quantity. But avocados are so healthy.

Julie:

Yeah, I think that's great advice. Because I think when we're eating healthy foods, we tend not to think about the calorie count in those foods. They're better than Cheetos, right? So, let me have some almonds instead. And then I eat an entire bag of almonds, and all of a sudden I've eaten my entire caloric intake for one day in a couple of fistfuls of almonds.



And what about if you are, you know, on a keto diet, is there any consideration there?

Ginger:

Yeah, I would say a very large number of clients that seek my support are actually trying keto on their own, and a lot of them are not feeling very well. And so that's why they end up on my nutritionist doorstep. It's like 80 to 90% of all the calories you eat are fat and really, really low carb. A lot of people just mentioned the low-carb aspect; but they forget, oh, I'm eating mostly fat all of the time. So, when you look at the anti-inflammatory research though, that doesn't really align with keto. And I'm not saying that keto doesn't fit for some people. I've seen some success. I'm a cancer expert. I've used it in cancer care. It's amazing for epilepsy. So, I've seen it in the clinical setting. But for the general person that's trying to calm inflammation, I often find that they're not getting the results they want and that we need to go in a different direction.

Julie:

It's a difficult nexus, right? Because we have the arthritis community that is, of course, looking to calm inflammation. But often some of the first pieces of guidance that you'll hear from a physician is combat your weight. Try to find some weight loss tools, and keto seems to be one diet tip that can help you get there.

Ginger:

Well, I'm glad you brought that up, because being in the metabolic state of ketosis... So, this actually is a different form of metabolism; being in that state causes weight loss. For whatever reason, if it's a birthday, a weekend or if you just can't keep up with that anymore, I'm seeing pretty massive weight gain rebound. And so that is actually not good for inflammation. It's not good for your metabolism, and it's not good for your emotional state either, or mentally. What I help my clients do is get on a more long-term, stable diet that helps them manage their weight, instead of being on that roller coaster up and down that can cause so much harm.

Rebecca:

Can you comment on the different types of oils and the anti-inflammatory properties they may or may not have?



Ginger:

Yeah, so the most anti-inflammatory oils are typically plant oils and the unsaturated fat sources. So, we're talking about olive oil, avocado oil, grape seed oil — those are often the most heart healthy. It gets a little confusing, because saturated fats, which we keep saying isn't as healthy and could be more pro-inflammatory — that actually exists in one plant oil and that's coconut. Coconut oil is often touted as this really beneficial oil. It can be certainly part of a healthy diet, but it also gives you a lot of saturated fat. So, you got to look at that balance?

Rebecca:

OK, next myth is: I should avoid eggs, fact or fiction?

Ginger:

The research has swung so wildly on eggs. And I get a lot of people telling me they're feeling really frustrated. You know, what happened for a while, we're going back maybe a decade or so: The guidelines came out and said when you eat eggs, they have cholesterol; they increase your cholesterol in your body, and they're not good for you. Starting in 2015, they said, oh, we looked at the research, and we decided that we're removing all limitations on eggs. What creates high cholesterol in the body is actually eating a high intake of saturated fats. So, it's interesting we keep coming back to having a moderate fat diet. Eggs are really high in protein. And the yolk, specifically the yellow part, has a lot of vitamins and minerals. So, for my clients, if they can tolerate eggs and they make them feel good, they're such a great snack or food to incorporate.

Julie:

Awesome. Our next one is: The best diet for arthritis is one that excludes all meat. Myth or fact?

Ginger:

What we see really clearly in the research is that high-meat diets are often higher in saturated fats and can be more pro-inflammatory. The vegetarian and vegan diets,



including vegetarian diets that include fish, those seem to be more anti-inflammatory. They can also help people manage their weight. They create better outcomes for cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure and cholesterol. They can help lower cancer risk. I mean, plant-based diets, and I use the term plant-based cause I'd like to be really flexible, but plant-based diets are very indicated for arthritis and other inflammatory conditions. But that being said, I think a lot of people get a little freaked out by like, what? I can never eat meat again?

You don't have to be vegan. You can, if you want to, and there's really healthy ways to do that, but you can actually just start by eating less meat, weaving in like a meatless Monday, right? And doing lentils for dinner instead of meat, or you could start by weaving in like mushrooms to your burger, just so that you're adding in more veggies. There is no one best diet for everyone, but the research shows us pretty clearly that eating less meat, and more plant-based, more vegetarian, probably helps with inflammation and arthritis.

Rebecca:

Well, that's good to know. When we're talking about the meat that we eat, can you differentiate, is poultry better than red meat? Is there a certain type of meat that we want to avoid more of or eat more of?

Ginger:

Saturated fat is much higher in red meat, and that includes beef, lamb and pork. Those foods, if you're going to reduce meat, might be one of your best choices. And do more lean meats like chicken, turkey, fish is a really good option. A lot of people are like, OK, I'm going vegan, I'm never going to eat meat again, and I'm just going to eat lettuce. And then they tell me that they felt terrible, and their hair fell out and, you know, like it went very poorly. And I tell them a balanced plant-based diet isn't just lettuce. It's so many different foods and whole grains and tofu and beans and lentils. You should feel full and satisfied and really, really good when you get some support from a registered dietician or you get the right cookbooks or blogs.

Julie:



I know that there has been a lot of conversation and research around processed meats and some of the carcinogenic effects that they have. Do you mind commenting on that for our listeners?

Ginger:

Yeah. And then people are gonna get mad at me because I'm going to put bacon and sausage and hot dogs on the list of processed. And what happens is, there's some additives to those meats, and they are linked to increased cancer risk and they do have some negatives. It doesn't mean never, but I think a lot of us can eat less. And while you're eating less meat, it's not just about cutting things out. It's about adding things in. So, adding in different types of anti-inflammatory foods, that can be really positive.

Rebecca:

Everything in moderation, right? So, the next myth: I should, if I'm going to do a plant-based diet, I should only eat vegetables raw.

Ginger:

People have a lot of questions about whether they should eat raw or cooked vegetables. Which are better? Are the nutrients getting depleted? And the fact is, when you cook some vegetables, you increase nutrients. So, like carrots is a good example: When you cook carrots, then you get more vitamin A, it's better digested and better absorbed. So, my bottom line here is, yes, some nutrients are lowered by cooking. I would suggest doing some quick-cook methods like steaming, right? Or roasting things, so that you're not like dumping them in water and boiling them for like a half hour, you know? Cook things a little bit more lightly, and weave in cooked and raw veggies so that you're getting some of both.

Julie:

If you're eating that vegetable instead of a different processed food, you are increasing your nutrient value by so much. You've really done yourself a service rather than minimized it, right? So, it's not about being perfect all the time; it's just about taking those small steps and trying the things that you can do to do better with your diet. Our



next myth, this is what I hear all the time: A shot a day of apple cider vinegar can help my inflammation. What do you think? Yes, no, myth, fact?

Ginger:

Though apple cider vinegar has some interesting properties, right? It's a source of probiotics, which is good for your gut health, right? Which is tied to inflammation. There is nothing about apple cider vinegar that's like uniquely anti-inflammatory. It can also be a little tough on your teeth and tissues in your mouth and throat, so a lot of people will need to dilute that with water. I personally don't really care for drinking it or shooting it. I'll use it more in recipes like salad dressings. I think it can be part of a really healthy diet. It's an awesome fermented food, but I'm not seeing any evidence that that alone is going to make a difference in arthritis or inflammation. What's important about this conversation is that unfortunately I've never seen any research that one type of food is gonna be the answer.

Rebecca:

Yes, totally agree with that.

PROMO

*Want to connect with others who understand what you're going through? The Arthritis Foundation's Live Yes! Online Community features forums on specific topics, where you can chat with those who know what it's like, including health care experts. Or check out our local virtual Connect Groups for a more personal touch. Sign up at <https://www.arthritis.org/liveyes>.*

Julie:

Ginger, is it a myth or a fact that coffee is bad for arthritis? Give me the skinny on this one. I drink a lot of coffee, a lot of it.

Rebecca:

A latte of it.

Ginger:



Oh, latte of it.

Rebecca:

Had to do it.

Ginger:

Yeah. Thank you for the food pun. I am a fellow coffee lover. I live in Seattle, and I track the research really closely cause, just like other things, it goes back and forth. But really where the research seemed to have landed is even drink a moderate amount of coffee, and that could be one to two cups a day; that there's very special antioxidants in there that could be anti-inflammatory. So, if you tolerate coffee and it feels good for you, and the caffeine doesn't bother you, it could be beneficial. But I will give you a warning: Drinking it with a lot of cream and sugar can take away all those benefits and lead you down the wrong path. So, you have to think about how you take your coffee.

Julie:

So maybe not a latte of it?

Rebecca:

Not a latte, a latte.

Julie:

So Ginger, you talked a little bit about, you know, being curious about the kind of foods that make you feel good and those that don't and eliminating them for some period of time. Could you tell me a little bit more about what that elimination approach might mean?

Ginger:

Yeah. This honestly is really important to tackle with a qualified health professional, especially a registered dietician. I do this a lot with clients because it's extremely restrictive and it's extremely challenging. But it can help you find some good answers.

So, basically what you do, in a nutshell, is you eliminate the vast majority of foods. You eat sticking with a very small amount of foods that often are not triggers. And so even



meeting your calories and protein needs, getting your nutrients is very hard. So, you need an expert. You do that for a period of time, maybe a week or two, and then you start adding in the potential trigger food.

Let's say the first week you add in some gluten. That's a test for yourself. You track your symptoms, then you take it back out, and you're on that baseline diet. Then you add in nightshades and you test those, and then you take them back out. So, I mean, this could span a period of months. And it really is very specific and very challenging if you have any kind of eating disorder issues; you really need to be careful. It might not be appropriate for you if you have other health conditions where you need certain nutrients; you might need to be careful. So again, I wouldn't suggest this on your own. I really think you need a professional to do it, but it could be very helpful.

A lot of people have questions about how to know whether or not they're allergic or sensitive to a certain food. The first place I would actually start is with an allergist. Because a food allergy is different than a sensitivity, and there are very reliable tests to tell if you're allergic. So that's a good place to start: Meet with an allergist, get a referral from your doctor. Secondly, they might be able to help you, or a registered dietician or a functional medicine provider can help you, with food sensitivity testing. I will warn you that those are a little bit less clear cut.

What often happens is you'll do a food sensitivity test, and you'll get back a sea of red, which means don't eat these foods. And it's like, every food that you love, or it's cutting out like half of your diet, and that can feel so frustrating. You have to take that with a grain of salt, and I see a lot of people get really, really tied to that. And I think it cuts out a lot of foods, and that's very unfair. So what needs to happen is: Get that information, and then move into an elimination diet with a health professional based on that. And that can help add some clarity. Let's say it tells you to cut out eggs. You love eggs, they make you feel good, you know; probably that could be part of your lifestyle.

Julie:

I think that's a great way to think about an elimination diet and maybe a less intimidating way: starting with some kind of food sensitivity test or something like that. And then using that to guide what you eliminate first, while you add back in; maybe shorten the length of time that you're in that elimination phase. That's great advice, Ginger. Thank you.



Rebecca:

Are there any foods that can actually help with arthritis symptoms?

Ginger:

You know, there are. Especially when they're put together into an anti-inflammatory diet, there are foods that are linked to specifically calming inflammation in the body. And I like to include them together multiple times throughout the day — that's how you get the best benefit, not just from eating like ginger once but from eating ginger every day, right? As part of your anti-inflammatory plan. So, one of the most important foods that can lower inflammation is Omega threes. We touched on them earlier. They are found in fatty fish, like salmon or halibut or trout or anchovies or sardines or herring. But they're also found in walnuts and flax, chia and hemp seeds. There are some really great sources in the diet to get this special type of fat that helps lower inflammation. So that's a really good place to start.

Rebecca:

We hear a lot that beans are good for us, too. Can you address, you know, the issue with beans being anti-inflammatory, and what about soy?

Ginger:

This is a really important conversation that I get asked a lot about. There is a, I would call it a movement, that's an anti-lectin movement. And that really is actually based on a book that was written by a doctor that said there is this compound called lectins in beans and nuts and grains, and they're not good for us. And we should eliminate them. That to me is a very far reach. It is in one book that a doctor wrote, but it really isn't showing up in the research. Some people might feel better without beans, without foods that have lectins, but the research shows so strongly that beans are really beneficial. They lower cholesterol, they're high in plant proteins and fiber, and it's tons of antioxidants. Studies show so clearly they're anti-inflammatory. Unless you have a specific issue with the way beans make you feel, most people should be eating more of them.

And then soy is a very interesting conversation. There are some old myths that I wish would go away. Some old research from the 1980s and nineties that were done on animal studies, actually mice and rats, saw that when those animals ate soy, they had



higher levels of plant estrogens in their bodies. And then, when they did more research on humans, they saw, oh, that research doesn't translate. And every single major cancer organization has statements that soy is not cancer-causing; it is not bad for you, it does not increase human estrogen. Soy is an incredible source of protein. It's an incredible source of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. It's such an important food. I think it's a real shame that a lot of people still fear it. So, I really encourage you to eat soy foods. If you can, a tofu, edamame, tempe, miso, these are incredibly healthy foods

Rebecca:

That is good to hear. That is definitely a myth that I think a lot of people still believe. Thanks for dispelling that for us.

One that we hear a lot about right now, and Julie and I were just saying, is it turmeric, turmeric? How do you say that?

Ginger:

Yeah, so it's turmeric, and it's this very interesting root. And it looks a little bit like ginger, but when you grate it, it is very bright orange. So, you can use turmeric in so many foods: salad dressings, sauces, you can put it in your smoothie and often people are taking the supplement version, which is called curcumin.

So ginger and other herbs and spices are basically all anti-inflammatory. I mean, I just buy huge pieces of ginger and always buy cilantro and parsley, and I just chop them up and I put them in all of my dishes all week long. Because when you do that, you're adding a concentrated source of flavor and anti-inflammatory antioxidants.

Julie:

Could you also comment on things like sour cherry juice?

Ginger:

All fruits and vegetables are also anti-inflammatory. Unless you specifically have an allergy to one of them, every fruit and every vegetable is a go. And the reason for that is you get so many antioxidants from those foods. So, when you juice cherries and you get that bright red color, that is a concentrated source of anti-inflammatory benefits. I



don't think you need to be drinking cherry juice all day, every day. You could also weave in like putting some cherries in your oatmeal or your yogurt or having them as a snack.

Julie:

Perfect. That's really, really helpful. And some of these foods that we're talking about, they can carry a price tag in the grocery store. And I wondered, could you share some tips or shortcuts to eating an anti-inflammatory diet on a budget?

Ginger:

I think it can get so overwhelming when we're like, I have to get all the fresh fruits and vegetables. I have to prep them all when my hands hurt, and they all have to be perfectly organic. It can be so overwhelming and out of reach for a lot of people. I have a few tips for you. And when I wrote my anti-inflammatory diet meal prep book, it was all about simple, quick meal prep.

So, you're cooking a lot of food ahead of time, so you have it all week to really decrease your time. And I used a lot of foods like frozen and canned. I mean, you can get a can of beans at the store for a dollar or less sometimes, and they have awesome nutritional value. I think a lot of times we feel guilty about using those types of foods, but the research shows frozen foods actually have the same or more nutrition than fresh, so it can be more affordable and it stores better. If you're not going through all your produce, really do consider canned and frozen foods for your budget is really helpful.

Rebecca:

Do you have any tips about putting together a quick arthritis-friendly meal with some easy arthritis-friendly snacks?

Ginger:

The benefit of prepping is that you're doing some work on the front end, but you're taking so much pressure and time off of yourself in the future. You're being very kind to your future self when you're hungry, if you're having a day where you're in pain or you're not feeling well. It's so nice to have stuff just to grab from your refrigerator or freezer. And it's not possible for every person, but if you have any family members that could get involved and help you chop and prep things on meal prep day, that is just so



wonderful. Then just getting some really simple packaging. I get them on sale, and that's how I package things. So, I've got cut up veggies, just grab and go, you know, hummus in small little packages, grab and go.

Julie:

On your good days, invest in your next good day, make sure that you're doing the meal prep or taking that nap or taking it slow on the good day, not pushing yourself too hard so that you have another good day to come.

PROMO

*What topics do you want to hear more about on future episodes? Share your thoughts with us by going to <https://www.arthritis.org/liveeyes/podcast>. Just scroll down to the bottom of the page and click "get started" to start the survey.*

Julie:

Ginger, would you be able to share your top three takeaways that you want to make sure our listeners walk away from this podcast and keep in their head?

Ginger:

The first is that living an anti-inflammatory lifestyle, you have to think about it holistically. So, it is about the diet, that's your baseline, but also it's about movement, it's about stress management and sleep. I always say all the blueberries in the world can't lower your inflammation if you have a lot of stress. So, make sure you're thinking about it holistically. Are you hitting all the aspects of your health?

The other tip I have is that there is no one miracle cure. I wish there was, but we really need to think about this broadly, and one way to really hit on a lot of that is a plant-based diet. It doesn't have to be vegan or even vegetarian, but looking at maximizing fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains. That often is the way to go for lowering inflammation and weight management. And then finally, what works for someone else doesn't always mean it's going to work for you.

Julie:

I love it. Ginger, thank you so much for sharing your guidance with us today and helping us navigate our myths and facts. Those top three takeaways really will stick with



us for a long time. One more question I have: What advice might you have for that person in how they could respond to their friend who's giving them this unsolicited health advice?

Ginger:

I always tell them, they can say: Well, I'm working with a registered dietician, so I've got it covered. Or my dietician, Ginger, and I we are working on this together. Or thank you so much, I'll think about that. That's my favorite.

Julie:

I think that's the best one: I'll think about it, thanks, goodbye. Goodbye.

Rebecca:

Well, thanks so much again for joining us today, Ginger, we really appreciate it.

Julie:

Sure do.

Ginger:

Thanks for having me.

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