There’s no denying these are very uncertain times, but one aspect of our lives that remains a constant, is the need to nourish our bodies with real wholesome food. What we eat can have a profound effect on our body and mind and is not to be underestimated.

Our bodies rely on a steady supply of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, protein, healthy fats and complex carbohydrates in order to adequately function and keep us healthy. Our immune system is a hot topic at the moment with the current Covid-19 pandemic, but one lesser known aspect of immunity is inflammation.

**Immunity & Inflammation**

Inflammation is a natural response of the immune system and is very useful in acute situations such as an injury, or to help fight off an invader like bacteria, however, low-grade chronic inflammation is something we don’t want. Why?

There is an increasing body of evidence linking inflammation with a host of illnesses such as diabetes, depression, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and even some cancers[[1]](#footnote-1). Now more than ever, it’s a good idea to help support our immune system in any way we can. What a lot of people don’t realise is, certain foods promote inflammation while others can have an anti-inflammatory effect.

Research shows that diets which promote inflammation are:

1. High in these foods - sugar, refined carbohydrates, sweets, alcohol, processed meats and fried foods; and
2. Low in these foods - omega-3 fatty acids, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

**What can we do to help ourselves?**

Get cooking with some of the below immune supporting foods to help tip the scales of inflammation in the right direction. If you have kids at home, maybe try including them on occasion when cooking. It’s a great opportunity to teach them valuable life skills.

* **Fruit & Vegetables - “Eat the Rainbow”** meaning lots of different colours and varieties which ensures you’re getting a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients (help protect against disease). Try stir-fries, salads, or snack on vegetable sticks with some hummus.
* **Healthy fats** such as oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines, anchovies), nuts, avocados, olives & olive oil. These wonderful fats help to lower inflammation, support mood and cardiovascular health. Consider some steamed fish with roasted veggies, homemade guacamole or snack on olives or a handful of nuts.
* **Choose wholegrains** over refined carbohydrates as these still contain vitamins, minerals and fibre which are often eliminated during the refining process. Fibre is important for our digestive health and provides fuel for the good bacteria in our gut. Try switching to brown rice, having some porridge for breakfast or using wholegrain pasta.
* **Turmeric** has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties so try adding this spice to your cooking. I like it in curries or sprinkled on some homemade sweet-potato wedges.
* **Hydration** shouldn’t be underestimated as dehydration can promote inflammation and fatigue, so try drinking 2 litres of water each day. Add a slice of fresh lemon, lime, cucumber or some mint leaves to jazz it up if you’re struggling. Herbal teas will count towards this and are available in a wide range of flavours so find something that tickles your taste buds.

We know things are tough right now, but remember small changes can make a big difference. Maybe it’s eating more vegetables, or having an extra glass of water each day, but we would encourage you to consider making just one change and that might make all the difference.

Stay safe & keep well,

Jenny White, Beoga Nutrition

1. (Chen et al., 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)