

INFLAMMATION

The Underlying Cause of Chronic Disease and Pain



While there are numerous chronic ailments and a variety of aches and pains you might suffer from, all of them have one thing in common—they all begin with inflammation. This does not mean that inflammation is a bad thing. It is the normal response of the body to any kind of tissue damage. Whenever tissues are injured, biochemical messengers are released that initiate an inflammatory response. This response activates the immune system to check the injured area for invading microbes. It also sequesters the damaged area to slow the spread of any toxins introduced via the injury and triggers pain to alert you of the problem.

Once infection is contained and toxins are neutralized, a new set of biochemical messengers are released. These messengers turn off the inflammatory response and begin the process of healing. When this doesn't happen, inflammation starts to become chronic, and that's not good.

In cases of chronic inflammation, what was intended as a mechanism to slow the spread of irritants and control infection now becomes an impairment to normal tissue function. It inhibits circulation, depriving the affected tissues of vital oxygen, nutrients, and waste removal. The chronically activated immune system can also begin damaging otherwise healthy tissues. This can lead to autoimmune reactions and degenerative diseases. Furthermore, the sharp pain associated with acute inflammation, which informs you that you've been injured, now becomes dull aches and constant discomfort.

It's important to understand that chronic inflammation is the foundation for all chronic and degenerative diseases. So, in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll be discussing why inflammation becomes chronic and what can be done to halt the inflammatory process and start the healing process. This will help you see how all diseases are interrelated, having the same basic causes and the same basic cures. When you recognize this, you'll understand that halting chronic inflammation and promoting tissue healing and repair is essential to recovering from all chronic and degenerative health problems.

The Central Role of Inflammation in Disease

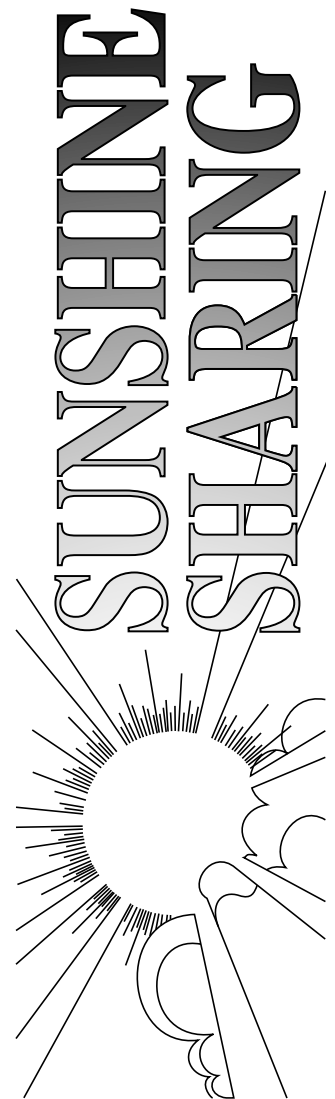
Here are just a few examples of how inflammation is at the root of chronic health problems and pain. For starters, the leading cause of death in Western society is heart disease. This



typically begins with the hardening of the arteries, which contributes to heart attacks and strokes. The process of forming arterial plaque doesn't begin with high cholesterol, as many people have been led to believe. It actually begins with inflammation of the arterial lining, which is what causes the plaque to form. Thus, reducing inflammation is key to preventing heart disease.

In another example, arthritis, which afflicts millions of people with pain and impaired mobility, is a chronically inflamed condition of one or more joints. This inflammation results from damage to the joint by physical injury or autoimmune reactions. The name for this condition, arthritis, clearly indicates that inflammation is the root problem. *Arthro* is Latin for joint and *itis* is Latin for inflammation.

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Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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This means that any disease with 'itis' in its name is one involving inflammation. The disease name describes where the inflammation is occurring, as in hepatitis (*liver inflammation*), colitis (*colon inflammation*), pancreatitis (*pancreatic inflammation*), dermatitis (*skin inflammation*), gastritis (*stomach inflammation*), bronchitis (*bronchial passage inflammation*), neuritis (*nerve inflammation*), and so on.

Inflammation is involved in many health problems that seem unrelated, like many mood and memory problems. Research is revealing that mood and memory problems, from depression to dementia, involve inflammation in the brain.

Even cancer has its roots in inflammation. Researchers are now learning that cancer begins with damaged tissue that never healed. The lack of healthy circulation to a chronically inflamed area deprives the cells in that area of needed oxygen. It is well-documented that cells mutate and become cancerous in a low oxygen environment.

Traditional systems of medicine recognized the problem with chronic unresolved inflammation. For example, Matthew Wood's Native American teacher, Tis Mal Crow knew this, "He taught us that every bruise, no matter how small, should be attentively cared for, because it may give rise to 'bad blood,' and this may develop into cancer, even years later."

Matthew further states, "The Chinese have the same concept. Stagnant mucus can precipitate into 'soft, moveable tumors,' which are generally non-malignant, but stagnant blood, they say, can turn into 'hard, immobile tumors' and some of these can be cancerous." (Matthew Wood, *The Book of Herbal Wisdom*, pg.79)

Treating Acute Inflammation

This brings up an important point. The best way to prevent chronic inflammation is to properly treat all acute injuries and associated infections. Remedies that can reduce inflammation and promote healing following injuries include arnica, yarrow, calendula, plantain, and comfrey. Remedies that aid acute infections associated with injuries include echinacea, goldenseal, Oregon grape, myrrh, and tea tree oil.



Following any injury, including surgery, if the injury is not healing properly, take an anti-inflammatory remedy like boswellia gum, hemp/CBD, licorice root, mangosteen pericarp, turmeric/curcumin, and willow bark. Taking an *Anti-Inflammatory Herb Formula* combining several of these remedies can speed healing after surgery, dental work, and injuries, at the same time reducing pain and promoting faster healing. These remedies can also be helpful for chronic pain and inflammation, but anti-inflammatory

remedies, by themselves, are not sufficient to fix the problem of chronic inflammation.

The Causes of Chronic Inflammation

To effectively reverse chronic inflammation, you need to know the difference between treating symptoms versus correcting causes. Using remedies to reduce inflammation and promote healing can be helpful in both acute and chronic inflammation, but it will not be effective at solving the problem of chronic inflammation if you don't figure out what's *causing* the chronic inflammation.

There are two basic reasons why acute inflammation doesn't subside and give way to healing. The first is that the source of injury was never removed so the irritation and damage to the tissues is ongoing. The second is that the body lacks the nutrients or energy it needs to initiate healing. Let's take a closer look at both of these causes.

Ongoing Tissue Irritation

To understand the problem of ongoing tissue irritation, imagine that you get a splinter in your hand. The splinter causes an inflammatory process, which will reverse and heal once the splinter is removed. But imagine if you don't remove it. In this case, the splinter will continue to irritate (inflammate) your hand.



The body can suffer from many lingering splinters. For example, if you were exposed to a heavy metal like mercury and your body wasn't able to remove it, the heavy metal would get stored in the bones or fatty tissues. It would then continue to cause irritation and damage until you detoxify and remove it from your body.

A low grade infection or parasitic infestation can also be an ongoing irritation. This is the problem that occurs in chronic Lyme disease. The bacteria burrow into body tissues and hide from the immune system, creating ongoing irritation. Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) is another example, where too many bacteria are growing in the small intestines causing chronic inflammation. This contributes to intestinal inflammation and leaky gut.

One of the biggest health problems in modern society is the ongoing exposure to irritating substances found in food, water, and the environment. Various additives found in food products and pesticide residues are examples of these irritating substances. Another problematic source are toxic chemicals that are used as part of a job. For example, contractors, beauticians, dry cleaners, factory workers, mechanics, conventional farmers, and pest controllers may all be exposed to irritating chemicals on a regular basis.

Another example, is the substances people frequently use such as alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. Excessive alcohol consumption, for example, will contribute to inflammation in the liver tissues (hepatitis). As this irritation continues, chronic inflammation eventually results in a breakdown or scarring of the liver tissue, cirrhosis of the liver. Smoking or vaping chronically irritates and inflames the lungs, which can eventually result in a breakdown of lung tissue potentially leading to COPD or lung cancer.

These environmental irritants won't be a serious problem as long as your internal detoxification systems are healthy enough to remove these toxins. But once these systems are overwhelmed, chronic inflammation will start to adversely affect the body.

Lack of Nutrients for Healing

This brings us to the second reason why inflammation may become chronic, which is the lack of nutrients needed to remove irritants, reverse the inflammatory process, and/or promote healing. For example, the body initiates inflammation by means of chemical messengers such as prostaglandins and eicosonoids. These pro-inflammatory messengers are produced primarily from omega-6 essential fatty acids, which are abundant in modern diets.

As previously noted, a different set of prostaglandins and eicosonoids is needed to halt the inflammatory process and initiate healing. These anti-inflammatory messengers are formed from omega-3 essential fatty acids, which tend to be lacking in modern diets. This imbalance in the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids favors inflammation and inhibits the healing process.

Here are some other examples. Wounds won't properly heal if a person is deficient in vitamin C or zinc. The immune system can't properly remove infections from the body if it is deficient in vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, or selenium. The liver can't remove toxic substances from the body without magnesium, vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, and many other nutrients. So, good nutrition is essential to reversing inflammation and promoting healing.

Three Steps to Reversing Chronic Inflammation

If you want to reverse the chronic inflammation that's at the root of chronic health problems and ongoing pain, you need to do three things. First, you need to detoxify and remove any 'splinters' from the system in the form of toxins or infection. Second, you need to avoid irritating substances to prevent further inflammation. Finally, you need to get the nutrients your body needs for healing. You can also use anti-inflammatory herbs or nutrients to help reverse the inflammation (see sidebar), but lasting success depends on following these three steps.



Step One: Detoxify

Detoxification is the process of removing the 'splinters' that are continually irritating tissues. So, if you suffer from chronic pain and disease consider starting with a cleansing program. Consider

following *Ivy Bridge's Cleansing Program*, which combines fiber, bentonite clay, aloe vera, chlorophyll, and a *Lower Bowel Formula*, along with a *Detoxifying Formula*. A Detoxifying Formula contains ingredients like burdock, dandelion, yellow dock, red clover and milk thistle. A Lower Bowel Formula contains stimulant laxatives like cascara sagrada and buckthorn.

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Promote Healing with Anti-Inflammatory Remedies

There are many herbs and nutrients that help to reverse inflammation and promote the healing process. These remedies can be used immediately following any injury or tissue damage to calm down the inflammatory process and aid the tissue healing process. You can apply them as single remedies, or use them as part of an *Anti-Inflammatory Herbal Formula*.

Willow Bark: The bark of various willow trees has been used to relieve inflammation and pain since ancient times. Willow bark contains salicylic acid, the forerunner of modern aspirin. Salicylic acid affects the chemical messengers that mediate inflammation (prostaglandins) in the same manner as aspirin, but with less risk of side effects.

Boswellia Gum: Native to India, the boswellia tree produces a resin similar to frankincense, which is anti-inflammatory and aids tissue healing. Clinical trials have noted significant improvements in rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, bursitis and tendonitis when patients took boswellia. The herb is also used in Ayurvedic medicine for acute inflammatory conditions like sore throats, laryngitis, canker sores, gum disease, ulcerative colitis, psoriasis, asthma and hay fever.

Mangosteen Pericarp: This native of Asia has been used as a natural medicine for centuries. The fruit and particularly the rind or pericarp is loaded with antioxidants called xanthones that exhibit powerful anti-inflammatory qualities. Many studies have shown the ability of xanthones to inhibit free radical damage, ease pain, balance the immune system, relieve allergic reactions and cool inflammatory reactions.

Turmeric and Curcumin: Also native to India and southern Asia, turmeric is generally known for adding flavor and color to Indian food, but it also has valuable medicinal properties. The rhizome is antioxidant, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory, partly due to the presence of the compound curcumin. Studies suggest the anti-inflammatory action of both turmeric and curcumin is even stronger than hydrocortisone. Both can be used for all types of chronic conditions arising from inflammation, including arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cancer, depression, gastritis, asthma, eczema (dermatitis), bronchitis, and headaches.

Hemp and CBD: The hemp plant contains CBD, a phyto-cannabinoid that supports the body's endocannabinoid system. This system helps to down regulate inflammatory and immune responses following injuries or tissue damage. CBD helps reduce both acute and chronic inflammatory responses and promote the healing process. It can be taken internally or applied topically for this purpose.

Licorice Root: The adrenal glands produce a hormone called cortisol, which helps to regulate inflammatory responses. When the adrenals become fatigued, due to long term stress, inflammation increases. Licorice root has a cortisol-sparing action that helps support adrenal function and calm down chronic inflammatory reactions, thus reducing pain and promoting healing. However, if you have high blood pressure it is contraindicated.

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Another option is the *Chinese Balanced Cleanse*, which also contains a Detoxifying Formula and a Lower Bowel Formula, along with a *Chinese Wood Decreasing Formula* to aid liver function. This cleanse also contains psyllium, burdock, and black walnut.

Both of these cleansing programs have helped many people improve their overall health by cleansing their bowel and aiding liver and kidney function. Make sure to drink plenty of water when doing the cleanse. It also helps to adopt a clean diet as outlined in Step Two.

You may also need other, more specialized cleansing programs, such as a heavy metal cleanse, a parasite cleanse, or a program to rid the body of low grade infections or yeast. Talk with the person who provided you with this newsletter for additional help.

Step Two: Remove the Source of Irritants

Detoxification gets rid of irritants, but if you continue to expose your body to more of them, it will just lead to more inflammation. For example, smoking or vaping continually exposes the lungs to new substances that can irritate and inflame them. If you smoke/vape detoxification isn't enough to keep your lungs healthy. You need to remove the source of irritants, you need to quit.

So, minimize your exposure to toxic and irritating substances as much as possible. These include pesticides, food additives, toxic household cleaning and personal care products, as well as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Since a high sugar level in the blood is also pro-inflammatory, it also helps to avoid refined carbohydrates. If your blood sugar is high, take a *Blood Sugar Control Formula* containing herbs like cinnamon, gymnema, nopal, and bitter melon to help bring down your blood sugar and reduce inflammation.

Essentially, you want to adopt a clean diet. This means looking for foods that are organically-grown, or at least grown without chemicals, and that do not contain unnecessary additives. You also want to eat whole, natural foods, rather than processed and refined foods. The less irritants you expose your body to, the less inflammation you will experience.

Step Three: Foods to Reduce Inflammation

Besides adopting a clean diet, there are many foods you can eat which will help reduce inflammation and aid healing. For starters, inflammation and oxidative stress, also known as free radical damage, are closely linked. The best source of antioxidant nutrients is fresh, brightly-colored fruits and vegetables. When fresh fruits and vegetables aren't available use frozen or dried produce. Canned foods are not as good because the heat used in the canning process destroys too many nutrients.

In fact, many people have found that temporarily adopting a mild food diet, one that contains *only* fresh fruits and vegetables, for a period of one to three months, has eased pain and aided healing from many chronic and degenerative diseases. While it isn't necessary to go to this extreme, a diet where fresh fruits and vegetables comprise more than half of the diet is very helpful.

You can also supplement with various anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory nutrients such as vitamins A, C & D3, zinc, alpha lipoic acid, carotenoids, and green tea.

Eating foods high omega-3 essential fatty acids is another dietary key to reducing inflammation. Foods high in omega-3s include nuts like walnuts and macadamia, deep ocean fish, and grass fed, whole milk dairy products. Directly supplementing with a fish oil or omega-3 supplement may also be beneficial.

Following these three steps can help to ease chronic pain, reverse chronic inflammation, and promote healing from a wide variety of chronic and degenerative diseases.

Additional Help and Information

For more information about reducing chronic inflammation for better health, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

The Inflammation Cure by William Joel Meggs, MD, PhD, with Carol Svec
The Anti-Inflammation Zone by Dr. Barry Sears
The Golden Seven Plus One by Dr. C. Samuel West
Strategies for Health by Steven Horne