

# 6 arthritis fighters you should be eating

Premier Health

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Take care of those hands and keep arthritis at bay by making smart food choices.

Research has found that the treatment of the most destructive form of arthritis may receive a boost with the consumption of a diet high in anti-inflammatory compounds.

Arthritis is a common, but often misunderstood, disease of the joints. There are 100 different types of arthritis, according to the Arthritis Foundation. The two most common are osteoarthritis, which comes with an aging body, and inflammatory arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis. Inflammatory arthritis is one of the most destructive forms of arthritis because the joint's cartilage is actually being attacked and destroyed, said Mark Williams, M.D., a family physician with Beavercreek Family Medicine.

"Inflammatory arthritis can severely affect a person's ability to be mobile, get up and down," said Dr. Williams, who practices with Premier HealthNet. "They often have chronic pain as well, which significantly affects their quality of life."

There is no specific diet prescribed for those suffering from inflammatory arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis — however, recent research suggest those who suffer from the disease might benefit from modeling their eating habits after the Mediterranean diet, according to the Arthritis Foundation. Many of the foods in this diet have been found to help control inflammation, the key culprit of arthritis pain.

"The Mediterranean diet is rich in whole foods, fruits, vegetables, lean meats and fish," Dr. Williams said. "These types of food items can decrease inflammation, which in turn, decreases the pain and stiffness of arthritis and may help improve the quality of a person's life."

Dr. Williams said it is important for those who suspect they may be suffering from arthritis to see a health care provider who can diagnose which kind they may have. That will then help form a course of treatment, including the type of diet that will best help counteract symptoms. The most common symptoms of arthritis include joint stiffness and swelling. Inflammatory arthritis can also cause a person's joints to become red and swollen.

The Arthritis Foundation suggests the following guidelines when choosing anti-inflammatory foods:

**Think seaside:** Fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines and anchovies are rich in inflammation-fighting omega-3 fatty acids. Eat up to four ounces a week.

**Go a shade darker:** Fruits and vegetables dark in color usually boast a high concentration of antioxidants. Try your hand at dark berries such as blueberries and blackberries and throw kale or a purple squash in the mix. Eat up to two cups of fruit and three cups of veggies with each meal.

**Get nutty about it:** Walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios and almonds contain monosaturated fat that fights inflammation. Grab a handful a day.

**Add in beans:** Look for ways to include beans into your meals. These small items are packed full of anti-inflammatory compounds that also deliver fiber, protein, folic acid and minerals.

**Pour on the oil:** Olive oil contains monosaturated fat, antioxidants and oleocanthal, a compound that can lower inflammation and pain. The foundation suggests three tablespoons a day in cooking or salad dressings.

**Fill up on fiber:** Fiber lowers C-reactive protein, a substance in the blood that indicates the presence of inflammation. And Dr. Williams said fiber works best when consumed through whole grain foods.

For more information on arthritis or to find a Premier HealthNet provider near you, visit [www.premierhealthnet.com/provider](http://www.premierhealthnet.com/provider).