The 30 BEST and WORST Inflammation Fighting Foods

Known as the “silent killer,” Toxic Inflammation Overload is being recognized by the scientific and medical communities as the major contributor to nearly all leading causes of death and disability in modern world today. Toxic Inflammation Overload has been linked to everything from heart attacks and strokes to type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, asthma, and many, many other conditions.

What’s more, there are far more subtle signs that the fire inside your own body and cells is burning and growing. The following symptoms are near telltale signs that your body may already be overtaken by Toxic Inflammation Overload:

- Achy, painful joints
- Mood swings
- PMS
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of mental focus
- Skin problems
- Eczema
- Acne
- Fatigue
- Premature aging
- Sugar cravings
- Inability to lose weight
- And many, many more
You see, while most of us are quite familiar with acute inflammation, which is characterized by visible redness, swelling, pain, and is a natural part of the healing process, Toxic Inflammation Overload is low-grade systemic inflammation that occurs on at the cellular level and flies beneath the radar.

As a matter of fact, new research now suggests that the fire inside artery walls could be the missing puzzle piece to solve the mystery of why many people with normal or even optimal cholesterol levels suffer heart attacks or strokes, while others with very high cholesterol never develop heart disease.¹

By far, the single-most important, controllable factor that fuels Toxic Inflammation Overload and its myriad symptoms is your food choices—both what you do and don’t eat. We call this the Omega Imbalance. Specifically, the typical Western diet and many so-called “healthy” diet plans contain far too many inflammation-promoting Omega-6 Fatty Acids and not nearly enough anti-inflammatory Omega-3 Fatty Acids.

In reality, humans evolved to consume diets consisting of marine life, wild game, and/or inland plants, which provided the ideal balanced dietary ratio (i.e., 1:1) of Omega-6 to Omega-3 Fatty Acids, or an equal intake of these two essential fatty acids. Unfortunately, in the modern diet, this ratio has shifted to an incredibly disproportionate 16:1 to 20:1.² This is completely out of balance for overall and cellular health.

You see, ingestion of Omega-6 Fatty Acids stimulates the release of hormone-like molecules called eicosanoids, which promote the following effects on in body:

- Blood vessel constriction
- Inflammation
- Blood clotting
- Pain
- Airway constriction
- And more
When these inflammatory molecules are continually present due to daily excessive Omega-6 intake, they essentially act as a persistent slow-burning fire that wreaks havoc on your insides and causes damage to the healthy tissues of your body—damage to cardiac tissue and blood vessels (causing your arterial walls to thicken and your blood passageways to narrow), joint tissue, gut lining, endocrine glands, skin, and even brain tissue. And if this weren’t enough, too many Omega-6 fatty acids in your diet also suppress your immune system, making you much more susceptible to illness and disease.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids also liberate the release of eicosanoids, albeit a different class than the pro-inflammatory eicosanoids stimulated by Omega-6 Fatty Acids. These anti-inflammatory eicosanoids promote the following, much more favorable effects in the body:

- Blood vessel dilation
- Anti-Inflammatory effects
- Anti-coagulant effects
- Decrease in pain
- Airway dilation
- And more

Swinging the Balance

At this point, you likely have a greater appreciation for the impact that Omega Imbalance can and does have on Toxic Inflammation Overload. To actively address this Omega Imbalance, one must reduce inflammation-promoting foods while subsequently increasing anti-inflammatory foods.

Without further ado, let’s get to the BEST and WORST Inflammation Fighting Foods, and let’s put out the fire that is Toxic Inflammation Overload!
The BEST Inflammation Fighting Foods

In the list that follows, you’ll learn exactly which foods help improve your Omega Imbalance by significantly increasing your intake of anti-inflammatory Omega-3 Fatty Acids. What’s more, you’ll find that there are several other compounds besides Omega-3 Fatty Acids that have a potent effect on reducing Toxic Inflammation Overload.

#1: Wild, cold-water fish

Wild-caught, cold-water fish like salmon, sardines, anchovies, mackerel, halibut, and tuna are rife with anti-inflammatory Omega-3 Fatty Acids. A cooked 3-ounce portion of wild-caught salmon has over 2000mg of Omega-3 Fatty Acids, compared to less than 200mg of Omega-6 fats. Admittedly, there are some drawbacks with relying solely on fish to boost your omega-3 fatty acid intake and optimize your Omega Imbalance.

First of all, you have to consider the heavy metal toxicity and purity issues that run rampant in our modern fish supply. What’s more, it’s possible—even likely—that the fish you think you are buying at the store many not actually be the fish you are getting.

In fact, a recent study conducted by the world’s largest ocean conservation group, Oceana, discovered that nearly half of the fish being sold in America today has been deliberately
mislabeled to increase manufacturer profits at your expense.\(^6\)

Not only is this an ethical concern, it also has a very negative impact on your Omega Imbalance and Toxic Inflammation Overload. These cheaper farm-raised fish are much lower in Omega-3 Fatty Acids and rife with inflammatory Omega-6 Fatty Acids. In addition, they are often riddled with contaminants, toxins, and allergens that can have a profound, negative impact on your health.

You’ll want to make sure that you ask questions about your seafood to ensure you’re getting the anti-inflammatory benefits that you should be. Including a few servings of these wild-caught, cold-water fish each week can be helpful in improving your Omega Imbalance.

**#2: Chia seeds**

Cha, cha, cha, cha, chia! It’s hard to avoid mentioning the ol’ Chia Pet® when discussing this nutrient-dense seed. One ounce of this super food of the ancient Aztecs contains nearly 5,000mg of inflammation-fighting Omega-3 Fatty Acids in a 3:1 ratio of omega-3 to Omega-6 Fatty Acids, which will do wonders to improve your Omega Imbalance.

What’s more, that same serving size will also yield 11 grams of gut-friendly fiber and 4 grams of protein. To say that these seeds are chockfull of nutrients would be an understatement. There is some research to suggest that grinding the seeds may be better than consuming the seeds whole.

Scientists from Appalachian State University compared milled/ground chia seed to whole chia seed supplementation in overweight women. The scientists found that milled chia seeds increased blood levels of ALA and EPA, two Omega-3 Fatty Acids, significantly more so than whole chia seeds, which the authors interpreted as a sign that milled chia seeds are indeed more “bioavailable.”\(^7\)
You can add chia seeds to a smoothie or yogurt or even make a chia seed pudding. Hemp and flax seeds are also great options in this category. For example, a one-ounce serving of flax seeds packs over 6,000mg of Omega-3 Fatty Acids in a 4:1 ratio relative to Omega-6 Fatty Acids.

#3: Cold-pressed Extra-virgin Olive Oil

Most folks are well aware that olive oil is considered to be quite healthy. It is typically touted as being heart-healthy, as it is rife in another type of fat called monounsaturated fats (MUFAs). MUFAs may lower your total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or “bad”) cholesterol levels. MUFAs may also help normalize blood clotting. And some research shows that MUFAs may also benefit insulin levels and blood sugar control.

As it relates to our Toxic Inflammation Overload discussion, olive oil is also naturally abundant in a polyphenol called oleocanthal, which has some very impressive and unique benefits to reducing inflammation. Specifically, it is a naturally-occurring non-steroidal anti-inflammatory that inhibits activity of cyclooxygenase (COX) enzymes. If this sounds familiar it’s because it shares that property with the highly-recognizable over-the-counter drug ibuprofen.

There are some special concerns when it comes to choosing and using olive oil to help fight Toxic Inflammation Overload. First and foremost, it’s important to choose a cold-pressed, extra-virgin olive oil, which has undergone minimal processing to ensure quality and purity. Heating destroys the highly valuable polyphenols, like oleocanthal.

What’s more, it’s imperative to check to make sure that the bottle is 100% olive oil. Unfortunately, many manufacturers are now adding cheaper, inferior oils to
their olive oil products. These oils actually promote inflammation, as they are often high in Omega-6 fats and even health-derailing trans fats.

Lastly, olive oil is best when used for “cold” purposes, like salad dressings, dipping, drizzling, etc. Heating olive oil can damage these healthy fats and degrade some of the health benefits olive oil confers. Low heat is okay, but avoid cooking with olive oil at high heats.

#4: Avocados

Like olive oil, the avocado is full of MUFAs. Also known as the “Alligator Pear,” the avocado is a climacteric fruit, which means that it matures on the tree but ripens off of it. The anti-inflammatory power of the avocado seems to lie within its carotenoid diversity.

Carotenoids are essentially the colorful plant pigments that give vegetables and fruits their colors. Our bodies convert these carotenoids into extremely valuable vitamins and antioxidants.

The list of carotenoids found in avocado include well-known carotenoids like beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, and lutein, but also many lesser known carotenoids including neochrome, neoxanthin, chrysanthemaxanthin, beta-cryptoxanthin, zeaxanthin, and violaxanthin

These antioxidants, in turn, help fight Toxic Inflammation Overload. The wide-ranging anti-inflammatory benefits of the avocado don’t end there, as avocados also contain these other nutrients that fight inflammation:

- **Phytosterols**, specifically beta-sitosterol, stigmasterol, and campesterol, which are key supporters of the immune system;
• Other (non-carotenoid) antioxidants, including the flavonoids epicatechin and epigallocatechin gallate, vitamins C and E, and the minerals manganese, selenium, and zinc;
• Omega-3 Fatty Acids, in the form of alpha-linolenic acid (approximately 160 milligrams per cup of sliced avocado), which help fight Omega Imbalance; and
• Polyhydroxylated fatty alcohols (PSA)s, provide anti-inflammatory benefits like the phytosterols.

There’s not necessarily a “wrong” way to enjoy this anti-inflammatory food. You can cut it up and add it to a salad, which will further assist in absorbing fat-soluble vitamins in the veggies. You can enjoy it by itself. Or, you can freeze it and add it to a smoothie, which provides a surprising and delightfully rich, creamy consistency.

#5: Walnuts

While nearly all nuts contain some anti-inflammatory power (more on that in a moment), the walnut reigns “king.” Walnuts are an excellent source of Omega-3 Fatty Acids, as they contain more per serving than any other nut.

In addition, walnuts carry several unique and extremely rare phytonutrients and antioxidants that possess potent anti-inflammatory benefits:

• Juglone, which is a quinone found in virtually no other commonly consumed food in the world.
• Phytonutrients, including rare and valuable tannins, phenolic acids, and flavonoids that fight inflammation.

These anti-inflammatory and antioxidant phytonutrients also help explain the decreased risk of certain cancers—including prostate cancer and breast cancer—in relationship to walnut consumption.
As mentioned, other nuts, like almonds, cashews, pecans, pistachios, Brazil nuts, Macadamia nuts, also contain MUFAs, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and polyphenols that can help fight inflammation. Add walnuts and these other nuts to salads, sprinkle them on yogurt, add them to smoothies, or simply enjoy them by their tasty selves!

#6: Grass-Fed Meat and Dairy

Without a doubt, one of the biggest contributors to Omega Imbalance is the consumption of meat, dairy, eggs, etc., from feedlot animals, which are fed high amounts of corn and soy. The old adage, “You are what you eat” certainly rings true, as this Omega-6 dominant feed leads to very high amounts of Omega-6 Fatty Acids in these foods, especially compared to their pasture-raised, grass-fed counterparts.

Interestingly, regardless of whether your beef is grain-fed or grass-fed, you’ll be getting about 40-50% saturated fat, about 40-50% monounsaturated fat, and somewhere near 10% polyunsaturated fat. However, and this is a BIG however, the diet of the cow does significantly influence the types of each fat present.

This might come as a surprise, but the most current research indicates that beef contains consistent levels of Omega-6 regardless of diet. What you’ll be missing out on are the significantly higher levels of omega-3s found in grass-fed beef.

Depending on the breed of cow, grass-fed beef contains between 2 and 5 times more omega-3s than grain-fed beef. The average ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 Fatty Acids in grass fed beef is 1.5:1. On the contrary, in grain-fed beef, this ratio jumps all the way up to nearly 8:1. Talk about Omega Imbalance!

Beef is one of the best dietary sources of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which is a
naturally-occurring fatty acid that forms in the rumen of animals like cows and sheep. CLA possesses significant anti-oxidant activity, and research has shown it to reduce body fat, increase lean body mass, and improve body composition.

Grass-fed beef contains an average of 2 to 3 times more CLA than grain-fed beef. This is because grain-based diets reduce the pH of the digestive system in ruminant animals, which inhibits the growth of the bacteria that produce CLA.

In addition to beef, the meat and milk of grass-fed lambs is significantly higher in Omega-3 Fatty Acids and conjugated linoleic acid than the meat and milk of grain-fed lambs. Another study shows that the fatty acid composition of grass-fed bison is similar to that of grass-fed beef, and both contain higher levels of omega-3s and CLA than that of grain-fed bison.

While potentially more expensive, meat from pasture-raised, grass-fed animals offers much greater nutritional bang for the buck, including reducing your Omega Imbalance and Toxic Inflammation Overload.

#7: Coconut oil

One tablespoon of coconut oil contains ZERO Omega-3 Fatty Acids, yet nearly 12 grams of saturated fats, so one may wonder why this is considered one of the BEST inflammation-fighting foods. Rest assured, virgin coconut oil possess significant anti-inflammatory benefits, as well as analgesic and even fever-reducing properties.

The anti-inflammatory mechanisms of coconut oil appear to take place due to having a direct effect in suppressing inflammation and repairing tissue. Coconut oil may also contribute by inhibiting
harmful intestinal microorganisms that cause chronic inflammation.

On top of these anti-inflammatory properties, coconut oil is also rich in a medium-chain fatty acid called lauric acid, which is tied boosting the metabolism. What’s more, including coconut oil daily can reduce belly fat, increase HDL, or “good,” cholesterol, and decrease the ratio of LDL:HDL cholesterol.13

Because of its high saturated fat content and the stability that those fats exhibit when heated, coconut oil is an ideal fat to use for cooking. You can also add it to smoothies and various baked goods recipes.

#8: Herbs and spices

Certain herbs and spices contain extremely powerful compounds that fight Toxic Inflammation Overload. Some of the most potent anti-inflammatory phytochemical are found in the following herbs and spices:

- Turmeric. A flowering plant in the ginger family, turmeric has long been used as an anti-inflammatory agent and in wound healing. It may also have anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties. Research suggests that turmeric’s active ingredient, curcumin, is responsible for these benefits.14
- Basil. Recently shown to reduce swelling and inflammation in arthritic patients by 73%, which is on par with commonly used drugs, basil exerts its potent anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting the same enzyme that anti-inflammatory drugs do.15
- Thyme. Thyme has also been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties, which are believed to be exerted by inhibiting the same enzyme (COX-2) that anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen target.
- Cloves. An aromatic spice common in Indian cuisine, cloves contain an anti-inflammatory compound called eugenol that posses anti-inflammatory activity.
It works similarly to basil and thyme in that it also inhibits COX-2 enzyme function.

• Garlic. Garlic contains several naturally-occurring compounds that possess potent anti-inflammatory benefits. Allicin and other organic sulfur compounds appear to inhibit the activity of certain inflammatory enzymes, as well as boost the immune system.

• Ginger. Do you remember those nasty pro-inflammatory prostaglandins we talked about earlier? Well, this gnarled root combats inflammation by blocking those very compounds.

• Cinnamon. In addition to its potent blood sugar-lowering properties, which indirectly decrease inflammation via improved insulin control, cinnamon has anti-inflammatory properties. It’s even been shown to conquer *E. coli* and other forms of pathogenic bacteria, which can drive up inflammation.

Other herbs like rosemary, oregano, and sage also possess anti-inflammatory properties. Use a variety of herbs and spices in your cooking to help fight inflammation and to provide exceptional variety to your meals.

### #9: Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and kale all work diligently in the fight against Toxic Inflammation Overload. These foods are naturally detoxifying to the body, which helps reduce inflammation. As a matter of fact, you probably won’t find a “Top Inflammation Fight Foods” or
“World’s Healthiest Foods” list without one of these all-star vegetables. They’re loaded with helpful compounds called sulforaphanes, which have been shown to reduce inflammation in arteries.\textsuperscript{16}

Enjoy a variety of veggies from this family, as they all possess unique vitamins and phytonutrients, as well as flavor. Roast, steam, sauté, or consume them raw.

**#10: Tea**

Green, white, oolong, and rooibos teas contain nutrients called catechins, bioflavonoids, and polyphenols, which all possess strong anti-inflammatory properties as they help to fight off free radicals.

You can enjoy these teas hot or cold, and you can even use them in smoothies. Aim to drink two cups per day to take advantage of the anti-inflammatory and health-promoting benefits. An additional benefit is that you’ll be increasing your water intake, which is naturally detoxifying to the body.

**#11: Dark chocolate**

A recent study found that dark chocolate consumption is associated with lower levels of a compound called C-reactive protein (CRP), which is a marker of systemic, chronic inflammation.\textsuperscript{17}

The cocoa flavonoids found in dark chocolate modify the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines and eicosanoids, which contribute to Toxic Inflammation Overload.

Make sure to choose a dark chocolate with 70% or more cacao, which minimizes sugar and maximizes flavonoid content. Enjoy a couple squares 2 – 3 times per week.
#12: Blueberries

If ever there were a super fruit blueberries would be it. Check out this laundry list of phytonutrients that you’ll find in these brightly-colored berries:

- Anthocyanins: malvidins, delphinidins, pelargonidins, cyanidins, peonidins;
- Hydroxycinnamic acids: cafeic acids, ferulic acids, coumaric acids;
- Hydroxybenzoic acids: gallic acids, procatechuic acids;
- Flavonols: kaempferol, quercitin, myricetin; and
- Resveratrol and pterostilbene, which are both highly marketed as dietary supplements for their potent anti-oxidant capabilities.

These phytonutrients serve both anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory roles in the body. With this many soldiers going to battle, blueberries are sure to put up a winning fight in the war against Toxic Inflammation Overload.

Other great options are blackberries, cherries, cranberries (fresh), raspberries, and strawberries. Try to include several servings of these berries each week, if not daily. You can snack on them by themselves, put them to smoothies, or add them to yogurt.

#13: Tropical Fruits

Called the “Fruit of the Angels” by Christopher Columbus, papaya is rich in a digestive enzyme called papain. Along with potent antioxidants vitamins C and E, papain improves digestion and fights inflammation.

Pineapple, a delicious tropical fruit, is also rich in another digestive enzyme, bromelain. While it’s best known for its
digestive properties, bromelain is an excellent anti-inflammatory agent and analgesic compound. You'll find extracts of bromelain in many natural anti-inflammatory supplements, as it has been proven to be as effective as numerous anti-inflammatory drugs.

In addition to its high concentration of bromelain, pineapple is also packed with vitamin C, which is a potent anti-oxidant that fights inflammation. Add these tropical fruits to nutrition plan to improve digestion and reduce Toxic Inflammation Overload.

**#14: Hot peppers**

It's hard to believe something that tastes so hot in your mouth can actually put out the inflammatory inferno that rages inside of you. It’s true: hot peppers are naturally anti-inflammatory.

All hot peppers contain a compound called capsaicin, which is a potent inhibitor of a compound called substance P, a neuropeptide associated with the inflammatory process. The hotter the pepper, the more capsaicin it typically contains, which also means the more anti-inflammatory power it confers.

Chili, cayenne, jalapeño, habanero, banana, and Anaheim peppers all contain this powerful anti-inflammatory compound. Try adding some cayenne pepper and chili powder to recipes, as well as chopping up jalapeños and banana peppers and add them to salads and other dishes for a little kick.

**#15: Red Wine**

Cheers to red wine! Despite what you’re likely to read, there is a fair amount of scientific evidence to suggest that a daily glass of wine has significant health benefits. Whether it’s the resveratrol, the polyphenols, or the antioxidants, red wine has long
been thought of as heart healthy and it has the science to back that up. In addition, there is scientific proof to suggest that the alcohol in and of itself has cardiovascular benefits.

Evidence shows that a reduction in inflammation and blood clotting may contribute to increased heart health; in addition, those same polyphenols found in wine may help protect the lining of blood vessels in your heart. Studies show that alcohol, in moderation, possesses the following heart-healthy benefits:

- Raises “good” cholesterol (HDL)
- Reduces formation of blood clots
- Helps prevent artery damage caused by high levels of “bad” cholesterol (LDL)

Further, recent research suggests that dry red wine promotes an improvement in the gut microbiota, which may make it an even better choice for overall health. Most of the research dictates that the health benefits are optimized with 1 – 2 glasses of dry red wine.
The WORST Inflammation Fighting Foods

Unfortunately, inflammatory Omega-6 Fatty Acids are pervasive in the average diet and in food choices everywhere you look. It’s not necessarily your fault. As a matter of fact, you have likely been taught to avoid saturated fats in favor of supposedly more “heart healthy” vegetable oils that are rife in Omega-6 polyunsaturated fats.

Unfortunately, this misguided dietary “wisdom” has been a cornerstone of worldwide dietary advice for the past half century. Thankfully, new research has set the record straight and confirmed that this Omega Imbalance is leading to Toxic Inflammation Overload. As a matter of fact, researchers have concluded that substituting Omega-6 Fatty Acids for saturated fats increases “the rates of death from all causes, coronary heart disease, and cardiovascular disease.”

In the list that follows, we’ll tell you exactly which foods to eliminate—as well as how you can replace them—to immediately improve your Omega Imbalance. What’s more, we’ll reveal several other notorious ingredients that are significant contributors to Toxic Inflammation Overload.

#1: Mayonnaise

If you take a look at the back of a jar of mayonnaise, you’ll likely uncover one of the biggest contributors to Omega Imbalance and Toxic Inflammation Overload: soybean oil. Soybean oil contains about an 8:1 to 10:1 ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 Fatty Acids, sending the Omega Imbalance into overdrive.
People seem to have a very polar relationship with “mayo.” They either love it or they hate it. Folks in the second camp are better off as a result; however, folks that love mayonnaise do have some better options available to them. Opting for reduced-fat or, worse, canola oil-based mayonnaise won’t provide any relief.

Rather, you may consider making your own spread with coconut oil and/or olive oil. Not only will you be expunging the inflammatory fats, you’ll be replacing them with anti-inflammatory foods. This is what we call positive “dietary displacement,” which means that you’re replacing a “bad” food with a “good” one. This can go both ways.

Another option for a sandwich spread or for use in recipes, like chicken or tuna salad, is Greek yogurt or even a mashed avocado—yet another example of positive dietary displacement.

**#2: Grain-Fed Meat**

As mentioned, Omega Imbalance stems largely from a result of high intake of Omega-6 Fatty Acids from soybean, corn, safflower, sunflower, cottonseed, and peanut oil. Another significant contributor is meat from feedlot animals, which are fed significant amounts of corn, as well as soy.

The old saying is that you are what you eat. Well, animals fed abundant amounts of feed rife with Omega-6 Fatty Acids integrate those same inflammatory fats in their own structure. As we’ve already discussed, non-organic, grain-fed beef, poultry, pork, and traditionally-raised eggs all have significantly lower amounts of Omega-3 Fatty Acids and much higher Omega-6 to Omega-3 Fatty Acids ratios, which contribute to the Omega Imbalance.

Instead, opt for organic, grass-fed, pasture-raised beef, poultry, and eggs. This is another solid example of positive dietary displacement and ridding yourself of Omega Imbalance.
#3: Farm-Raised Fish

Just like the grain-fed meat, farm-raised fish are significant contributors to the Omega Imbalance. Because of the myriad toxins and purity issues, they potentially pose an even greater load on Chronic Inflammation.

Farm-raised fish are significantly higher in Omega-6 Fatty Acids—and lower in anti-inflammatory Omega-3 Fatty Acids—than their wild-caught counterparts. Instead of eating small krill and other natural sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids like wild fish, farm-raised fish are fed diets of corn meal, soy, and other GMO ingredients like canola oil. Three strikes and you’re out!

If that’s not bad enough, check this out:

- Farm-raised tilapia has greater inflammatory potential than bacon or a cheeseburger;²¹
- Farm-raised salmon may have up to 10 times as many cancer-causing pollutants than wild salmon;
- Farm-raised fish are believed to have higher concentrations of antibiotics and pesticides;
- Farm-raised fish have lower levels of healthy nutrients, including Omega-3 Fatty Acids, than wild fish; and
- Farm-raised salmon has been found to have dioxin levels 11 times that of wild-caught salmon.

The clear choice here is that if you’re going to eat fish, then you better choose wild varieties. You’ll be lowering your Toxic Inflammation Overload and improving your Omega Imbalance dramatically.
#4: Margarine

Originally created as a substitute for butter, margarine once contained beef fat as its primary ingredient, which wouldn’t have been all that bad. Supply shortages, however, led to the creation of an Omega Imbalance and Toxic Inflammation Overload nightmare.

Margarine is now manufactured with a combination of two health-derailing ingredients: vegetable oils and trans fats. That’s right. Not only will you find soybean oil as the predominant ingredient, you’ll find partially hydrogenated soybean oil at the top of the list. This makes margarine a Frankenstein of an inflammation nightmare combining high Omega-6 Fatty Acids with the inflammatory properties of trans fats.

Trans fats compete for space in our cells with Omega-3 Fatty Acids. They not only wreak inflammatory havoc, they also displace the good fats in our bodies. Awesome.

Let’s keep this simple: ditch the margarine and opt for organic, grass-fed butter or ghee.

#5: Salad Dressings

In almost every case, you should steer clear of store-bought, packaged salad dressings. Simply put, the salad dressings that you find on the grocery store shelves are almost always filled with myriad health-damaging, inflammation-promoting ingredients.

Most store-bought salad dressings are made with cheap, denatured, and highly processed fats. If you see vegetable oil, canola oil, or soybean oil on the ingredient list, steer clear! These inflammatory fats can and will wreak havoc on your health and your waistline.

Store-bought salad dressing is notorious for packing in loads of sugar, including the
number one worst form, man-made high fructose corn syrup. Refined sugar makes blood sugar and insulin levels rise, which put the immune system on high alert. High insulin levels also activate enzymes that raise levels of inflammatory compounds in your blood.

Store-bought salad dressings frequently contain man-made, unnatural ingredients, like artificial ingredients, colors, preservatives, and sweeteners. These are found in nearly every dressing, especially “light” or “low calorie” dressings. Marketed as healthy or as a good choice for those look to drop flab, these waist-expanding ingredients won’t get you any closer to your fat loss goals, and it comes at the expense of your health.

Instead of the store-bought options, take advantage of the opportunity to make a positive dietary displacement. Make homemade salad dressings using extra-virgin olive oil and a variety of anti-inflammatory herbs and spices.

#6: Baked Goods

While the sub-heading reads “Baked Goods,” it could easily list all of the following:

- Cookies, crackers, cakes, muffins, pie crusts, pizza dough, and breads such as hamburger buns
- Margarine and vegetable shortening
- Pre-mixed cake mixes, pancake mixes, and chocolate drink mixes
- Snack foods, including chips, candy, and packaged or microwave popcorn
- Frozen dinners

And that’s an abbreviated list. You see, these foods are representative of the inclusion of trans fats. We’ve touched on them briefly already, but their role in fanning the flames of inflammation bear repeating.
Trans fats have been specifically identified to induce systemic inflammation. Although there are small amounts of naturally-occurring trans fats—like conjugated linoleic acid, which actually has many health benefits—the majority are man made, and those are exactly the ones you’ll find in the aforementioned products.

What’s more, each of these products tends to be rife with refined sugar. Remember, refined sugar leads to a rapid increase in blood sugar resulting in a dramatic increase in the hormone insulin, which leads to significant increases in inflammation.

Simply put, eating these types of foods is an inflammatory disaster.

**#7: Peanut Butter**

It’s actually painful to expose peanut butter because it’s so darn delicious. However, a typical two-tablespoon serving of peanut butter can contain 180 times the amount of Omega-6 Fatty Acids as it does anti-inflammatory Omega-3 Fatty Acids. Talk about Omega Imbalance!

What’s more, the vast majority of store-bought peanut butter products are a mere resemblance of the actual peanut, as they typically include added sugar and even trans fats. What was once thought of a health food has quickly turned into a major contributor to Toxic Inflammation Overload.

On top of this, peanuts are one of the most common food allergies. Even if you’re not allergic, it’s believed that many folks have some level of intolerance to the proteins in peanuts, which sets off an inflammatory cascade in and of itself.

A better option than peanut butter would be almond butter or another nut butter from the list of nuts we shared in the anti-inflammatory food section. In any case, your best bet will be to make your own nut butters, grind them fresh at the store, or
choose packaged varieties that only have the nut on its ingredient list.

#8: MSG

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a food additive that is traditionally used as a flavor enhancer. It was derived in an effort to stimulate umami, one of the five basic flavor tastes along with sweet, sour, bitter, and salty.

MSG has been found to promote inflammation. If that’s not enough, MSG has been linked to obesity in research. Researchers that collected data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey concluded, “MSG consumption was positively, longitudinally associated with overweight development among apparently healthy Chinese adults.”

Unfortunately, MSG is found in a wide variety of foods and seasonings. The good news is that if you tend to avoid pre-packaged, processed foods and instead choose from the anti-inflammatory, one-ingredient foods we’ve listed, you’ll be in great shape!

#9: Canola Oil

Marketed as “heart healthy,” the inconvenient truth about canola oil is that it’s likely a major contributor to Toxic Inflammation Overload. This heavily processed oil, derived from the rape seed plant, contains up to 4.6% trans fats, which is a staggering amount. As discussed, in inflammation speak, consuming trans fats is like pouring gasoline on a raging fire.

In addition, there’s research to suggest that canola oil depletes vitamin E. This also has significant implications in terms of inflammation because vitamin E is a free radical scavenger, and it fights inflammation.

Unfortunately, canola oil is everywhere, including store-bought goods and in restaurants. You can avoid it at home by using olive oil, coconut oil, and butter or ghee (from grass-fed, pasture-raised cows). At restaurants, you may want to consider asking if they use canola oil. If they do, specifically request a replacement.
#10: Fruit Smoothies

If your goals are to lose weight and fight inflammation, you’d probably never reach for a can of soda. After all, that can of soda has a whopping 40 grams of sugar in most cases, and that’s not doing your hips, butt, thighs, and waistline any favors.

But, what may SHOCK you is that something that people reach for all the time to support their weight loss goals—a fruit smoothie—can actually have THREE TIMES MORE sugar than a can of soda if you’re buying one of these so-called “healthy” beverages at your local smoothie shop.

Popular fruit smoothies can contain upwards of 100 grams of sugar per smoothie. That’s crazy, and it’s an inflammatory nightmare. Fruit smoothies aren’t the only so-called health foods that are deceivingly inflammatory.

Not all protein and “energy” bars are created equally either. As a matter of fact, they are colloquially termed “glorified candy bars” by many. The reason being they contain as many—in some cases more—inflammatory ingredients as a typical candy bar. For example, you’ll almost always find both vegetable oils and added sugar.

Just because something is supposed to be healthy doesn’t mean that it is.

#11: Fruit Juice

Generally speaking, store-bought fruit juice has a much sugar, if not more, than a can of soda. That’s alarming. Just to reiterate, refined sugar has a significant impact on inflammation. Rapidly digesting sugars drive insulin, which in turn drives inflammation.25

For the most part, eating the REAL fruit whenever possible is most advantageous.
As a matter of fact, in a study that appeared in the *European Journal of Nutrition*, researchers found that eating whole apples (but not drinking apple juice) has cholesterol-lowering benefits. Researchers attribute this difference to the fact that the juicing process eliminates/significantly reduces the polyphenol and pectin (e.g., fiber) content that would typically be found in whole apples.

In addition to fruit juice, other somewhat surprising foods that you may include in this category (due to high sugar content) include: bottled spaghetti sauce, flavored yogurts, and sweetened non-dairy milks (e.g., soy, almond, coconut).

#12: Whole Wheat Bread

Another sure-fire way to spark Toxic Inflammation Overload is by triggering a food intolerance. Unlike a true allergy, which triggers a surge in histamines, a food intolerance has the opposite effect. It can actually cause a delay in histamine response. This delay causes your immune system to work non-stop to fight what it perceives as an intruder. This immune response is assisted by a substance called Immunoglobulin G (IgG).

Unfortunately, your body reacts to IgG by producing inflammatory substances in the gut. These substances produce free radicals that prevent food molecules from getting broken down properly. This means those molecules are absorbed whole and that is just how they enter your bloodstream.

Once there, they cause even more inflammation in your tissues. This causes you to retain fluid, struggle with losing weight, and suffer the consequences of Toxic Inflammation Overload.

In one study, researchers discovered IgG antibodies in obese subjects were
dramatically higher—250 to 300% higher—than in subjects who were a normal weight. This led them to conclude that “IgG is pathogenetically involved in the development of obesity.”

According to traditional naturopath Dr. Glen Depke, “One of the most common food intolerances that I have seen in clients is gluten.” It’s speculated that gluten sensitivity affects more than 20 MILLION adults nationwide and has been linked to more than 130 symptoms, including some MAJOR conditions like skin diseases, lupus, multiple sclerosis, thyroid disease, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, migraine headaches, and a host of others.

Nearly 30% of adults are now avoiding gluten, which is a protein found in foods processed from wheat and other grains, like barley and rye. Wheat and wheat-based products are the predominant source of gluten in the diet, although it is sometimes added to foods like beer, soy sauce, ice cream, and ketchup due to its stabilizing properties.

One reason you’ll find whole wheat bread listed here is because the typical diet is high-carb and high-grain. Everywhere you turn, there’s flour derived from wheat: bread, pasta, crackers, cookies, cereals, and more. These heavily processed, high glycemic foods will have a similar impact on blood sugar and insulin levels as refined sugar itself.

Removing heavily processed grains from your diet can likely reduce your Toxic Inflammation Overload. Instead, you may consider opting for sprouted-grain or products, which are generally easier to digest and contain fewer “anti-nutrients.” Alternatively, you may choose to go wheat- and/or gluten-free, by opting for foods made with rice, almond, and quinoa flours.
#13: Non-Organic Dairy

We’ve already touched on the significance of opting for organic, grass-feed meats and dairy when it comes to correcting the Omega Imbalance and putting out the burning flames of Toxic Inflammation Overload. However, it bears repeating here.

All milk is not the same. According to the Organic Valley website, a co-op of organic farmers founded in 1988 with products in all 50 states, Canada, and Japan, organic milk from grass-fed cows is significantly different and superior to its conventionally-produced counterpart that lines grocery store shelves:29

- Organic milk has more than double the Omega-3 Fatty Acids than conventional milk;
- While conventional milk exacerbates the Omega Imbalance, organic milk actually helps to lower this ratio, thus positively impacting Toxic Inflammation Overload. Conventional milk has nearly a 6:1 ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 Fatty Acids, while organic milk is much closer to the 2:1 ideal ratio;
- Organic milk is nearly 40% higher in another “good” fat called conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which has been shown to decrease fat mass, increase your body’s ability to burn fat, increase lean mass, decrease fat cells (i.e., cell apoptosis), decrease body fat percentage, and reduce systemic inflammation that can impede weight loss and/or lead to weight gain.

In addition, organic dairy is typically a good indicator that the animals have been pasture-raised and predominantly grass-fed—although not always the case. This designation also means that the animals have been raised without the use of antibiotics, synthetic hormones, and pesticides, all of which could be potentially dangerous to your health and contribute to Toxic Inflammation Overload.

Make the switch to organic, grass-fed dairy (e.g., milk, butter, yogurt, cottage cheese, etc.) and beef, as well as organic pork, poultry, and eggs today to help improve your
Omega Imbalance and reduce your Toxic Inflammation Overload.

#14 Prepared Salads and Other “Health” Foods

Everything with the word salad has to be healthy, right? Not so fast! This section is meant to be of consumer “watch dog” proportions, as you’ll be faced with myriad so-called “healthy” options every time you go to the grocery store.

Prepared salads like tuna, chicken, egg, potato, and the like are all typically loaded with high amounts of Omega-6 vegetable oils, and they often contain added sugar under the guise of a less suspecting names like agave nectar, molasses, hydrolyzed starch, invert sugar, maltodextrin, corn syrup, or cane sugar. The bottom line is that you know high intakes of Omega-6 Fatty Acids drive up the Omega Imbalance, and that as well as sugar fuels Toxic Inflammation Overload.

Other foods in this category include frozen dinners, granola, dried fruits, trail mix, bran muffins, many “low-fat” diet foods, sports drinks, and even pre-packaged deli meats. The key here is to read the ingredients labels. When in doubt, choose to avoid pre-packaged convenience foods, as they will typically include Omega-6-rich vegetable oils, added refined sugar, and even trans fats—all of which contribute to Toxic Inflammation Overload.

#15: Body Fat

Okay, it’s not an inflammatory food, per se, but it’s a major source of inflammation, and it’s a significant contributor to Toxic Inflammation Overload. It’s a vicious cycle. Consuming large amounts of the aforementioned inflammatory foods leads to body fat accumulation.
At the same time, excess belly fat, which can be measured as a waist size of 35 inches or more for a woman and 40 inches or more for a man, means higher levels of inflammation, as abdominal fat produces inflammatory chemicals in the body. As a matter of fact, scientists call this unique metabolic inflammatory state metaflammation.30

That’s a pretty cool name for something that’s not even slightly cool. The take-home message here is that it’s important to control your Omega Imbalance to drop belly fat, which in turn helps you control Toxic Inflammation Overload.

**Douse the Flames of Toxic Inflammation Overload**

While Toxic Inflammation Overload can be absolutely devastating to your health, body composition, and vitality, the good news is that it is not inevitable. You can fight this debilitating issue immediately because what you eat—or don’t eat—has major implications on your Omega Imbalance.

After reading this, it should be quite clear that you could exert a major, positive influence on your Omega Imbalance by reducing/eliminating the foods that contribute to inflammation while adding more of the foods that fight inflammation.

Take a stand against the “silent killer,” and begin restoring your Omega Imbalance and fight Toxic Inflammation Overload today!
References


