

## **Not cool to be hot**

Inflammation is nature's way of working with trauma to help fix it. If we injure ourselves, this part of the healing process starts in a minute, with complex biological systems creating inflammation (heat, redness, pain, swelling). It's an excellent way of slowing us down so that we prevent further injury to the joint or tissue that is traumatised. Even a bruise will cause some level of inflammation.

But inflammation isn't supposed to continue in a healthy body. Once the injury is healed, our cellular processes should go back to normal. The trouble is, poor diet and disease processes also cause inflammation. Heart disease, arthritis, diabetes and anything ending with "itis" like sinusitis, gastritis or conjunctivitis all indicate that there is an inflammatory process going on in the body. Stress will also cause inflammation. This isn't good.

If a condition lasts more than 10-12 weeks, it is called chronic. Chronic inflammation isn't much fun. You may not notice the effects at first, but slowly a joint may twinge and progress to a constant ache. What can you do?

There are the usual painkillers, but taking Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) on a long-term basis has rather nasty effects on your digestion. A number of pharmaceutical products (Vioxx, Celebrex, Prexige and others) have been withdrawn because long-term use has resulted in unexpected deaths in a number of cases.

A number of the practitioner brands of supplements have concocted some natural herbal anti-inflammatories which do not interfere with digestion or cause side effects, and these are available through your nutritionist on consultation. But there are lots of useful things you can do to help yourself.

Avoiding processed food (most of the stuff that comes in packaging from a supermarket) and increasing your consumption of plant foods, particularly salads is a good start. Good quality fish oil capsules, vitamins C and E, Alpha lipoic acid and bioflavonoids will also help. Your practitioner can assess your diet and help you find the right supplements. Don't hesitate to ask.

Don't put up with pain. There are good natural solutions, and they don't have to be complicated or very expensive. Increase the quality of your life. You deserve it.

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[Advice in these columns is of a general nature only and is not to be taken as specific treatment.]