

Food Choices to Help Ease Arthritis Pain

Many people claim that certain foods can reduce pain and joint inflammation. Growing evidence suggests that following a healthy diet and adding specific foods and spices could help.

Foods to Try

- **Broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage.** These veggies are full of a compound called sulforaphane, which may help slow cartilage damage in joints due to osteoarthritis (OA). Other foods rich in sulforaphane include kale and cauliflower.
- **Fatty fish.** Fatty fish like salmon, tuna, trout and mackerel are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help fight inflammation and boost heart health. Choose wild-caught fish whenever possible.
- **Garlic.** Garlic is a member of the allium family, which also includes onions and leeks. These items contain a compound called diallyl disulfide that may help with a number of diseases, including arthritis.
- **Tart cherries.** The ingredient in cherries that helps with joint symptoms is the same one that gives this fruit its red color – anthocyanin. A recent study found that subjects who drank tart cherry juice experienced improvements in the pain and stiffness of OA.
- **Vitamin C.** It's reported that people who take vitamin C supplements are 11 percent less likely to develop knee OA than those who don't take the supplements. (Note: avoid going above the recommended daily allowance of 65 to 85 milligrams, because in large doses vitamin C can increase the risk of kidney stones.)



Foods to Avoid

Some people find that certain foods aggravate their arthritis.

- For example, people have reported that eating foods in the nightshade family – such as eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes and most peppers – increases their pain, although studies haven't confirmed this.
- Foods high in saturated and trans fats – such as red meat, fried food and packaged baked goods – should be avoided. They can lead to weight gain, which can make symptoms worse.
- Avoid sugary sodas. A recent study revealed that OA of the knee tended to get worse in men who drank a lot of soda.



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* Adapted from Six Food Choices to Help Ease Arthritis Pain, by Stephanie Watson and Kelli Miller, ELS, arthritis.org