Top 10 Foods that Protect Cartilage and Prevent Arthritis

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Arthritis is a common joint disorder that is caused due to inflammation of the joints. Although there are 100 different types of arthritis, the most common are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Pain associated with arthritis is mostly localized to the joint affected by arthritis and it can lead to disability, inability to walk or use the arms, loss of flexibility, deformation of hands and feet, intense muscle pain and loss of aerobic fitness. The most common body parts that are affected by arthritis are wrists, hands, feet, back, hip, and knee.

Although, there is no known cure for either rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis, but people affected by these diseases can live and less painful and fulfilling life with the help of physical therapy, healthy lifestyle changes, regular exercise and a planned arthritis diet that is rich in potent anti-inflammatory foods.

Types of Arthritis

There are two common forms of arthritis and both are caused due to inflammation of the joints. Both forms of arthritis are commonly seen in adults over the age of 65. Let us take a look at the two types of arthritis and the causes of arthritis.

- **Osteoarthritis** – Osteoarthritis is caused due to normal wear and tear of the cartilage (connective tissues present in the joints that absorb pressure and shock produced due
to movement). The normal breakdown of cartilage tissue through years of walking, running and jumping cause infection and injury to the joints.

- **Rheumatoid Arthritis** – Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is another common form of arthritis that is actually an autoimmune disease. This type of arthritis is caused when the immune system of the body turns against it and attacks the tissues of the body. This attack damages the synovium that releases a fluid which protects the cartilage and lubricates the joints. Rheumatoid arthritis damages both the bones and cartilage of the joints.
10 Best Anti-Inflammatory Foods to Include in the Arthritis Diet

Arthritis is an agonizing chronic inflammatory disease that curbs mobility and is marked by associated symptoms of joint stiffness, swelling and tenderness. While there are a wide range of anti-inflammatory drugs, certain anti-inflammatory foods can show equal effectiveness in relieving the painful symptoms of arthritis.

Green Tea

The health benefits of green tea call for no new emphasis. This nourishing beverage is an amazing anti-inflammatory drink that is loaded with antioxidants polyphenols that counteract the inflammation initiated by free radicals and oxidative stress. The flavonoids (plant compounds) found in green tea also reduce inflammation and protect the cells and tissues of the joints from pain and swelling related to rheumatoid arthritis.
Flavonoids can also be found in berries, grapes, broccoli, soy and dark chocolate but it is best to choose the chocolates that are low in sugar and high in cacao to enjoy best results.

Green Cabbage

Green cabbage is an effective cure for inflammatory arthritis that helps in reducing the inflammation of the joints when consumed raw. The chemical present in cabbage dilates the blood vessels which allow fluids to flow easily thereby reducing swelling and pain.
Cabbage also contains the antioxidant anthocyanin that possesses powerful anti-inflammatory properties that help in relieving arthritis related symptoms. The nutrients such as vitamins K, C and A along with fiber and potassium found in cabbage is also helpful for improving conditions of arthritis.

Garlic

This pungent smelling herb is one of the most effective anti-inflammatory foods that must be included in arthritis diet. Garlic has been used for ages as an Ayurvedic remedy for treating osteoarthritis and gout.

The compound diallyl disulphide present in garlic has potent anti-inflammatory effect that can fight rheumatoid arthritis pain and garlic also inhibits the release of pro-inflammatory substances called cytokines that promote inflammation of cartilage and tissues in the joint. But for optimum utilization of the health benefits of garlic, it should be consumed raw, rather than cooked with other foods.

Ginger

This common kitchen spice has been used for centuries in traditional medicine to treat digestive disorders, nausea and inflammation and is an effective arthritis cure that must be included in the list of food for arthritis. Ginger works as good as anti-inflammatory drugs aspirin and ibuprofen.
The compound Gingerol found in ginger contains the anti-inflammatory properties that make it the perfect natural remedy for prevention of arthritis, joint pain and joint stiffness. You can either chew a few slices of ginger or enjoy a nourishing ginger tea by boiling 5 to 6 thin slices of ginger in a cup of water for 5 to 8 minutes.

**Blue Berries**

Berries of all kind like blueberries, strawberries and raspberries are superfoods for arthritis cure that helps in improving the condition of damaged and inflamed tissues and cartilage by strengthening and building collagen. The antioxidants proanthocyanidins and ellagic acid present in blueberries neutralizes cell damage caused by free radicals and oxidative stress.
The flavonoids anthocyanins and proanthocyanins found in blueberries repair the damaged tissues and joints which help in relieving swelling and joint stiffness and also aids in enhancing mobility in people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.

Chilli Peppers

The active component capsaicin present in chilli pepper that gives the burning hot taste is also responsible for relieving swelling and pain related to arthritis. Capsaicin inhibits the production of a neuropeptide known as substance P that is responsible for inflammatory processes.

Capsaicin is effective in relieving the symptoms of both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. You can either consume red hot chilli peppers along with your foods or opt for topical application of capsaicin by applying a pain reliever cream that contain capsaicin.

Fatty Fish

Fatty fishes such as mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout are considered powerful anti-inflammatory foods because of their high omega 3 content. The omega 3 fatty acids present in these fishes help in reducing inflammation and possess anti-rheumatic action that helps in relieving the pain and discomfort caused by rheumatoid arthritis.
The polyunsaturated fats suppress the release of cytokins and other inflammatory compounds that are responsible for triggering inflammation. You can either consume oily fishes or opt for fish oil supplements found in the form of capsules. In case you are a vegan or vegetarian, you can consume ground flax seeds, almonds and walnuts that are good plant based sources of omega 3 fatty acids.

Turmeric

Turmeric works better than anti-inflammatory drugs in treating rheumatoid arthritis and joint pain. This bright yellow coloured common kitchen spice has various health benefits and the cooling effect of turmeric helps in soothing the discomfort caused by the heat generated from inflammation.

Curcumin – the active compound present in turmeric treats all the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis such as tenderness, joint swelling and stiffness. You can either consume raw turmeric or ingest it in the form of supplements such as turmeric capsule.
Pineapples

This refreshing tropical fruit can help in relieving the excruciating pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis. The enzyme bromelain found in pineapples that help in protein breakdown is also effective in reducing inflammation and decreasing pain and swelling caused by rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

Bromelain supplements are often suggested to reduce rheumatoid arthritis pain and it works as efficiently as anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen. You can enjoy a bowl full of cubed or sliced pineapples, drink a glass of fresh pineapple juice or take bromelain supplements.

Olive Oil

The presence of healthy monounsaturated fats in olive oil makes it an inseparable part of any nutritious diet. The natural compound oleocanthal found in olive oil is helpful in relieving arthritis related inflammation and pain. Oleocanthal works by blocking the inflammatory pathways and the action is quite similar to anti-inflammatory drugs. It also helps in preventing other degenerative joint diseases, heart diseases and diabetes.
That's why people following the Mediterranean Diet that includes a lot of olive oil are seen to have fewer health conditions linked to inflammation. You can substitute common vegetable oil with extra virgin olive oil and use it for cooking and salad dressing.

Include these anti-inflammatory foods in your daily diet and get sustained relief from joint pain, stiffness and swelling caused by gout and arthritis.

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