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## EIGHT FOODS TO AVOID WITH ARTHRITIS

If you have arthritis, you're probably all too familiar with the pain, swelling and joint stiffness characteristic of this disease. With osteoarthritis, the most common form, which impacts 27 million Americans, this pain is the result of the breakdown of cartilage in the joint itself, often from accumulated wear and tear.

With rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that impacts an estimated 2 million Americans, chronic inflammation of the joints leads to pain, stiffness and swelling.

You may have already realized that certain foods cause a flare-up of your symptoms, and if so, rest assured it's not all in your head. Science shows that certain foods do indeed impact the progression of this disease. The foods that follow are among them, impacting arthritis significantly — and not in a good way.

## TOP 8 FOODS TO AVOID WITH ARTHRITIS

### 8. Empty Calories

Jelly beans, energy drinks, pastries, fruit drinks, and cakes are examples of empty calories, foods that contain little or no nutritional value, but which can easily add more inches to your waistline. Excess weight increases the load placed on your joints, which may not only speed the breakdown of cartilage, but also may make joint pain and swelling worse.

Further, fat tissue in your body releases pro-inflammatory chemicals, such as cytokines, which can influence the development of arthritis. Losing even a small amount of weight may have a beneficial impact on your risk of developing arthritis, as well as your current symptoms.

### 7. Gluten

Although a formal link has yet to be established, joint pain is a common symptom described by people with gluten sensitivity, or gluten intolerance. In people who are sensitive, gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye and barley may provoke an innate immune response that may trigger symptoms such as joint pain hours or days after the gluten is consumed.

To find out if gluten may be contributing to your arthritis symptoms, eliminate it from your diet for 2 weeks, then slowly reintroduce them and watch for any symptom flare-ups.

### 6. Nightshade Vegetables

Nightshade vegetables, including potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and tobacco, contain calcitriol, an active form of vitamin D that may lead to calcium deposits in soft tissues such as tendons, ligaments, cartilage and joints if over consumed.[i] This may cause or contribute to inflammation and joint pain, particularly in those who are sensitive. As with gluten, an elimination diet can help you determine if nightshade vegetables are problematic for you.

#### **5. Vegetable Oils (Common in Processed Foods and Fast Foods)**

Soybean, corn, peanut, safflower and sunflower oils are examples of vegetable oils that are rich in omega-6 fats, which most Americans consume far too much of. It's not only a matter of the oil you use for cooking at home ... far more so it's the vegetable oils added to just about every processed food that end up being a problem.

Eating too many of these omega-6 fats may increase inflammation in your body, which may make your arthritis symptoms worse.

#### **4. Refined Carbs**

Do you notice that your joints seem achier when you've been eating a lot of muffins, bagels, cookies, doughnuts or pasta? This may be because these refined carbs lead to spikes in your blood sugar and insulin, and in turn increase body-wide inflammation significantly.

#### **3. Synthetic Trans Fats**

You should limit your intake of trans fats, common in partially hydrogenated oils, as much as possible. Trans fats are strongly linked to systemic, chronic inflammation,[iii] which is at the root of many arthritis symptoms. Common foods that contain trans fats include savory snacks (like microwave popcorn), fried foods, frozen pizzas, cake, cookies, pie, margarine and spreads, ready-to-use frosting, and coffee creamers.

#### **2. Blackened and Barbecued Foods**

Foods cooked at high temperatures – including char-broiled, blackened, barbecued, fried, etc. – often contain harmful byproducts of the cooking process called advanced glycation end products (AGEs). AGEs are highly inflammatory and can damage your tissues, making your arthritis worse.

#### **1. Soda**

Harvard researchers recently revealed that the more sugary soda men with knee osteoarthritis drink, the more likely the condition is to get worse.[v] Even though increased consumption of soda is linked to weight gain, a known risk factor for osteoarthritis, the link was true regardless of the men's weight.

This suggests the soda itself may be responsible for worsening the arthritis, although a cause-and-effect link has not been proven.