
You are what you eat...

I have worked with a few clients who have come to me with concerns regarding food allergies or uncomfortable gastrointestinal symptoms that they are concerned could be caused by the foods they are consuming. Others have wondered what might happen to symptoms related to certain medical conditions if they avoided or incorporated certain foods into their diets. We know that foods can be powerful remedies to common and not-so-common ailments. What you are about to read will make you take ANOTHER, CLOSER look at what the foods you are eating actually contain!

Individuals with chronic pain are oftentimes dealing with inflammation in the body that is largely influenced by the foods they eat. Pain from conditions such as fibromyalgia, migraines, and rheumatoid arthritis can be lessened with food alterations that will reduce inflammation. Swelling and damage to tissues can be caused by free radicals in foods we consume, which produces inflammation, which in turn produces more free radicals. A terrible cycle that won't stop until we change our eating habits! Saturated fats and trans fats tend to make inflammation worse, and foods like fish and fruits and vegetables reduce inflammation due to their antioxidant content. If you are eating cleanly, you know the foods that you should be avoiding, but here is a list of the foods that may be causing you discomfort. Read the labels!

- **Saturated Fats:** meats (mostly red meat); high fat dairy like whole milk, full-fat cheeses, cream, ice cream, and butter; vegetable oils (use canola or olive instead); coconut/coconut oil, palm/palm kernel oil; cocoa butter;
- **Trans Fats:** anything with "Hydrogenated" in the ingredient list; prepared cakes, cookies, brownies, pastries; fried foods; processed foods like crackers and chips; stick margarine; certain breads

For those who suspect they may have food allergies/sensitivities, "elimination diets" are recommended to help identify the triggers of your symptoms. For example, eliminate all the trigger foods from your diet, and if you feel better after a month, then begin adding only one back into your diet at a time. If symptoms return after the addition, this will indicate a sensitivity to that particular food. You can also try a backward approach and eliminate each food individually for two weeks. If symptoms are reduced, the sensitivity is indicated.

Food Alternatives for Sensitivities:

- For Dairy: soy cheese, soy milk
- For Wheat: barley, rye, spelt, kamut, and oats
- For Soy: rice milk, almond milk, oat milk, hemp milk, hazelnut milk
- For Corn: Avoid corn syrup and look for honey and sugar for sweeteners; Taro and parsnip chips subbed for regular corn chips