



7 Ways Chronic Inflammation Can Damage Your Body

Dangers of this “silent killer” range from joint and muscle pain to heart disease and cognitive decline

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You may have heard about the dangers of “silent” chronic inflammation. It’s been discussed on *The Dr. Oz Show* and has made headlines in popular publications such as *Newsweek* and *Time*.

Slow-growing, body-wide inflammation is rapidly becoming recognized as the **root cause of a wide range of serious health problems**.^[1] Unfortunately, most people don’t do anything until the initial symptoms such as aches and joint discomfort appear. When this happens, their gut reaction often is to go see a doctor, who is unlikely to correctly diagnose the problem, and more than likely will prescribe drugs that are far from safe and only provide short-term benefits.

The Problem With Big Pharma’s Inflammation Fighters

The current medical mentality on fighting inflammation has spurred a multi-billion dollar industry for Big Pharma. However, studies show that long-term use of even seemingly “harmless” over-the-counter anti-inflammatory pills has serious side effects such as permanent joint damage, liver and kidney damage, stomach bleeding, ulcers and increased risk of heart attack and stroke.^[2,3]

Then there are prescription pain pills, which are much worse. You may recall the painkiller Vioxx, which may have claimed up to 100,000 lives before the FDA banned it.^[4] Any way you slice it, taking OTC or prescription painkillers long-term is NOT a safe solution.

Inflammation Is a Double-Edged Sword

Now, it’s important to realize that temporary inflammation is a normal part of the body’s healing process. And under regular conditions, once the job is done, the inflammation retreats, and healing can begin. The trouble arises, however, when that inflammatory response doesn’t “turn off,” but rather, stays in a constant state of alert. If inflammation becomes chronic, it can cause serious damage to your heart, joints, brain, skin, waistline and more.

What causes inflammation to become chronic? It’s complicated, but many experts believe it’s a combination of factors such as exposure to toxins, lack of exercise and the consumption of processed foods.

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If I haven't convinced you yet that inflammation is your body's worst enemy, I'll let the science do the convincing.

Here are seven health problems linked to chronic inflammation:

#1: Abnormal cell growth: The process of inflammation is initiated by cell-signaling chemicals known as cytokines. When these cytokines remain active long-term, abnormal cellular development can occur and cause healthy cells to become abnormal.^[5]

#2: Heart trouble: Contrary to what scientists have believed for years, inflammation — not cholesterol — is the primary culprit when it comes to cardiovascular problems. The body responds to inflammation in blood vessels by coating them with cholesterol, which protects them from damage.^[6]

#3: Cognitive decline: Brain cells are particularly susceptible to the effects of chronic inflammation. In fact, inflammation has been identified as a primary factor in the development of the beta-amyloid brain plaques that are the hallmark of severe forms of cognitive decline.^[7]

#4: Joint pain: This effect of inflammation may be one you're already all-too-familiar with. Joints are particularly prone to inflammation, which manifests as stiffness, popping, pain and loss of mobility.^[8]

#5: Skin aging: Did you know that inflammation is a primary factor in the development of fine lines and wrinkles? Inflammation has also been linked to dryness, itchiness and certain skin conditions.^[9]

#6: Digestive problems: An inflamed digestive tract can make you prone to digestive maladies ranging from heartburn to constipation. Not only that, inflammation in your digestive tract can result in decreased absorption of important nutrients.^[10]

#7: Weight gain: One of the lesser-known consequences of chronic inflammation is difficulty with losing weight. Research has shown that inflammation is associated with certain gut bacteria that seem to promote cravings for carbohydrates.^[11]

Nature's Inflammation-Fighting Miracle

There are several natural inflammation fighters out there, but did you know that one herb has shown more promise when it comes to beating back inflammation than almost any other medical finding to date?

Curcumin, an antioxidant compound found in the root of the turmeric plant, is one of the most powerful natural anti-inflammatory substances ever studied. Curcumin is a potent inhibitor of the body's most powerful inflammatory chemical, called Nf-kappa beta,^[12] and has been shown in numerous clinical studies to tame joint pain and muscle soreness, protect the brain, support cardiovascular health, bolster immunity and more.^[13,14,15,16,17]

You may be familiar with turmeric as the bright yellow spice that is commonly found in curry powder. Turmeric has a long history of use as a healing herb and culinary spice in India. Interestingly, India has the highest per capita consumption of turmeric AND the lowest incidence of cognitive decline worldwide!^[18]

Your Brain on Curcumin

The hallmark pathological process associated with certain types of age-related cognitive decline is the formation in the brain of abnormal protein structures called beta-amyloid plaques.

In 2008, a landmark clinical trial in people with severe cognitive decline measured the effects of curcumin. Amazingly, the participants taking curcumin had significantly higher levels of dissolved plaque in their blood compared to those in the placebo group. This study showed that curcumin has the ability to effectively pass into the brain, bind to beta-amyloid plaques, and assist the body in their breakdown and excretion.^[19] Curcumin is one of the only substances known to have such a profound effect.

How to Get the Most Out of Curcumin

Although you can find high quality turmeric in your local market, it's very difficult to verify its purity and potency, plus it's almost impossible to incorporate therapeutic amounts of curcumin into your diet on a daily basis. So, to put it simply, a high-quality curcumin supplement is your best bet!

However, not all curcumin supplements are created equal. Unfortunately, most supplements out there don't have the necessary doses and components to get the job done.

There are 3 major things to consider when deciding to purchase a curcumin supplement:

Standardization: This is the process by which the active ingredients in a plant is concentrated and brought to a consistent level. In the case of turmeric, the active ingredients are called curcuminoids, and there are actually three components: curcumin, demethoxycurcumin and bisdemethoxycurcumin. Any curcumin supplement you consider should include all three of these curcuminoids and be standardized at least 95%.

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