



Lifespan

Delivering health with care.®

Lifespan Lyme Disease Center

NUTRITION

You really are what you eat. Nutrition is important for overall wellness because your body absorbs nutrients from any food you digest, whether it is a diet of pizza and soda or a paleo-Mediterranean diet. The real question is about the quantity and quality of the nutrients being absorbed. These nutrients affect many aspects of wellness, including mood, energy level, weight and pain management.

A Lyme patient can benefit from general nutrition guidelines just like everyone else. There may not be a ‘Lyme diet’, but these tips may help alleviate Lyme symptoms and increase your overall wellbeing.

Dealing with inflammation and joint pain:

Anti-inflammatory foods include many of the same foods and food habits that a normal healthy diet requires. For example, eating foods rich in antioxidants can help reduce inflammation.

Antioxidants help with the problem of free radicals. Free radicals are electron stealing substances produced as a natural byproduct of your body’s conversion of food into energy. Electron loss is a problem because it can change the structure and function of the tissue affected by altering DNA. This process can lead to atherosclerosis, vision loss, cancer, and many other chronic illnesses. Antioxidants donate electrons to these free radicals, thus limiting their damaging effect on the body. To learn more visit:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/antioxidants>

Antioxidant rich foods include:

- Colorful fruits and vegetables! Some especially high in antioxidants include: berries, apples, pears, stone fruits (peach, nectarine, etc.), tropical fruits (mango, papaya, etc.), artichokes, kale, bell peppers, okra, asparagus, broccoli, red cabbage, tomatoes; and sweet, red, and russet potatoes with the skin.
- Antioxidant rich nuts include: walnuts, pistachios, pecans, almonds, hazelnuts, and legumes such as kidney beans, edamame, and lentils.
- Antioxidant foods which are helpful in moderation: Red wine, Pomegranate juice, coffee, tea, and dark chocolate.

Salt intake is also an important part of calming the inflammatory response. The FDA recommends about 2300 mg of sodium per day as part of a healthy diet. Too much or too little salt can be harmful. For comparison, one teaspoon of salt is 2325 mg. For a fantastic website with all you need to know about salt intake check out: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/sodium/art-20045479?pg=1>

Maintaining a healthy salt content with these steps:

- Drink lots of water. Eight to 10 glasses per day is recommended on an average.
- Be wary of the salt content in restaurant's and fast foods, prepackaged meals, deli meats, soups, and canned food. Eat fresh!
- Season your food with spices other than salt.

Tips for Digestive problems:

- Make sure water intake is adequate.
- See if lactose sensitivity is a part of your problem and if so, limit dairy products in your diet.
- Try eating more or less fiber. If you eat more fiber and still feel sick, try less fiber because you could have a sensitivity / allergy to fiber.
- Eat soft foods. Cook foods like carrots until they are able to be mashed.
- Try sources of probiotics. Some find supplements helpful and others only need an added boost of probiotics from foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, pickles, and miso soup.

General Healthy Eating Tips:

- Moderation is key. Even healthy foods can become unhealthy in huge quantities. Use your judgement and question websites that encourage diets limited to one food group. There is such a thing as too much avocado, olive oil, or salmon, even if they are mostly healthy. Dark chocolate and red wine only provide so much benefit through antioxidants before the negative effects of eating such food overwhelms the benefits.
 - Cook with olive or coconut oil. Swap it for vegetable oil and try it on popcorn with seasoning, or as part of a new salad dressing recipe.
 - Ten servings of fruits and vegetables per day is recommended.
 - Go whole grain! Remember, if the first ingredient is enriched unbleached flour it is not whole grain / whole wheat - even if the front of the packaging claims it is! This is just white flour under a different name. Make sure the first ingredient on the label clearly says whole grain or whole wheat.
 - Cut down or eliminate sugary drinks.
 - Healthy foods work together so eat a wide variety of foods in a meal.
 - Remember the food pyramid and check out *Myplate* by the USDA. It may have changed since the last time you looked! Explore: www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate
-

Works Cited / Links to include:

“Antioxidants: Beyond the Hype.” *Www.hsph.harvard.edu*. Harvard, n.d. Web. 21 June 2016.
<<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/antioxidants/>>.

“MyPlate”. *Http://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate*. USDA, n.d. Web. 21 June 2016.
<<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate>>.

“Nutrition and Healthy Eating: Adding Antioxidants to Your Diet.” *MayoClinic.org*.
Mayo Clinic, n.d. Web 21 June 2016.
<<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/multimedia/antioxidants/sls-20076428?s=7>>

“Sodium: How to Tame Your Salt Habit.” *MayClinic.org*. Mayo Clinic, n.d. Web. 21
June 2016.
<<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/sodium/art-2004579?pg=1>>
