



GENERAL WELLNESS

Acute vs. Chronic Inflammation

Inflammation is a popular buzzword these days. But what causes it exactly? How can you know you have it, and if it's something your body does naturally to help you heal, then what's the big deal?

We've all been there: It's late, you're tired, and you don't feel like turning the lights on just to cross a room...then *bam!* Shin finds coffee table. The resulting egg-shaped lump is formed when blood flow increases to the area, bringing with it neutrophils and macrophages as part of the immune response.

Symptoms of this acute inflammation are typical: redness, swelling, heat, and pain. The swelling that occurs as fluid collects in the area is also called "edema." The symptoms last for a limited period of time—minutes to days—as the body heals itself.

Acute inflammation vs. chronic inflammation

When the body isn't given enough time, or if the body is unable to resolve the immune response due to deficiency of certain nutrients, it can lead to chronic inflammation. This can also be caused by untreated infectious pathogens such as bacteria or viruses, as well as the adverse effects of long-term exposure to pollutants or chemicals, including smoking.^{1,2} Stress and obesity are also known factors that lead to chronic inflammation.^{3,4}

Common symptoms of chronic inflammation include:

- **Fatigue:** When your immune system is in overdrive, it uses a lot of energy. It can also trigger a low-grade fever.⁵
- **Gastrointestinal issues:** Including constipation and diarrhea.⁶
- **Unexplained pain:** Most notably in the abdomen, chest, and joints.^{1,5}
- **Skin issues:** Such as rashes, redness, or puffiness.⁷
- **Weight gain:** Especially in the “spare tire” region. As part of a vicious cycle, excess weight can be both a cause, and result, of inflammation.^{4,8}
- **High blood sugar:** Inflammation can alter the body’s natural insulin processing, making the body less sensitive to insulin. High blood sugar levels also increase the inflammatory circulating cytokines.⁸
- **Brain fog:** An imbalance in blood sugar levels can also cause brain fog.⁸

Another marker of inflammation is an elevated level of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) in the blood. C-reactive protein is produced in the liver when there is inflammation in the body. Increased CRP levels can lead to unwanted health conditions,⁹⁻¹¹ but, while a raised hs-CRP level is a marker of inflammation in the body, by itself an hs-CRP test will not identify a complete outline of all the health risks due to the inflammation.¹²

What can we do?

While acute inflammation is one way your body can heal itself, chronic inflammation should be avoided, as a prolonged inflammatory response can cause damage to healthy cells and tissue.

Consider adopting a few simple ways to decrease inflammation. If you have been experiencing the symptoms described herein and are concerned you may have chronic inflammation, make an appointment with your healthcare practitioner.

This content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Individuals should always consult with their healthcare professional for advice on medical issues.

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Submitted by the Metagenics Marketing Team

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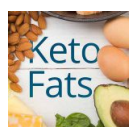
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