

Real Common Sense

May 2022

Chronic Inflammation

Hello, this is Dr. Ellen. In this month's '*Real Common Sense*' newsletter, I will address an all-too-common problem, chronic inflammation. This is best viewed as an ongoing aberrant response of the body's inflammatory process that can lead or contribute to many chronic conditions. Using the Ellen Cutler Method (ECM), I can help discover the underlying factors causing chronic inflammation and determine the best modalities to rebalance the inflammatory response.

By the way, if you didn't get a chance to see my previous newsletters, you can find them on my website, www.drellencutler.com.

What is Chronic Inflammation?

The body is generally designed to react to and then aid in the healing of tissue infections and injuries. These timely reactions are vital for the survival of the individual. Examples would be a bacterial infection of the respiratory tract or an injury to a joint. These trigger an acute inflammatory response that relies initially on specialized cells, some being a part of the "innate" immune system, at the site of the local tissues affected. In the case of infections, the "adaptive" portion of the immune response can also be activated, which includes the release of antibodies as well as the direct attack of T-cells against the specific intruders.^[1] Inflammation protects the host by eliminating pathogens/toxins and promoting tissue repair and recovery.

The acute inflammatory response temporally upregulates inflammatory activity in the involved area that is threatened and resolves once the threat has passed. However, certain social, environmental and lifestyle factors can promote and sustain more generalized chronic inflammation. This can lead to disease processes that have become many of the world's leading causes of disability and death. These include cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus, as well as certain cancers, chronic kidney disease, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and autoimmune and neurodegenerative disorders.^[2]

Chronic, systemic inflammation often seems to begin without an overt pathogen or injury and does not appear to serve a protective purpose.^[3] However, there may be clinical findings suggesting that a chronic infection (such as Epstein-Barr and other viruses) may underlie ongoing inflammation in many individuals. Unlike acute inflammation, chronic inflammation is low grade and long-lasting, causing non-localized, systemic damage, which can be severe and increase with age.^[2,3]

There are a number of factors that can contribute or lead to chronic systemic inflammation. It can begin with an acute infection or tissue injury that is untreated and/or unresolved. Long-term exposure to chemical irritants, such as air pollution, can cause chronic inflammation, as can dysfunctional responses of the immune system as seen in autoimmune diseases.^[4] Psychological stress has also been associated with increased inflammation.^[3]

Several lifestyle factors can cause chronic inflammation. Muscle contractions cause the muscles to release small hormone-like proteins that have anti-inflammatory effects. Thus, inactivity can contribute to the ongoing inflammatory process. Diets high in saturated fat and trans-fat, refined sugar, and excess salt are associated with increased inflammation, especially in those who are overweight and obese. Fat tissues themselves, especially visceral fat (around the abdominal organs), produce pro-inflammatory chemicals. Smoking cigarettes can lower the body's production of anti-inflammatory chemicals and can directly increase inflammation. Also, irregular sleep schedules can increase inflammation compared to those getting a regular eight hours of sleep a night.^[2,3]

What to do about Chronic Inflammation?

Interventions to help lessen chronic inflammation begin with reversing some of the pro-inflammatory factors just described. Decreasing exposure to chemical irritants (e.g., stopping cigarette smoking), establishing regular stress-reducing and/or physical activities (tai chi [taijiquan] or yoga may accomplish both), and establishing a healthy sleep schedule all help. If you are overweight and obese, losing weight can be essential in decreasing chronic inflammation (please see my previous newsletters from February and March of this year).^[5,6] Studies suggest that the most effective way to lose weight to decrease inflammation is by combining dietary weight loss plus exercise.^[7]

Optimal long-term dietary choices can definitely help decrease chronic inflammation. I have found that a whole food, plant-based diet is usually the best eating pattern to follow. A number of studies have shown that a vegan diet is associated with a lower level of C-reactive protein (CRP) compared to omnivores. CRP is a protein made by your liver that is released into your bloodstream in response to inflammation. The association is less pronounced in vegetarians.^[8] Prebiotics and probiotics as well as tea and olive oil may be helpful as well,^[9] although the latter is a processed food and should be used sparingly. Several "functional foods" have demonstrated anti-inflammatory effects, such as flax and chia seeds, which are both high in fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, and lignans.^[10,11] Processed foods, added sugar or salt, unhealthy oils, and excess alcohol can increase inflammation. For at least some individuals, gluten may worsen symptoms, as well as plants from the nightshade family, including tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and potatoes.^[9]

Hormesis has been found to help decrease inflammation. Hormesis is the body's response to moderate stresses that can lead to optimized systemic and cellular functioning and therefore improved health. Examples include exertional activities and calorie-restricted eating. Heat exposure in saunas is another type of hormesis that mimics some of the body's responses to

exercise. We know that repeated use of a sauna causes production of 'heat shock proteins' [HSP]. These may alter other proteins known to be involved in inflammatory responses. Studies have found that HSP help protect against cardiovascular, neurodegenerative, and metabolic diseases.^[12,13] I have received only positive feedback from many users of infrared saunas who had been found to have underlying chronic inflammation.

Perhaps most importantly, I have used the Ellen Cutler Method (ECM) with great success in decreasing the inflammatory response of the body. In most cases, this has led to a significant improvement in the health of my patients suffering from chronic illness. I incorporate many of the above lifestyle improvements when chronic inflammation is a factor (which is frequently the case) and individualize their program for their specific needs. Most importantly, ECM can energetically identify and 'clear' any sensitivities or imbalances found, greatly reducing the inflammatory response of the body. Oftentimes, a gentle organ-specific detoxification is also indicated to facilitate the clearing.

There are a number of supplements that I have found helpful for those with chronic systemic inflammation. Below are the ones I have most frequently found to be effective in reducing the ongoing inflammation:

- ProEnzol® **"pHysioProtease®"** - microbial proteases that, when taken between meals, increase tissue healing and help balance immune function.
- ProEnzol® **"Sugar/Starch DigestEnz"** or **"Chewable DigestEnz"** - microbial digestive enzymes taken at the beginning of each meal to help optimize the breakdown, absorption, and utilization of the nutrients in our foods.
- ProEnzol® **"Disc & Joint"** - non-animal derived proteolytic enzymes including Serratiopeptidase, Bromelain, and pHysioProtease® plus potent herbal extracts including Boswellia and bioactive nutrients including MSM to promote a balanced inflammatory response, which may aid in tissue repair.
- ProEnzol® **"InflammEnz"** - a blend of non-animal derived proteolytic enzymes including Bromelain and pHysioProtease®, plus antioxidant nutrients to help reduce inflammation and accelerate soft tissue healing.
- ProEnzol® **"Soft Tissue"** - a blend of powerful, non-animal derived proteolytic enzymes including Bromelain, Serratiopeptidase and pHysioProtease®, herbal extracts including Turmeric and Boswellia, and antioxidants to help maintain normal inflammatory responses and tissue homeostasis.
- ProEnzol® **"JointEnz"** - a blend of NEM® Eggshell Membrane (rich in bioactive collagen with other joint-supporting substances) plus powerful, non-animal derived Serratiopeptidase enzymes to help maintain joint flexibility and tissue integrity.

Depending upon which organ system(s) is involved, additional supplements may be indicated by testing. ProEnzol® supplements that frequently come up in ECM testing include **"Kidney/Urinary Tract"**, **"Liver Assist"**, **"Lungs"**, **"Lymph"**, **"Memory & Focus"**, and **"Gall Bladder"**. Again, ECM allows me to individualize supplementation for each person.

The beauty of ECM is that chronic inflammation can be detected and optimal measures to ameliorate it can be determined for each individual. My years of clinical experience have repeatedly and happily demonstrated ECM's effectiveness.

Be well, be healthy, and remember...

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."

– Vincent van Gogh

Dr. Ellen

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