**8 Food Ingredients That Can Cause Inflammation**When you have arthritis, your body is in an inflammatory state. What you eat may not only increase inflammation, it can also set you up for other chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Here are 8 food ingredients that may trigger more inflammation in your body.

**Sugar**

It may be hard to resist desserts, pastries, chocolate bars, sodas, even fruit juices. However, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition warns that processed sugars trigger the release of inflammatory messengers called cytokines. Sugar goes by many names so look out for any word ending in “ose,” e.g. fructose or sucrose on ingredient labels.

**Saturated Fats**

Several studies have shown that saturated fats trigger adipose (fat tissue) inflammation, which is not only an indicator for heart disease but it also worsens arthritis inflammation. Pizza and cheese are the biggest sources of saturated fats in the average American diet, according to the National Cancer Institute. Other culprits include meat products (especially red meat), full-fat dairy products, pasta dishes and grain-based desserts.

**Trans Fats**

Harvard School of Public Health researchers helped sound the alarm about trans fat in the early 1990s. Known to trigger systemic inflammation, trans fat can be found in fast foods and other fried products, processed snack foods, frozen breakfast products, cookies, donuts, crackers and most stick margarines. Avoid foods with partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient labels.

**Omega 6 Fatty Acids**

Omega 6 fatty acids are an essential fatty acid that the body needs for normal growth and development. The body needs a healthy balance of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Excess consumption of omega-6s can trigger the body to produce pro-inflammatory chemicals. These fatty acids are found in oils such corn, safflower, sunflower, grapeseed, soy, peanut, and vegetable; mayonnaise; and many salad dressings.

**Refined Carbohydrates**

White flour products (breads, rolls, crackers) white rice, white potatoes (instant mashed potatoes, or french fries) and many cereals are refined carbohydrates. According to Scientific American, processed carbohydrates may trump fats as the main driver of escalating rates of obesity and other chronic conditions. These high-glycemic index foods fuel the production of advanced glycation end (AGE) products that stimulate inflammation.

**MSG**

Mono-sodium glutamate (MSG) is a flavor-enhancing food additive most commonly found in prepared Asian food and soy sauce, but it can also be added to fast foods, prepared soups and soup mixes, salad dressings and deli meats. This chemical can trigger two important pathways of chronic inflammation, and affect liver health.

**Gluten and Casein**

People who have joint pain and are sensitive to gluten, found in wheat, barley and rye, or casein, found in dairy products, may find relief by avoiding them. And those diagnosed with celiac disease, in which gluten sets off an autoimmune response that damages the small intestine and sometimes causes joint pain may find relief when they adopt a gluten-free diet. There may be an overlap in which some people with arthritis also have gluten sensitivity or also have celiac disease.

**Aspartame**

Trying to go sugar-free? Aspartame is a non-nutritive, intense artificial sweetener found in more than 4,000 products worldwide. While it’s approved by the FDA, studies on its effects are mixed, and the impact on people with autoimmune disease are unknown. If you are sensitive to this chemical, your immune system may react to the “foreign substance” by attacking the chemical, which in return, will trigger an inflammatory response.