

# Can Your Diet Help Ease Rheumatoid Arthritis?

What you put on your plate may help you manage the way RA makes you feel. Food won't cure your disease, but a meal plan like the Mediterranean diet can lower inflammation and control some of your symptoms.

## Why the Mediterranean Diet Helps

It's loaded with fruits, veggies, whole grains, healthy fats, beans, and fish. These foods have natural chemicals that help keep your inflammation in check.

Veggies, beans, and whole grains are also healthy because they're high in fiber. Fish is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are healthy fats. Fatty fish, like salmon, herring, sardines, and anchovies, have the most.

A Mediterranean diet also relies on olive oil, another healthy fat, to take the place of full-fat dairy products like butter. That's good if you have RA, because olive oil can also lower levels of the chemicals that cause inflammation.

The fruits and vegetables in the diet are full of antioxidants that also help curb inflammation. Go for ones that have deep or bright colors, which usually means higher antioxidant levels. Some good choices are blueberries, blackberries, squash, sweet potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, peppers, oranges, broccoli, and melons.

In one study, women who ate this way for 6 months had less joint pain and morning stiffness, and better overall health, than those who didn't.

To change things up, add some turmeric or ginger. These spices aren't part of the Mediterranean diet, but they naturally lower inflammation. If you take blood thinners, talk to your doctor first, since turmeric can prevent blood from clotting.

Red wine is a classic part of this eating plan, but check with your doctor to see if it's OK for you. If you take methotrexate, you should avoid alcohol because of the chance of liver damage.

## Should You Go Gluten-Free?

If you decide to give up gluten, RA shouldn't be the reason. There's no evidence that it can improve the condition or ease your symptoms.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley, and in many packaged and restaurant



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If you want to ditch gluten, talk to your doctor or a dietitian for tips so you get all the nutrients you need.

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[Sources](#) ^

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