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NUTRITION NOTES

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INFLAMMATION: What's all the fuss?

Inflammation is our immune system's method of fighting infection, from bacteria, to environmental pollutants or a result of genetic expression. When acute, it heals, but when it's chronic it is deadly. Chronic inflammation has been found to be triggered by smoking, poor diet, excess body weight and being sedentary. It has also been identified by research as contributing to all major diseases, especially diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, cancer and arthritis. Current research is showing it may be involved in dementia, Alzheimer's and asthma. Inflammation is measured in a blood test with a biomarker called C Reactive Protein (CRP). Certain lifestyle habits can control and reduce chronic inflammation & CRP levels, such as stop smoking, reduce weight, daily exercise, and a "Mediterranean" type diet. In particular, dietary recommendations involve consuming whole foods (not just supplements) containing Omega-3 fatty acids, and the antioxidants: Alpha Lipoic acid, vitamins A, C, and E. Whole foods, because they contain appropriate and digestible amounts of these and a symphony of other nutrients which all work synergistically to keep us healthy and avoid disease. Foods containing ample amounts of these life sustaining nutrients include: fatty fishes; flaxseed; plain nuts, seeds, & vegetable oils (especially olive & walnut); fresh fruits & vegetables (especially colorful ones); and whole grains like brown rice, wheat germ, bulgur and quinoa. For information on preparing and including these foods in your daily diet, call Donna Wolf R.D. at Healthy Directions of Poway 858-335-2140, or visit www.healthydirectionspoway.com