



## Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions [caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org](mailto:caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org) and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI,

**Question:** My care recipient has Chronic Inflammation. What is it and what can be done about it?

**Answer:** Inflammation is one way your immune system deals with potential harm from a germ, virus, or injury. When the immune system notices a threat, it sends out white blood cells and other inflammatory chemicals to help with the healing process. This is why injuries swell and turn red. When the immune response to an injury or an invading germ is relatively short, the inflammation is called acute.

### Inflammation Can Become Chronic

If the immune system is unable to clear the injury, germ or harmful substance quickly, it doesn't shut off its response. Instead, it works overtime trying to get the job done. This is known as chronic inflammation. Inflammation can occur and become chronic for several reasons including long-term exposure to irritants or toxic chemicals, immune system disorders, repeated injuries, constant stress and lifestyle factors such as an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity or smoking.

### Stress can Play a Big Roll

Stress impacts the immune system. It raises the levels of certain hormones in the body, and it also affects the way your cells absorb nutrients. This can reduce your body's ability to heal.

### Chronic Inflammation is a Factor in Many Diseases

Ongoing inflammation can begin to destroy healthy cells in arteries, organs, joints and other parts of the body. This can lead to developing several different diseases. Reducing or preventing inflammation may help lower the risk of Heart Disease, Cancer, Type 2 Diabetes, Asthma, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Inflammatory Bowel Disease as well as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.

### Talk to Your Doctor about Chronic Information

A doctor can determine if the symptoms are caused by chronic inflammation. Symptoms can include chronic pain or fatigue, trouble sleeping, depression, anxiety gut issues weight gain or loss, and reoccurring infections.

### **Diet and Lifestyle Changes Can Help Prevent or Reduce Chronic Inflammation**

Diets should include plenty of fruits and vegetables as well as whole grains. Choose healthy oils such as olive, avocado or coconut oil. Cut back or eliminate highly processed foods. This includes cured meats with nitrates, refined carbohydrates such as white bread and white rice and sugar-sweetened drinks. Talk to the doctor about taking fish oil or another supplement high in Omega-3s.

### **Make Lifestyle Changes**

If smoking or vaping are part of their lifestyle then they need to quit. Keep them active, but don't overdo it. Too much exercise can promote inflammation. Try meditation or other stress-reducing techniques

This information was taken from the pamphlet "Chronic Inflammation What it is and What to Do About It" by Annie Shaw - Journeyworks

Note: This is for informational purposes only.
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For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 333-6981 in Greensboro and Guilford Co., in High Point/Jamestown (336) 884-6981 or the Caregiver Support Specialist, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program  
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