



**nutrition**  
BY MARGO

*eat better, feel better*

# SIX SIMPLE FOOD HACKS TO STOP PAIN

By Margo Gasta, MS, RD, CCN, CCH

*When you're in pain and misery because of what you eat, it can be a surprisingly small sacrifice to change your diet.*

*Diet changes are the foundation for jump starting the healing process. However, sometimes more support such as dietary supplements or other holistic interventions are also needed. Try the diet approach first and see how far you get. You can always schedule with an integrative and functional medicine dietitian to dial in more specific interventions.*

*Follow the suggestions in this book for 12 weeks, keeping track of your pain on a scale of 1-10 on a few days per week (just jot it into your calendar). After 12 weeks you can begin adding your "regular" foods back into your diet (except for unhealthy fats). Do this by adding 1 food at a time for 4 days in a row. Log your pain symptoms on a scale of 1-10 and see if your pain worsens on any of the days you are adding another food. This will help you pinpoint some of your nutritional triggers.*

*If it feels too overwhelming to make these changes on your own, please consider scheduling an appointment with me to help apply these concepts. I can run specific lab tests to help identify nutritional factors that can be affecting your biochemistry and preventing your body from being able to heal itself. To contact me visit [nutritionbymargo.com](http://nutritionbymargo.com).*

- 1 -

## Swap Grains and Sugar For Great Tasting Substitutes

*It's empowering to know which foods taste amazing  
and won't hurt your body*

Sugar and grains (cereal, bread, tortillas, corn chips, crackers, pasta, rice, beer, etc.) can cause substantial inflammation and keep you in pain. The good news is that there are plenty of substitutions for inflammation-causing sugar and grains that taste amazing! The other piece of good news is that you might react negatively to only certain grains, not all.

One concept to keep in mind (which may require individual nutrition counseling) when we discuss grains, sugar and other sources of carbohydrate: Controlling overall blood sugar and insulin levels can help to control inflammation in your body. Therefore, even if you do not have an immune reaction to one specific grain, when eating any source of carbohydrate, it is important to keep it in balance with protein and fat in order to keep your blood sugar and insulin levels in a healthy range.

For now, cut sugar and the following grains out of your diet: corn, rice, buckwheat, teff, millet, wheat, spelt, oats, rye, barley, sorghum, amaranth, kamut and triticale.

Instead, use small amounts of raw, unfiltered honey or stevia to sweeten your foods. For grain substitutions, use tapioca flour, arrowroot flour, potato flour, sweet potato flour, almond flour and flour, almond flour and coconut flour. One disclaimer: You could have an immune reaction (and feel worse) with these food substitutions. This is where food sensitivity testing would help to guide us.

Pinterest offers a wealth of ideas for great tasting grain-free foods. Follow me on Pinterest to see the recipes I recommend, and consider these ideas:

- Instead of regular pizza, have pizza made with a cauliflower or zucchini crust. Top it with chicken and homemade dairy-free pesto.
- Instead of grain-based pasta, have spaghetti squash, zucchini ribbons or butternut squash ribbons. You can even buy gluten-free sweet potato noodles, or Capelli's pasta made with an almond-tapioca flour mix. Please note: Asian noodles made from sweet potato starch taste great but they are not yet available from certified gluten-free facilities and could keep you in an inflamed state.
- Instead of grain-based breads, use homemade tapioca wraps or use large lettuce leaves as wraps. If you need to lose weight, using lettuce leaves or large sheets of seaweed for a wrap can offer support. Seaweed contains iodine, which is good for the thyroid and breast cancer prevention.
- Instead of rice, enjoy cauliflower rice, sautéed summer squash, baked sweet potatoes or squash with your meal. Bake, mash and freeze sweet potatoes in advance (use chicken broth, grass fed butter and a pinch of cinnamon).



- 3 -

## Use Your Breakfast to Heal

Start the day off with a delicious smoothie that will start repairing your body right away.

These smoothies are packed with the stuff your body will love:

- Good bacteria to balance your immune system
- Protein to help repair tissues, and balance your mood and blood sugar
- Antioxidants and phytochemicals to support the health of your cells
- Fiber to feed your good bacteria and keep your intestinal tract moving
- Coconut oil, a good source of medium chain triglycerides, to help your immune system and brain health while increasing your metabolism to burn fat

## Margo's Super Healthy Breakfast Smoothies



### GREEK YOGURT SMOOTHIE

- ½ Cup Organic Greek yogurt
- ½ Cup Kefir
- ½ Cup Frozen Organic Blueberries
- ½ Cup Frozen Organic Cherries
- 1 Scoop Gluten-Free and Grass Free Powdered Reds and Greens
- 1 TBLS Coconut Oil
- 1/2 Cup Organic Spinach or Kale (frozen is ok)
- 6-8 oz Water

### DAIRY FREE SMOOTHIE

- ½ Cup Frozen Organic Blueberries
- ½ Cup Frozen Organic Cherries
- 1 Serving Low Lectin Pea Protein Powder (Designs for Health) or Hemp Protein
- 1 Scoop Gluten Free and Grass Free Powdered Reds and Greens
- 1 Serving Probiotic Coconut Water (1 tsp-follow directions on the bottle)
- ½ Cup Spinach or Kale (frozen is ok)
- 10 oz Water or Other Dairy Free Liquid (carrageenan-free coconut milk, almond milk, hemp milk)
- 1 TBLS Coconut Oil

For both recipes, combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Enjoy!

For an alternate breakfast you can have eggs or organic chicken sausage served over sautéed greens and mushrooms with chunks of avocado. You can call this a breakfast salad. Include fruit or leftover roasted sweet potato chunks.



- 2 -

## Put out the Fire with the Right Fats

This is a forever-and-ever suggestion because the wrong fats can wreak havoc on anyone's body!

- Use only these fats for your cooking  
*Grapeseed oil, avocado oil, hemp oil, coconut oil, and grass fed butter, ghee or olive oil. Flax seed oil is okay for salad dressings, but don't cook with flaxseed oil. Nut butters such as almond or sunflower seed are generally okay, but be aware that you may react to nuts.*
- Get rid of conventional butter, margarine, "vegetable oil" such as soy oil, peanuts and peanut oil, corn oil, and canola oil  
*Oils labeled "vegetable oil" are usually genetically modified corn oil which may provoke inflammation in your body.*
- Pass on the fried foods  
*Not only do these pack on the calories and put your heart at risk but the fat they use in the deep fryer will keep you inflamed and in pain.*
- When you eat processed food, fast food, or food cooked in restaurants, you are often eating cheap, inflammatory fats that will keep you sick  
*Try to cook the majority your own food.*
- Remember, unhealthy fats are not an item we are adding back in  
*I encourage you to forever choose healthy fats!*

- 4 -

## Make Your Protein Clean and Supreme!

*Protein is essential for repairing tissue, making neurotransmitters, building muscle mass and balancing blood sugar.*



You need some sort of “clean” protein at each meal and even a little at each snack. Clean animal proteins are organic, pasture-raised and grass-fed. They are free of GMO feed, antibiotics, hormones, and feed that is saturated in chemicals such as pesticides. Many conventional animal protein sources are packed with antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, and GMO particles from GMO feed that will keep you sick and in pain. If you have to, order your “clean” protein online and keep it in an extra freezer (Eatwild.com). Costco carries many clean protein sources as well as sustainable seafood.

The amount of protein you need depends on your health and body size. A safe amount is about 20 grams (3 oz meat, fish, poultry) per meal. Some people may need 30 grams per meal (4 oz). Children need less. I’m happy to help you to determine the optimum amount for your body.

### Clean Animal Protein Sources

Try to find a local farmer for these items:

- Grass fed beef or buffalo
- Pasture raised or organic chicken
- Pasture raised or organic eggs
- Wild caught salmon and sardines

### Protein Powders

I recommend only professional, clean brands for these items:

- Organic whey protein isolate
- Egg white protein powder
- Beef protein powder

Dairy can be a great source of protein but can also trigger symptoms in some people. It is best to stay dairy-free for 12 weeks, then add it back in gradually to see how your body reacts.

Vegan protein sources like legumes (beans) and nuts are generally clean protein sources, but some people with autoimmune diseases must avoid them as they can trigger flare ups. I’d suggest eliminating them from your diet for 12 weeks and then adding them back in, 1 food at a time for 4 days in a row, to monitor if they cause an increase in pain or discomfort.

- 5 -

## Harness the Power of Healthy Bacteria

*Eat foods full of “friendly” bacteria (probiotics) to reset your immune system, and lower inflammation in your body to get ahold of pain and chronic illness.*

Healthy bacteria live in us and on us, residing in our mucous membranes, intestinal tract and skin. These bacteria greatly outnumber our own human cells and they help to run our bodies. They help determine our mental health, metabolic rate, immune system (colds, flu, asthma, autoimmune disease and cancer), and the overall inflammation in our body (pain).

Good Sources of Healthy Bacteria:

- Organic Greek yogurt
- Organic kefir (cow, goat and coconut)
- Fermented coconut water (Inner Eco brand)
- Kim Chee
- Sauerkraut

Have about 1/2 - 1 cup of yogurt or kefir, and about 1 TBLS of fermented veggies per day.

- 6 -

## Power Up Your Cells With Plants

*The benefits of eating plant foods go beyond vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and antioxidants.*

Plant foods contain nutrients that can influence how our genes are expressed. This may help to stimulate the repair of our tissues, slowing down degeneration and inflammation. Epigenetics is the study of how the foods we eat and lifestyle choices we make control the expression of our genes. For a short video of this phenomenon please copy and paste this URL in your browser or just click this live link:

<http://www.drfranklipman.com/dr-jeff-bland-on-epigenetics/>.

- Eat 5-7 servings of veggies per day (less for children)  
*You can juice, roast, grill, sauté, or eat them raw in a salad. Don’t juice unless you know what you are doing and have read up on juicing safety.*
- Aim for 1 serving of fruit per day  
*Some ideas for low glycemic, antioxidant packed berries, apples or melons and stone fruit such as peaches, plums and apricots.*
- Make your beverages work for you instead of against you



*Drink organic herbal teas and green and black tea and organic coffee as these are also from plants. Don't forget that cocoa is also a plant with powerful healing properties. Raw, unfiltered honey and stevia are two of the safest sweeteners. The simple act of drinking tea has been shown to lower stress.*



- Think of your spice rack as a pharmacy  
*Use culinary herbs and spices as much as you can. Culinary herbs quiet down inflammation and may reduce your risk of many diseases. Culinary herbs and spices include cinnamon, basil, cilantro, oregano, fenel seeds, rosemary, turmeric, etc. Put herbs in sandwiches (whole basil leaves), salads and anything you cook (thyme, basil, rosemary, garlic, onion, oregano, sage, etc.). Make pesto from different herbs to add to your food (basil, cilantro, etc.).*
- Eat nuts and nut butters once you have determined that they do not cause system flare ups  
*Presoaking nuts can improve their digestibility and nutrition. The book "Nourishing Traditions" by Sally Fallon can tell you exactly how to do this.*

#### List of Foods to Eliminate for 12 Weeks:

Milk, cheese, yogurt (*unless you know for a fact dairy does not increase your pain*)

Eggs

Nuts and Seeds

Grains *including wheat, spelt, rye, barley, oats, corn, buckwheat, teff, triticale, kamut, amaranth, sorghum*

Beans, lentils, soy

Sugar, high fructose corn syrup

Any food you have tested allergic to

Foods that are NOT organic—*some of your immune reactions might be to the chemicals that are put into our food supply or to genetically modified organisms.*

*You can eliminate these factors by eating organic foods.*

I hope that this eBook has given you some good information on diet so you can jump start your way to good health. I wish you well on your journey to try to manage your pain and discomfort through food.

Remember that the overall goal is not just symptom management, but to restore health as much as possible.

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