
THE INTEGRATIVE CARDIOLOGIST

*The Anti-Inflammatory
Diet Guide*
At a Glance

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COMPLIMENTARY OFFICE EDITION

A COMPANION TO THE FULL BOOK

How to use this guide

A quick-reference summary of the framework I teach every one of my patients.

This booklet distills each chapter of *Dr. Azhak's Guide to Anti-Inflammatory Eating* into a single page you can pin to the fridge, tuck into a wallet, or hand to a family member. It is written to answer four questions at a glance:

- **What is inflammation, and why does it matter for my heart?** — Chapter 2, "A Tale of Two Houses."
- **What should I eat more of?** — The Anti-Inflammatory Eating Pyramid on the next page, and the seven plant-forward chapters that follow.
- **What should I eat with care?** — The five animal-food chapters (seafood, poultry, dairy, beef & lamb, and eggs).
- **What everyday habits move the needle?** — Herbs and spices, beverages, and the small role for supplements.

A GENTLE NOTE

This is patient education, not medical advice. If you take a statin, blood-pressure medication, or blood thinner, keep taking it as prescribed. Bring this booklet to your next visit and we will use it together.

The full 194-page handbook — with citations, images, and detailed chapters — is available on Amazon.

CHAPTER 1 · THE FOUNDATION

The Anti-Inflammatory Eating Pyramid

A plant-forward framework for lifelong cardiovascular protection.



1 Whole Soy

1 DAILY

½ cup edamame · 3 oz tofu ·
3 oz tempeh · 1 cup soy milk ·
1 Tbsp miso

2 Beans & Legumes

2 DAILY

½ cup cooked beans or
lentils, or a handful of
peanuts

3 Whole Grains

3 DAILY

½ cup cooked intact grains
—no flour, no bread

4 Fruits

4 DAILY

1 medium piece, or ½ cup
berries, or 1 cup cut fruit

5 Vegetables

5 DAILY

1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked
—Include 1 cruciferous

CHAPTER 1 · THE FOUNDATION

Five, Four, Three, Two, One

The daily targets that hold the whole pyramid up.

5

Vegetables 5 DAILY

1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked. Include at least one cruciferous every day — broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts, arugula.

4

Fruits 4 DAILY

1 medium piece, or ½ cup berries, or 1 cup cut fruit. Whole fruit, not juice. Berries as often as you can manage them.

3

Whole Grains 3 DAILY

½ cup cooked intact kernel — oats, farro, barley, brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat. No flour, no bread.

2

Beans & Legumes 2 DAILY

½ cup cooked beans or lentils, or a handful of peanuts. Canned is fine — rinse them.

1

Whole Soy 1 DAILY

½ cup edamame · 3 oz tofu · 3 oz tempeh · 1 cup soy milk · 1 Tbsp miso. Whole soy only, not isolate powders.

WHY THIS PAGE IS THE WHOLE BOOK

This pyramid is the take-home message of the entire book. Between them, these five layers supply the full range of nutrients found in whole plant foods — and they nourish both the microbiome and its human host. From there the balance is set, and upon that balance food can be crafted to be both healthy and enjoyable. Everything in the chapters that follow — the fats, the seafood, the poultry and eggs, the dairy, the meat, the herbs and the drinks — is craft applied on top of a foundation that is already in place. Get the base right and the rest becomes a pleasure rather than a rulebook.

THE HEALTHY HOUSE

A Tale of Two Houses

Your gut is the front door. Your body is the home.



THE GUT IS THE FRONT DOOR

Trillions of beneficial microbes live along the wall of your intestine. Fed on fiber, they produce **short-chain fatty acids** — natural signals that keep the gut lining sealed and selective. A healthy front door filters wisely.

THE BODY IS THE HOME

When the door does its job, the rest of the house stays quiet. Blood vessels stay smooth, joints stay comfortable, and **nothing burns in the background**.

CHAPTERS 3 – 6 · THE PLANT FOUNDATION

Eat More

The four food groups at the base of the pyramid.

CH 3 · 1 SERVING DAILY

Cruciferous Vegetables

Broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, arugula. Their **sulforaphane** is the most studied dietary anti-inflammatory in the human diet. Chop or chew, then wait 40 minutes before cooking.

CH 4 · 4 SERVINGS DAILY

Non-Cruciferous Vegetables

Leafy greens, tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms, onions, garlic, carrots, beets. Aim for at least **three colors** on the plate at every dinner.

CH 5 · 4 SERVINGS DAILY

Fruits

Berries first (blueberries, raspberries, blackberries), then citrus and stone fruit. **Whole fruit, not juice.** The fiber is the medicine.

CH 6 · 3 SERVINGS DAILY

Whole Grains

Oats, barley, farro, quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat. Intact grains — **not flour.** Beta-glucan from oats and barley lowers LDL directly.

CHAPTERS 7 – 10 · PROTEIN & FAT, PLANT-FORWARD

Eat More

Plant protein, traditional soy, mushrooms, and the fats that heal.

CH 7 · 2 SERVINGS DAILY

Beans & Legumes

Lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, peanuts. The most consistent dietary predictor of longevity in the Blue Zone data. Cheap, filling, **fiber-dense**.

CH 8 · 1 SERVING DAILY

Whole Soy Foods

Edamame, tofu, tempeh, miso, natto. Traditional soy — **not isolates, not powders**. Safe for women with breast-cancer history; excellent for cholesterol.

CH 9 · INCLUDE OFTEN

Mushrooms & Ergothioneine

Cremini, shiitake, oyster, maitake. Their unique amino acid **ergothioneine** is the closest thing we have to a longevity vitamin. Cook them; never eat raw.

CH 10 · EVERY MEAL

Healthy Fats

Extra-virgin olive oil, avocado, walnuts, almonds, pistachios, flax, chia. **Cold-pressed, not refined**. The mediterranean diet lives here.

CHAPTERS 11 – 13 · ANIMAL FOODS, CHOSEN WELL

Eat Wisely

Animal foods can belong on the plate — the question is which, how often, and how prepared.

CH 11 · 2 – 3 TIMES WEEKLY

Seafood

Small oily fish first — **SMASH**: salmon (wild), mackerel (Atlantic), anchovies, sardines, herring. Two servings a week is enough to move your **omega-3 index** into the protective range.

CH 12 · 1 – 2 TIMES WEEKLY

Poultry & Eggs

Skinless chicken or turkey; pasture-raised eggs. For most patients, 1 – 2 eggs a day is safe. **How you cook matters** — bake or poach, don't fry.

CH 13 · SMALL AMOUNTS

Dairy

Plain fermented dairy — kefir, yogurt, aged cheese — beats sweetened milk products every time. C15:0 in dairy fat is protective; added sugar is not.

THE PRINCIPLE

Sourcing over quantity

For animal foods, **quality is the entire game**. Grass-fed, pasture-raised, wild-caught, and minimally processed choices carry a different lipid signature than their industrial counterparts.

CHAPTERS 14 – 15 · MEATS & EVERYDAY MEDICINE

Eat Wisely

Red meat rarely; herbs and spices generously.

CH 14 · OCCASIONAL

Beef & Lamb

Grass-fed only. Small portions (3 – 4 oz), no more than **once a week**. The evidence for processed red meat (bacon, sausage, deli) is clearer and worse — treat it as a rare exception, not a routine.

CH 15 · EVERY MEAL

Herbs & Spices

Turmeric, ginger, garlic, cinnamon, rosemary, oregano, thyme. Weight for weight, these are among the **most anti-inflammatory foods on the planet**. Cook with them daily.

THE THREE HABITS THAT QUIETLY MATTER MOST

Beyond food itself

Sleep 7 – 9 hours — insufficient sleep raises hsCRP within a week. **Move** daily — even a 20-minute walk after meals lowers post-meal glucose and inflammation. **Stress** — cortisol thins the gut lining. Breathwork, prayer, walking outside — pick one and do it daily.

CHAPTER 16 · WHAT TO DRINK

Beverages

What ends up in the cup matters as much as what ends up on the plate.

DRINK FREELY**Water**

Half your body weight in ounces daily, more in summer or with exercise.
Filtered if possible.

2 – 4 CUPS DAILY**Green Tea**

Rich in EGCG, a well-studied catechin that lowers LDL and blood pressure modestly. Steep 2 – 3 minutes; skip the sugar.

1 – 3 CUPS DAILY**Coffee**

Paper-filtered, black or with unsweetened milk. Associated with **lower cardiovascular mortality** in most large cohorts — but not if you salt it with sugar and creamer.

RARELY OR NEVER**Sweetened Drinks & Alcohol**

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the single most reliable driver of metabolic disease in the American diet. **Alcohol has no cardioprotective dose** the current evidence supports — less is better.

CHAPTER 17 · FOOD FIRST, ALWAYS

Supplements

What a cardiologist actually recommends — and what to skip.

THE PRINCIPLE

A supplement is a supplement — an addition to a diet that is already doing the work. It cannot rescue a diet built on ultra-processed food, and most healthy adults eating the pyramid on page 3 need very little from a bottle.

REASONABLE FOR MOST ADULTS

Omega-3 (EPA + DHA)

1 – 2 g daily if you don't eat oily fish twice a week. Triglyceride-lowering; disease-prevention evidence is mixed.

CASE-BY-CASE

Vitamin D₃

Test your 25-OH vitamin D. Replace only if low. 1,000 – 2,000 IU is typical; more only under supervision.

CASE-BY-CASE

Magnesium Glycinate

300 – 400 mg at night for sleep, muscle cramps, and mild hypertension. Well tolerated.

SKIP THESE

What I do not recommend

Multivitamins for well-nourished adults; vitamin E; beta-carotene; iron unless deficient; **any product** promising to "reverse" heart disease in a bottle.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The Daily Plate

A day of anti-inflammatory eating in one glance.

BREAKFAST**Oats, berries, walnuts**

Steel-cut or rolled oats cooked with cinnamon; topped with fresh berries, chopped walnuts, and ground flax. Green tea or paper-filtered black coffee.

LUNCH**Big salad + beans**

Mixed greens, tomatoes, peppers, chickpeas or lentils, avocado, olive oil and lemon. Add sardines or a handful of pumpkin seeds. Fruit for dessert.

SNACK**Something colored and whole**

Apple with almond butter, hummus with carrots, a small square of dark chocolate. Not a granola bar.

DINNER**Fish or tofu, greens, grain**

Baked salmon or seared tofu; sautéed broccoli or kale with garlic; a scoop of farro, brown rice, or quinoa. Herbs, spices, olive oil — always.

THE 3-4-5 RULE

Aim for **3 colors** on the dinner plate, **4 servings of fruit** across the day, and **5 servings of vegetables** across the day. Do this consistently and the pyramid takes care of itself.

TAKE THIS TO THE STORE

Grocery Quick List

The staples that make the pyramid effortless.

PRODUCE · VEGETABLES

Broccoli · cauliflower · kale · spinach ·
arugula · cabbage · tomatoes · peppers ·
onions · garlic · mushrooms · carrots ·
beets

PRODUCE · FRUITS

Blueberries · raspberries · blackberries ·
apples · citrus · pears · stone fruit in
season · bananas · pomegranate

PANTRY · GRAINS & LEGUMES

Steel-cut oats · barley · farro · quinoa ·
brown or wild rice · dried or canned
lentils · chickpeas · black beans · kidney
beans

PANTRY · FATS & NUTS

Extra-virgin olive oil · walnuts · almonds
· pistachios · flax · chia · pumpkin seeds ·
tahini · avocado (fresh)

PROTEIN · PLANT & SEA

Firm tofu · tempeh · edamame · miso ·
wild salmon · sardines · anchovies ·
mackerel · herring

EVERYDAY MEDICINE

Turmeric · ginger · cinnamon · black
pepper · rosemary · thyme · oregano ·
green tea · dark chocolate (70%+)

IF YOU ONLY DO FOUR THINGS

Start With These Four

Any one of these, done consistently, lowers inflammation. All four, done together, changes a trajectory.

WEEK 1**Add, don't subtract**

Add one serving of berries and one serving of leafy greens to every day. Don't take anything away yet. **Crowd out, don't cut out.**

WEEK 2**Fiber up**

Add beans or lentils to one meal a day. Switch one white grain for an intact whole grain. Aim for **30 g fiber** by end of week 2.

WEEK 3**Fat, upgraded**

Butter and seed oils out; extra-virgin olive oil in. Add a small handful of walnuts or almonds daily. Fish twice this week.

WEEK 4**The one hard thing**

Cut sugar-sweetened beverages entirely — soda, sweet tea, fruit juice, sports drinks, flavored coffee. This one habit, alone, is worth **everything else combined.**

THE FULL GUIDE

About & Where to Learn More

Sameer Azhak, MD, FACC, is a board-certified integrative cardiologist with more than twenty-five years of clinical experience caring for patients with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and the everyday questions in between.

He completed his internal medicine and cardiology training through the Seton Hall University School of Graduate Medical Education and a fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the **Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine** at the University of Arizona. He practices in Wayne, New Jersey.

THE FULL BOOK

This booklet is a summary. The full 194-page handbook — *Dr. Azhak's Guide to Anti-Inflammatory Eating* — expands every one of these pages into a full chapter with images, cited research, and detailed food guidance. Available on Amazon in paperback.

*"Chronic inflammation is the fire behind heart disease.
This is the diet that puts it out."*

THE INTEGRATIVE CARDIOLOGIST · VOLUME TWO

THE INTEGRATIVE CARDIOLOGIST

Eat to Reverse Heart Disease

*Controlling inflammation is the key to reversing heart disease — and this book is
the blueprint that shapes that key.*

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