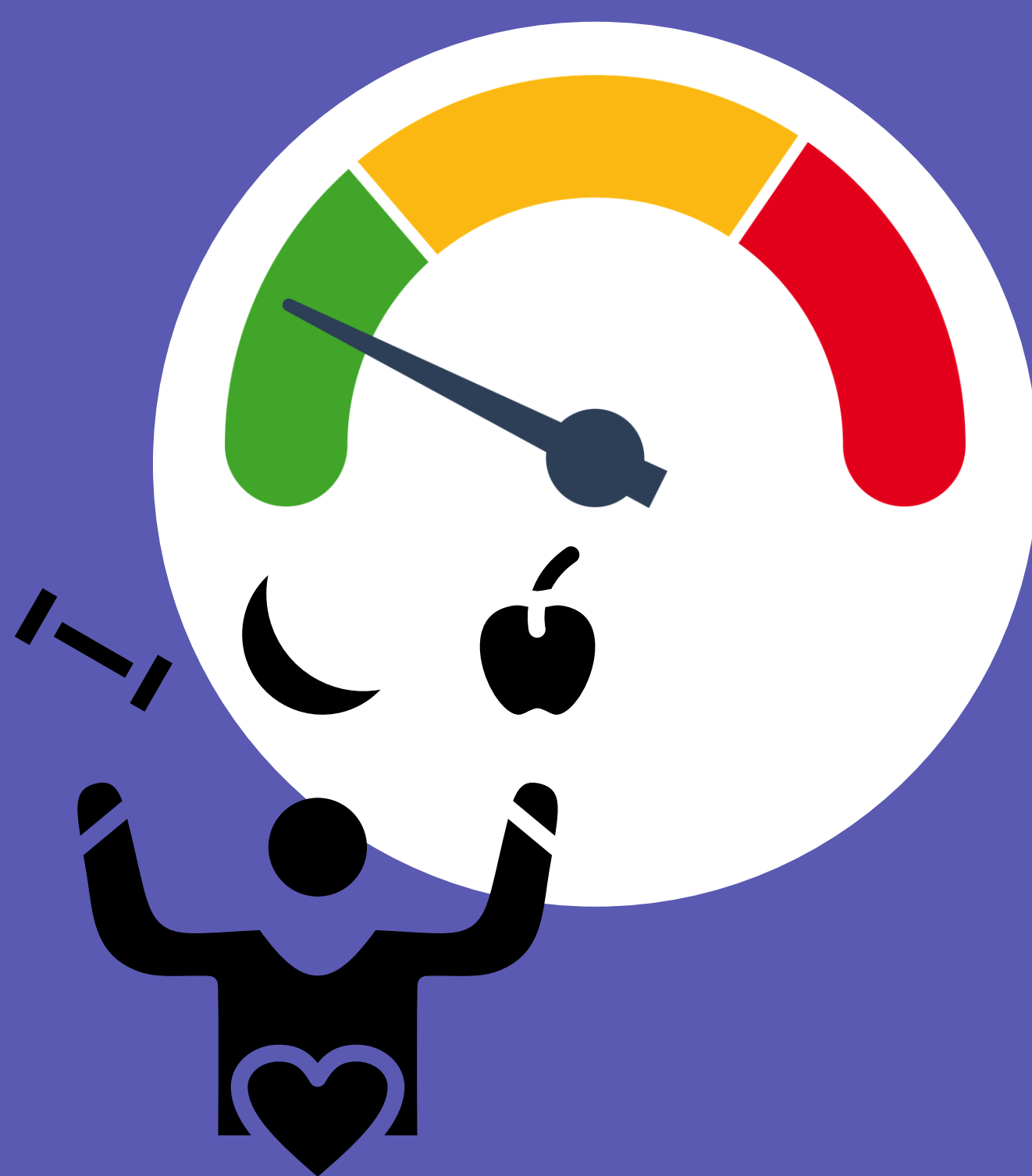




COOLING THE FIRE

A Simple Guide to Reducing Everyday Inflammation

Practical, evidence-based changes to support your energy, weight, skin, and long-term health.



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What Is Chronic Inflammation?

Inflammation isn't the enemy — it's your body's natural defence system. A cut swells, a fever rises, an infection is fought off, and then it resolves. That's acute inflammation, and it's protective.

Chronic, low-grade inflammation is different. It's a quiet, background immune activation that never fully switches off — driven by ongoing signals from diet, excess weight, poor sleep, stress, and gut imbalance. It doesn't announce itself with fever or pain. Instead, it shows up slowly: in your energy, your weight, your skin, your mood, and over time, your long-term health.

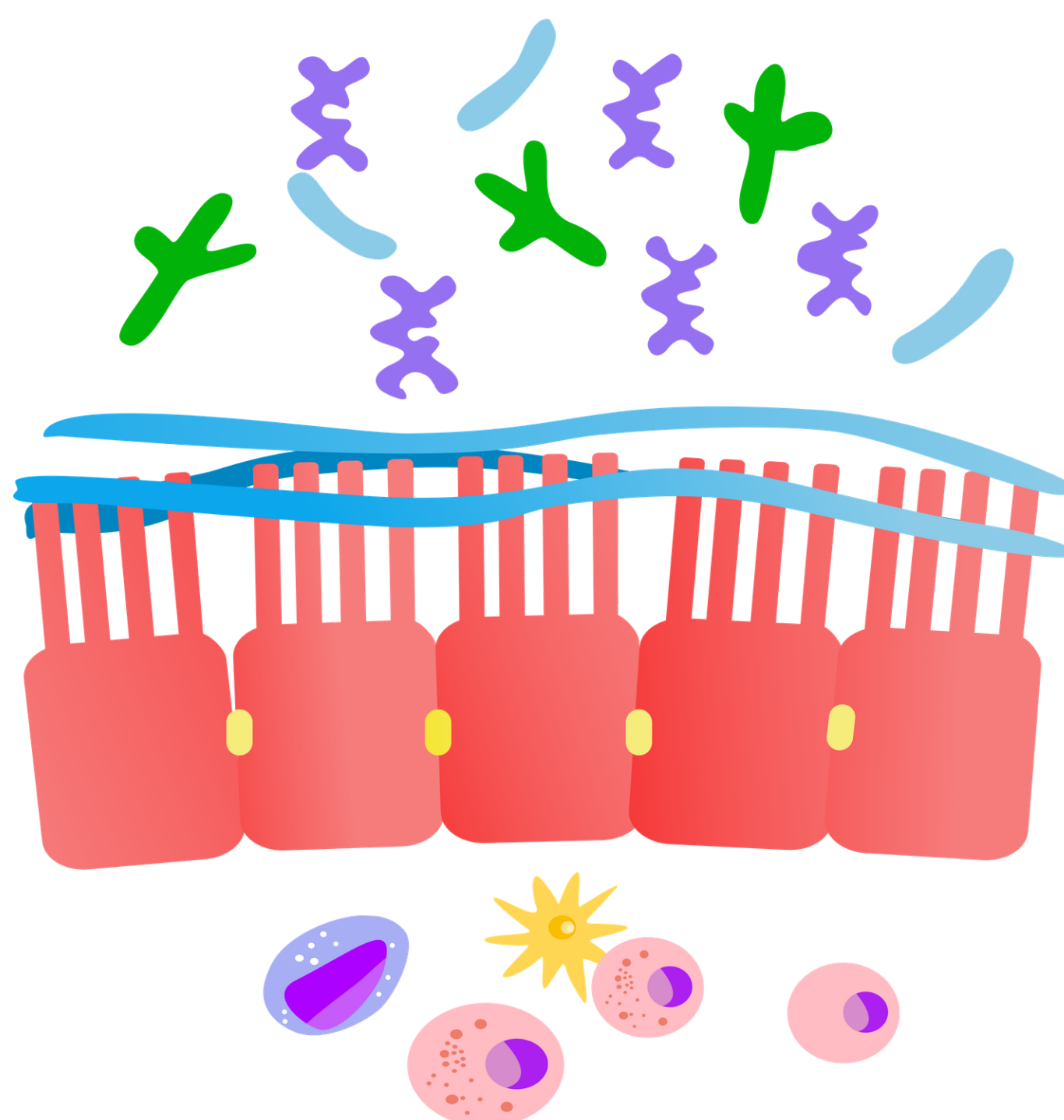
ACUTE INFLAMMATION

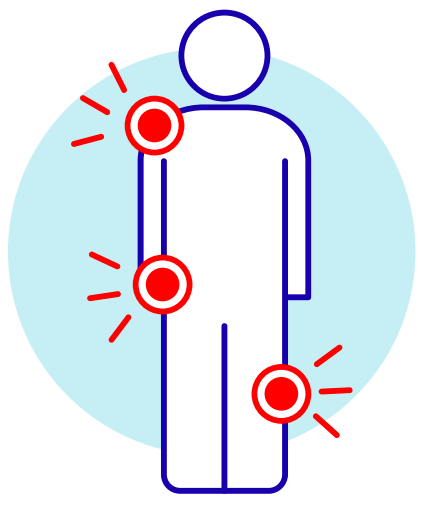
- Short-term
- Protective
- Resolves once healed
- Example: a cut, a cold, a sprain

CHRONIC INFLAMMATION

- Long-term, low-grade
- Often invisible day-to-day
- Driven by lifestyle factors
- Linked to fatigue, weight gain, aches + pains, skin issues, and disease risk

The good news: chronic inflammation responds remarkably well to simple, sustainable lifestyle changes — the kind covered in this handbook.





Is Your Body Showing Signs?

These signs don't diagnose anything on their own — but if several feel familiar, it's worth taking your inflammatory and metabolic health seriously.

☐

Persistent fatigue, even after a full night's sleep

☐

Brain fog or difficulty concentrating during the day

☐

Joint or muscle aches without an obvious cause

☐

Skin issues — breakouts, eczema, or unusual dryness

☐

Stubborn weight, especially around the abdomen

☐

Digestive symptoms — bloating, irregularity, discomfort

☐

Frequent colds or slow recovery from minor illness

☐

Low mood or increased irritability

☐

Poor-quality or unrefreshing sleep





6 Everyday Drivers of Inflammation



Diet

Excess sugar, refined carbs, ultra-processed food, and poor-quality fats



Sleep

Poor quality or insufficient sleep, and undiagnosed sleep apnoea



Movement

Sedentary days and lack of regular physical activity



Stress

Chronic, unmanaged stress and sustained cortisol elevation



Gut Health

An imbalanced gut microbiome and poor gut-barrier integrity



Environment

Everyday exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals and toxins



Simple Food Swaps That Help

You don't need to overhaul everything at once. Start with a few of these.

REDUCE

REPLACE WITH

Sugary breakfast cereal or pastries



Eggs, plain yoghurt, or chia seed pudding with berries

Margarine or refined vegetable oil



Extra-virgin olive oil, avocado or real butter

White bread, rice, or pasta



Wholegrain or legume-based alternatives

Fruit juice or soft drinks



Water, herbal tea, infusions, or whole fruit

Processed deli meats



Oily fish, chicken, or plant-based proteins

Packaged sweet snacks



Nuts, seeds, or fresh fruit

Frequent alcohol



Reduced intake, more alcohol-free days





Your Anti-Inflammatory Checklist

Small, achievable actions across all six lifestyle pillars. Tick as you go.

DIET

- ☐ Add one oily fish meal this week
- ☐ Swap one refined-carb meal for a wholegrain option
- ☐ Add a serving of vegetables to lunch and dinner

SLEEP

- ☐ Set a consistent bedtime, even on weekends
- ☐ Screens off 30 minutes before bed
- ☐ Ask your doctor about snoring or daytime fatigue

MOVEMENT

- ☐ Walk for 20 minutes, most days
- ☐ Add two short strength or HIIT sessions this week

STRESS

- ☐ Try 5 minutes of slow breathing daily
- ☐ Protect one screen-free wind-down hour each evening

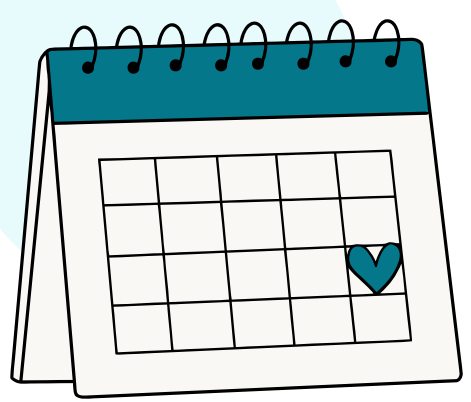
GUT HEALTH

- ☐ Add a fermented food (yoghurt, kefir, sauerkraut)
- ☐ Include a prebiotic fibre source (onion, garlic, oats)

ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Swap one plastic container for glass or steel
- ☐ Choose fragrance-free personal care for one product





Your 7-Day Starter Plan

One gentle nudge a day. No rigid rules — just small, stacking changes.

1

Swap sugar in your tea or coffee for cinnamon, or simply use less

2

Add one fermented or prebiotic food to a meal

3

Take a 20-minute walk, ideally outdoors

4

Swap one plastic container or bottle for glass or steel

5

Try 5 minutes of slow, deep breathing before bed

6

Add a portion of oily fish or plant protein for dinner

7

Reflect: which change felt easiest? Keep it going next week



You Don't Need to Do It All at Once

Chronic inflammation builds up slowly, over years — and it comes down the same way. Pick one or two changes from this handbook and start there. Small, consistent shifts in how you eat, sleep, move, and manage stress add up to real, measurable change in how you feel.

Want structured, step-by-step support?

My Nutrition Basics PLUS programme walks you through the same evidence-based, anti-inflammatory foundations covered in this handbook — with meal guidance, practical tools, and ongoing support to help the changes stick.

[Learn More at **lifestyledoc.co.za**](https://lifestyledoc.co.za)

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This handbook is for educational purposes and does not replace individualised medical advice.