

Understanding Linoleic Acid & Inflammation

Linoleic acid (LA) is an omega-6 fatty acid found in many common vegetable and seed oils. It is considered an essential fat, meaning the body needs small amounts. However, modern diets often contain significantly higher amounts than in previous generations. When consumed in excess—especially relative to omega-3 fats—higher linoleic acid intake may:

- Contribute to an imbalance in inflammatory signaling
- Increase susceptibility to oxidative stress (wear-and-tear at the cellular level)
- Support low-grade, chronic inflammation in some individuals

The goal is not elimination—but balance. Reducing ultra-processed foods and being mindful of common high-LA oils may help lower overall inflammatory load.

Foods Highest in Linoleic Acid (Ranked by Typical Content)

Category	Food Source	Relative Linoleic Acid Content
Very High	Safflower oil (high-LA type)	Very High
Very High	Sunflower oil (traditional)	Very High
Very High	Soybean oil	Very High
Very High	Corn oil	Very High
Very High	Grapeseed oil	Very High
High	Walnuts	High
High	Sunflower seeds	High
High	Pumpkin seeds	High
High	Pine nuts	High
Moderate	Canola oil	Moderate
Moderate	Sesame oil	Moderate
Moderate	Conventional chicken (with skin)	Moderate
Moderate	Pork	Moderate

Practical Tip: Focus on whole foods, reduce ultra-processed snacks and fried foods, and consider balancing omega-6 intake with omega-3 rich foods such as wild-caught fatty fish. If you have questions about how this applies to your specific health goals, feel free to discuss at your next visit.