How to Know if Your Body Is in an Anti-Inflammatory or Pro-Inflammatory State

By Robert Ferguson

This article was written to help you understand what it really means to have your body in a **pro-inflammatory** or **anti-inflammatory** state, and why that difference can determine how you **feel, heal, age**, and your **risk for chronic diseases** (e.g., heart disease, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, dementia, and autoimmune conditions).

To make this concept easy to grasp, I'll share the truth about two popular supplements, **borage oil** and **evening primrose oil**, which are often promoted as being "anti-inflammatory." The reality is that, for many people, these supplements can actually exacerbate inflammation.

Ultimately, the goal is straightforward: to determine whether your body is in an **anti-inflammatory** or **pro-inflammatory** state. And the best way to do that is through the **BalanceTest**, which measures your **arachidonic acid (AA) to eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)** ratio and your **dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid (DGLA) to arachidonic acid (AA)** ratio - two key markers that tell you exactly where your body stands. With that knowledge, there's no guessing, only clarity.

Pro-Inflammatory vs. Anti-Inflammatory: What It Really Means

Think of inflammation as your body's internal "fire alarm." When you get injured or sick, your immune system triggers an alarm to heal and protect you. That's *good* inflammation, temporary and necessary.

A **pro-inflammatory state**, however, is when that alarm never turns off. Your body stays slightly "on fire" all the time. This can damage your cells and tissues, making you more likely to develop chronic problems like **high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, or brain fog**.

An **anti-inflammatory state**, on the other hand, means your body's internal fire is under control. Your cells are flexible and calm, communication between hormones (like insulin) works smoothly, and your body can repair itself efficiently. In this state, you're more likely to feel energetic, think clearly, and maintain a healthy weight, blood pressure, and metabolism.

You can't see inflammation, but you can **measure it**. That's where the **BalanceTest** comes in. This is where I'm **excited and eager** to help everyone who is health-conscious get tested.

Unfortunately, it's not yet common practice for doctors to offer this kind of test. However, every doctor I share it with appreciates its value, many now use it themselves, and some are beginning to offer it to their patients.

Simply put, the BalanceTest reveals the state your body is in - **pro-inflammatory** or **anti-inflammatory** - providing you with the clarity you need to take action. Once you know your numbers, you can make the right changes to help your body **thrive in an anti-inflammatory state** and enjoy better health, energy, and longevity.

Two Clients, Two Common Misunderstandings

A few weeks ago, one of my clients, **Amy**, asked about taking **borage oil**. When I asked her, *"Why?"*, she said she'd heard it could help with **hormonal imbalances, skin conditions, and joint inflammation**. Another client, **Susan**, wanted to try **evening primrose oil** to ease **menopausal symptoms**.

Both Amy and Susan had good intentions, but what neither of them knew was that these oils, often believed to be healthy, are actually **high in linoleic acid**, a type of **omega-6 fat** found in seed oils (e.g., soybean, safflower, sunflower, grapeseed, and corn oil). When consumed in excess, linoleic acid can disrupt the body's fatty acid balance and make inflammation worse.

When I explained what happens inside the body, how these supplements can shift the body into a **pro-inflammatory state**, it became clear that this wasn't what either of them wanted. After all, no one wants their body stuck in inflammation. The ultimate goal is to bring the body into an **anti-inflammatory state**, where it can function more effectively, heal faster, and support overall health.

That experience with Amy and Susan reminded me just how much confusion there still is around what helps or harms inflammation. Most people who take supplements like **borage oil** or **evening primrose oil** genuinely believe they're doing something good for their health, and under the right conditions, these oils *can* indeed have beneficial effects. However, the key is understanding **when** and **how** they work, as well as what needs to be in place for them to support an anti-inflammatory state rather than fuel inflammation.

Why People Take Borage Oil or Evening Primrose Oil

For decades, **borage oil** and **evening primrose oil (EPO)** have been popular because they contain **gamma-linolenic acid (GLA),** an omega-6 fatty acid that can have *anti-inflammatory* effects when the body is in balance.

GLA is special because, when it's used properly, it converts into **dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid (DGLA),** a compound that helps your body make *Series-1 prostaglandins*. These compounds help calm inflammation, relax blood vessels, and support the health of the skin, nerves, and hormones.

That's why these oils are often promoted for:

✅ Easing **premenstrual (PMS)** and **menopausal** symptoms
✅ Supporting **joint comfort** (like in mild arthritis)
✅ Helping with **eczema** and **skin dryness**
✅ Supporting **nerve health**, especially in **diabetic neuropathy**

The intent behind these supplements is good; they aim to boost GLA and promote an anti-inflammatory effect.

The Hidden Problem

Here's what most people don't realize: while both borage and evening primrose oil provide GLA, most of their fat content is **linoleic acid (LA)**, the same omega-6 fat already *overconsumed* in modern diets.

Oil	Linoleic Acid (LA)	Gamma-Linolenic Acid (GLA)
Evening Primrose Oil	~70–74%	~8–10%
Borage Oil	~35–40%	~20–25%

That means every capsule delivers much more linoleic acid than beneficial GLA.

If your diet is already high in omega-6 fats (from foods cooked in soybean, corn, safflower, or sunflower oil), adding these supplements can exacerbate the issue. This excess linoleic acid can:

- Convert into **arachidonic acid (AA),** a *pro-inflammatory* compound
- Lower your **dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid (DGLA) to arachidonic acid (AA)** ratio, tipping your body toward inflammation
- Crowd out **omega-3 fats,** including **eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)** and **docosahexaenoic acid (DHA),** from your cell membranes

So even though these oils sound helpful, the **linoleic acid burden wins**, keeping your body in a pro-inflammatory state.

When Borage or Primrose Might Actually Help

GLA-rich oils might only help if your body is already balanced, meaning you have:

- **Optimal omega-3 levels (EPA + DHA)**
- A **low omega-6 to omega-3 ratio** (around 3:1 or better)
- **Stable insulin levels**, because high insulin converts DGLA into AA

If you are set on supplementing with borage or evening primrose oil, it's important to first know your current inflammatory status. If you're already in a **pro-inflammatory state**, both oils may exacerbate the problem instead of alleviating it.

How to Get the Benefits Without the Linoleic Acid Load

The good news is that you can enjoy **the same benefits people hope to get from borage or evening primrose oil,** like better hormone balance, skin health, and reduced inflammation, **without flooding your body with more linoleic acid (LA)**.

Here's how to do it naturally and safely:

1. Omega-3 Fatty Acids (EPA and DHA)

These are the foundations for an anti-inflammatory state. Omega-3s lower **arachidonic acid (AA)**, help preserve **dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid (DGLA)**, and improve both the **DGLA/AA** and **AA/EPA** ratios. This allows your body to produce more calming, anti-inflammatory compounds.

The best sources are clean marine omega-3s in their natural triglyceride form, such as **BalanceOil+**, which combines omega-3s with protective polyphenols for better absorption and stability.

2. Polyphenols

Polyphenols - found in olives, berries, herbs, and certain vegetables - help protect fatty acids from oxidation and regulate inflammation-related enzymes. They act as natural "bodyguards" for your omega-3s and improve their effectiveness in keeping your cells healthy and flexible.

3. Anti-Inflammatory Diet

A Mediterranean-style diet rich in **fish, avocados, olive oil, nuts, fruits, and colorful vegetables** naturally supports your body's ability to stay in an anti-inflammatory state. This kind of eating pattern helps balance the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio without adding more seed oils.

4. Nutrients That Support Fat Metabolism

Key nutrients, such as **magnesium**, **zinc**, and **vitamin B6,** help your body utilize fatty acids effectively. They influence whether DGLA stays in its anti-inflammatory form or converts into arachidonic acid (AA), which fuels inflammation. Ensuring you get enough of these nutrients helps maintain balance and keeps your fatty acid pathways working as they should.

Why Testing Matters

By focusing on these steps, you give your body the tools it needs to naturally calm inflammation and restore internal balance. But here's the key: even when you're eating well and taking the

right supplements, it's impossible to know your true inflammation status without measuring it. That's why testing is so important. The **BalanceTest** takes the guesswork out by showing exactly where your fatty acid ratios stand, revealing whether your body is currently in a **pro-inflammatory** or **anti-inflammatory** state.

Understanding Your Ratios

There are two main fatty acid ratios that reveal whether your body is in an **anti-inflammatory** or **pro-inflammatory** state.

1. The Arachidonic Acid (AA) to Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA) Ratio, Your Global Inflammation Gauge

This ratio compares **arachidonic acid (AA)**, the main pro-inflammatory omega-6, to **eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)**, the main anti-inflammatory omega-3.

AA/EPA Ratio	Meaning	Inflammation Level
1.5 – 3.0	Ideal / anti-inflammatory	Excellent cellular balance
3.1 – 5.0	Borderline	Early imbalance
5.1 – 9.0	Elevated	Chronic inflammation forming
> 9.0	High	Linked to disease risk and metabolic dysfunction

Goal: Maintain an **AA/EPA ratio below 3.0** for optimal control of inflammation.

2. The Dihomo-Gamma-Linolenic Acid (DGLA) to Arachidonic Acid (AA) Ratio, Your Omega-6 Pathway Balance

This ratio compares **dihomo-gamma-linolenic acid (DGLA)**, anti-inflammatory, to **arachidonic acid (AA),** pro-inflammatory. It shows how your *omega-6 fats* are functioning inside your cells.

DGLA/AA Ratio	Meaning	Inflammation Level
≥ 0.15	Excellent	Anti-inflammatory balance
0.10 – 0.14	Borderline	Early inflammation
< 0.10	Poor	Pro-inflammatory dominance

Goal: Keep your **DGLA/AA ratio above 0.15** to stay in an anti-inflammatory state.

How to Test and Restore Balance

The **BalanceTest**, a simple at-home dried blood spot test, measures both your **AA/EPA** and **DGLA/AA** ratios. It shows whether your cells are in a **pro-inflammatory** or **anti-inflammatory** state.

When you take **BalanceOil+** daily, you support a healthy omega-6 to omega-3 ratio, help calm inflammation, and maintain soft and flexible cell membranes - the foundation for long-term health and energy.

The beauty of testing is that there's **no guessing**. You can accurately assess your physical status and implement specific modifications that yield effective results.

The Bottom Line

This article was written to educate and empower you to understand your body's inflammation balance. Supplements like **borage oil** and **evening primrose oil** are often promoted as beneficial, but in many cases, they may contribute to inflammation if your body is already out of balance.

Before taking them, it's essential to know your **AA/EPA** and **DGLA/AA** ratios through a **BalanceTest**. If your results indicate that you're in a **pro-inflammatory state**, adding these oils may exacerbate the issue. But if you're in an **anti-inflammatory state**, your body can handle and use them more effectively.

Knowing your true balance eliminates the guesswork from your health and empowers you to create lasting change from the inside out.

If you would like to take your BalanceTest to determine if you are in a pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory state, please contact the person who shared this article, schedule a free consultation, or email me at robert@dietfreelife.com to learn more.

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About the Author

Robert Ferguson is a California- and Florida-based single father of two daughters, clinical nutritionist, Omega Balancing Coach™, researcher, best-selling author, speaker, podcast and television host, health advisor, NAACP Image Award Nominee, creator of the Diet Free Life methodology, and Chief Nutrition Officer for iCoura Health. He also serves on the Presidential Task Force on Obesity for the National Medical Association and the Health and Product Advisory Board for Zinzino, Inc.