

# Eating the Mediterranean way



**NUTRITION AND COOKING**



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## Meet your presenter



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This information is provided for educational purposes only. It is not to be used for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns. Consult your doctor before beginning any new diet or exercise regimen.

# Agenda

- 01 | The guiding principles of the Mediterranean diet
- 02 | Research-based benefits of the diet
- 03 | Tips for getting started



# The Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet is based on the food choices and cooking styles of nations bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

The diet started over 50 years ago when researchers began noticing these countries' rate of chronic disease were among the lowest in the world.

Now, the Mediterranean diet is a popular eating pattern and lifestyle, offering flexibility and loose guidelines with lots of potential health benefits.







## Potential benefits

Consistently eating Mediterranean-style foods may have many health benefits.

### **Research indicates that following the Mediterranean diet may help:**

- Improve sleep<sup>1</sup>
- Reduce inflammation to help fight diseases and decrease risk for cancer<sup>2</sup>
- Increase longevity<sup>3</sup>
- Improve brain and heart health<sup>4,5</sup>
- Support healthy vision<sup>6</sup>
- Boost mental health<sup>7</sup>



Tips for getting  
started







## Eat lots of fruits and veggies

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables may help reduce the risk of heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.

**How much is enough?** Aim for 3 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables per day, but research shows 10 servings may help even more!<sup>8</sup>

**Which types are best?** There's no single fruit or vegetable that provides all the nutrients you need, so eat a variety of different types.



# Choose whole grains

Whole grains are loaded with nutrients, including heart-healthy fiber. They contain all three parts of the grain: the bran, the germ and the endosperm.

## Here's what you need to know about whole grains:



**They are rich in fiber.** Insoluble fiber helps keep your digestive system moving. Soluble fiber helps block cholesterol and fats from being absorbed.



**How much is enough?** Aim for 3-6 servings of whole grains per day. One serving is equal to ½ cup of cooked oats, rice or pasta, one slice of bread, or one ounce of cereal.



**Read the list of ingredients on the package.** The word 'whole' or 'whole grain' should be listed as the first ingredient.

**Note:** Whole grains cannot always be identified just by looking at the color of the food. Some manufacturers add ingredients to make bread brown, even though they aren't whole grain.



## Use olive oil for cooking

Olive oil contains heart-healthy MUFAs, or monounsaturated fats.

**Good news:** Olive oil may help reduce ‘bad’ LDL cholesterol and improve how well ‘good’ HDL cholesterol works.<sup>9</sup>

**How much olive oil is recommended?** Try to get least 1 tablespoon, but no more than 4 tablespoons per day.

**Which type of olive oil is best?** Extra-virgin and virgin olive oil is best. These oils are the least processed and contain the most antioxidants.







## Rethink meat

The Mediterranean diet uses red meat sparingly, focusing on poultry and other sources of protein instead.

**Consider these tips for reducing meat:**

**Limit red meat.** Eat no more than one 3-ounce serving per week.

**Choose poultry instead.** Aim for three 3-ounce servings per week.

**Keep it lean.** Look for lean cuts of chicken, turkey, and red meat.

**Cooking method matters.** Bake, broil, or grill rather than frying.



## Substitute seafood

Fatty fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may help protect the heart. In fact, eating 1-2 servings of fish per week could reduce your risk of dying of a heart attack.<sup>10</sup>

### Incorporate more fish with these tips:



**Omega-3's help reduce inflammation.** Inflammation can damage blood vessels and lead to heart disease and stroke.



**How much is enough?** Aim for at least two servings of fatty fish per week. One serving is equal to about 3.5 ounces, or about the size of a deck of cards.



**Some fish are better than others.** Salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, and tuna contain the most omega-3's.

**Note:** Seafood is a common food allergy. If you are allergic to seafood, talk to your healthcare provider to find our alternative ways to get the nutrients you need.



## Switch to legumes

Eating legumes – beans, peas, and lentils – as part of a healthy diet may help improve blood cholesterol.<sup>11</sup>

Legumes are high in protein and fiber, making them an excellent substitute for meat – plus, they're loaded with vitamins and minerals.

**Caution:** Watch out for excess sodium!

Be sure to drain and rinse canned beans to remove excess salt, or buy canned beans with no salt added.







## Nosh on nuts

Nuts are rich in heart-healthy nutrients, including arginine, which helps relax blood vessels and ease blood flow.<sup>12</sup>

**Here's what you need to know about nuts:**

**Incorporate a variety of options.** Almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts are among the healthiest nuts – and walnuts have omega-3's.

**Keep servings small.** Nuts are high in calories – one serving is equal to a small handful, or two tablespoons of nut butter.



# Watch out for sodium

Consuming too much sodium may cause your heart to work harder and damage your arteries. Over time, it may lead to heart disease, stroke, heart failure, and high blood pressure.<sup>13</sup>

## Use these tips to help reduce sodium in your diet:



**Avoid processed foods.** Most sodium in the American diet comes from processed food. Choose fresh, whole foods instead.



**Don't add salt at the table.** Avoid sprinkling salt on your food – especially before tasting it. Start by keeping the saltshaker off the dinner table.



**Use other ways to season your food.** Herbs and spices can be used in place of salt in many dishes.

**Note:** When choosing packaged foods, compare labels. Different brands and versions of the same foods may have different sodium levels.





## Know how to hydrate

Staying well-hydrated helps your heart more easily pump blood through the blood vessels.

Even mild dehydration can affect how well your blood vessels work – nearly as much as smoking a cigarette.<sup>14</sup>

**Note:** A moderate amount of red wine is part of the Mediterranean diet, but ask your healthcare provider if it's okay for you.



Let's review!





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