



MedStar Good Samaritan
Hospital

All Roads Lead to the Mediterranean Diet



Presenter: Jessica DeCostole, MS, RD, LDN, CDE



Mediterranean Diet: The Basics

- Eating primarily plant-based foods
 - fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts
- Replacing saturated fat with healthy fats
 - olive oil and canola oil
- Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods
- Limiting red meat



Mediterranean Diet: The Basics (cont.)

- Eating fish and poultry at least twice a week
- Enjoying meals with family and friends
- Drinking red wine in moderation (optional)
- Getting plenty of exercise



Mediterranean Diet: Why all the Hype?

- **Decreasing risk of type 2 diabetes.** A Mediterranean diet is rich in fiber which digests slowly, prevents variances in blood sugar, and can help maintain healthy weight.
- **Preventing heart disease and strokes.** Following a Mediterranean diet limits intake of refined and processed food and meats, and encourages drinking red wine instead of hard liquor—all factors that can help prevent heart disease and stroke.
- **Keeping you moving.** If you're an older adult, the nutrients gained with a Mediterranean diet may reduce your risk of developing muscle weakness and other signs of frailty by about 70 percent.



Mediterranean Diet: Why all the Hype? (cont.)

- **Reducing the risk of Alzheimer's.** Research suggests that the Mediterranean diet may improve cholesterol, blood sugar levels, and overall blood vessel health, which in turn may reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease or dementia.
- **Cutting the risk of Parkinson's disease.** The high levels of antioxidants in the Mediterranean diet may help prevent oxidative stress, thereby decreasing the risk of Parkinson's disease.
- **Increasing longevity.** By reducing your risk of developing heart disease or cancer with the Mediterranean diet, you're reducing your risk of death at any age by 20%.



The Myths You Need to Know

- **Myth 1: It costs a lot of money.**
 - **Fact:** Beans and lentils (hallmarks of the diet) are less expensive than most processed foods.

- **Myth 2: If one glass of wine is good for your heart, then three glasses is three times as healthy.**
 - **Fact:** Moderate amounts of red wine (one drink a day for women; two for men) certainly has unique health benefits for your heart, but drinking too much has the opposite effect.



The Myths You Need to Know (cont.)

- **Myth 3: Italians eat a lot of pasta and bread.**
 - **Fact:** Typically, Mediterraneans don't eat a huge plate of pasta the way Americans do. Instead, pasta is usually a side dish with about a 1/2-cup to 1-cup serving size. The rest of their plate consists of salads, vegetables, fish or a small portion of organic, grass-fed meat, and perhaps one slice of bread.
- **Myth 4: The Mediterranean diet is only about the food.**
 - **Fact:** The food is a huge part of the diet, yes, but don't overlook the other ways the Mediterraneans live their lives. When they sit down for a meal, they don't sit in front of a television or eat in a rush; they sit down for a relaxed, leisurely meal with others and also enjoy plenty of physical activity.



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Quick Ways to Start Eating the Mediterranean Way

Eat this:



Instead of that:





References

- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/study-supports-heart-benefits-from-mediterranean-style-diets-201302255930>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/mediterranean-diet-beats-low-fat-diet-for-long-term-weight-loss>
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