

What is the Mediterranean Diet?

It is based on the diets and cuisine of a region of people, who have been shown to live longer and have fewer diseases. It is a well-rounded way of eating that emphasizes plant-based foods and healthy fats. There is no one “diet” so you can change it up to suit your needs, likes and dislikes. It is all about balance and not focusing on single foods.

The Mediterranean Diet has many benefits

Benefits include lower risk of heart disease, as well as supporting a healthy body weight, supporting healthy blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Foods typically eaten are anti-inflammatory so they can reduce arthritis complications like bone fracture and disability. The fiber improves digestion and overall gut health. It can even lower risk of certain cancers, especially breast, colon, and prostate cancer. It also has been shown to improve brain health and people tend to have lower rates of depression.

What foods can I eat?

- Fruits and vegetables; the more colorful the better.
- Beans and legumes instead of red meat.
- Nuts, but avoid honey roasted, sugar coated, or heavily salted.
- Whole grains like whole wheat bread, brown rice, steel cut oatmeal, quinoa, and popcorn (not buttered).
- Extra virgin olive oil as a healthy fat.
- Moderate amounts of fish high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, albacore tuna, or mackerel (avoid fried fish).
- Moderate amounts of cheese and yogurt.
- Little to no red meat; eat chicken or turkey instead.
- Little to no sweets, sugary drinks, or butter.
- Moderate amount of red wine with meals (no more than 5 ounces for women and 10 ounces for men). If you do not drink alcohol, do not start.
- Use herbs and lemon to season foods rather than salt.

What about physical activity and exercise?

Physical activity and exercise are not “all or nothing”. Even small steps can make a big difference. Get outside, enjoy time with friends, and get regular exercise. This is part of living healthier the Mediterranean way!