

The Mediterranean Diet

An eating plan for a healthful lifestyle



Overview

- What is the Mediterranean diet?
- What is included in the diet, and why is it so healthy?
- Summary
- Resources and questions

What is the Mediterranean Diet?

- A healthful eating plan
- Practiced by those in the Mediterranean Sea region



What is the Mediterranean Diet?

- This dietary pattern was “discovered” by researchers in the 1940s.
- They noticed that the people of the Mediterranean were living long healthy lives, and did not have as much heart disease as Americans.
- After studying the health of men in seven different countries, researchers discovered that the differences in diet and physical activity were the reason for differences in rates of heart disease.

What is included in the
Mediterranean diet?



The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

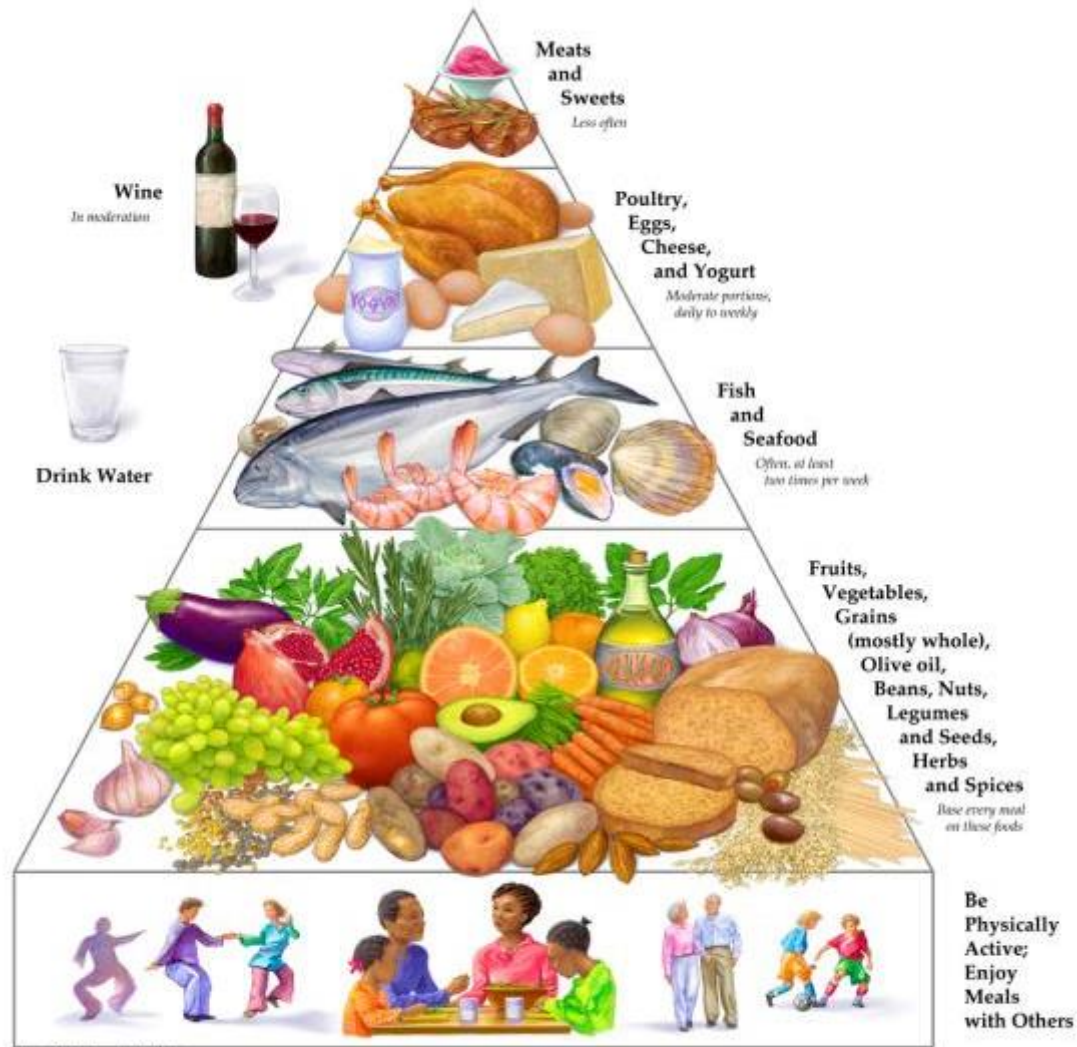
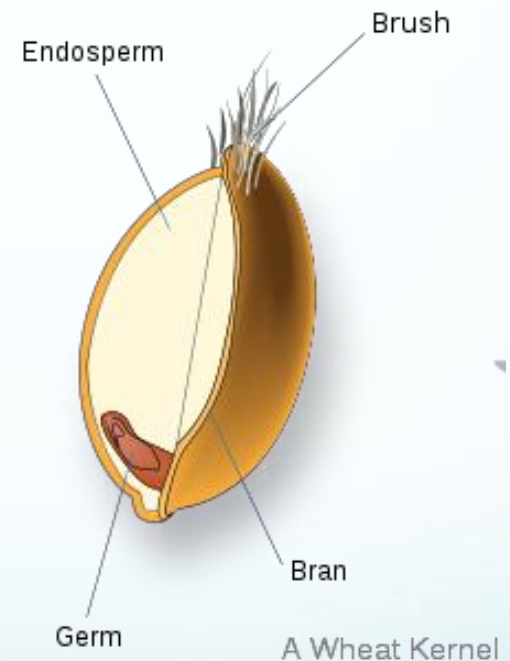


Illustration by George Middleton

© 2009 Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust • www.oldwayspt.org

Whole Grains

- Includes all parts of the grain – the bran, the endosperm, and the germ.
- Provide nutrients
 - Fiber
 - B vitamins
 - Minerals – magnesium, iron, selenium



Whole Grains

- Eating whole grains is associated with lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and can help maintain blood sugar levels and a healthy weight.
- The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggests that adult make at least half of their grains whole grains.



Whole Grains



- Tips to increase whole grains
 1. Swap out half of your regular pasta for whole grain pasta
 2. Add grains such as brown rice or barley to soups or casseroles
 3. Look for “whole wheat” in the ingredient list of foods
 4. Try using whole wheat flour instead of white flour when baking
 5. Have oatmeal or whole grain cereal for breakfast to help you stay full

Fruits and Vegetables

- High in nutrients and low in calories
- Eating a wide variety provides vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants for health
- A diet high in fruits and vegetables is associated with a lower risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, and obesity





Fruits and Vegetables

- Adults should consume 2 ½ cups of vegetables a day and 2 cups of fruit a day
- Tips to increase consumption
 1. Buy pre-cut fruits and veggies or cut up your own to have a convenient snack on hand
 2. Add cut fruit or berries to your morning bowl of cereal, oatmeal, or yogurt
 3. Add a bag of frozen mixed vegetables to soup, chili, casseroles, or stir-fry
 4. Select a variety of fruits and veggies to get different colors, tastes, textures, and nutrients
 5. Fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies first

Beans, nuts, and seeds

- A good source of protein, healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals
- The protein, iron, and zinc in beans makes them a good substitute for meat
- Including beans, nuts, and seeds in your diet can lower your bad cholesterol, reduce your risk for heart disease, and help maintain a healthy weight



Beans, nuts, and seeds

- Tips to increase consumption
 1. Swap out meat for beans as the main component of your meal at least once a week
 2. Spread peanut butter on an apple or whole wheat crackers for a filling snack
 3. Sprinkle sesame seeds on your stir-fry or salad
 4. Eat a handful of nuts as a quick snack
 5. Use hummus as a spread on sandwiches or as a dip for veggies
 6. Add beans to soups, chili, pasta dishes, or even cold in salads



Olive Oil



- The main source of fat in the Mediterranean diet
- High in heart healthy monounsaturated fat and low in saturated fat
- Can raise good cholesterol and lower bad cholesterol
- Helps the body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K better
- Olive oil consumption is linked to lower rates of heart disease and breast cancer

Olive Oil

- The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggests adults consume about 5 teaspoons of oils a day at the 2,000-calorie level.
- Tips
 1. Choose Extra Virgin Olive Oil for the most health benefits
 2. Use olive oil to cook vegetables, meat, or fish
 3. Drizzle over fresh veggies or salad
 4. Substitute olive oil for butter when baking



Seafood



- Seafood includes fish and shellfish
- A good source of protein that is lower in saturated fat than meat
- Contain healthy fats
 - Omega-3s

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends two servings (8 ounces) of fish per week.

Seafood



- Tips to increase consumption
 1. Make one night of the week fish night, where you eat fish for dinner instead of another meat
 2. Try different varieties of seafood to experience different flavors, textures, and types
 3. Make fish flavorful – try different seasonings: spicy Cajun, Italian pesto, Asian soy and sesame, or simple lemon and herb
 4. Fish and shellfish can be grilled, baked, sauteed, or sometimes raw – as in ceviche!

Dairy



- Cheese and yogurt
- In moderate amounts
 - Small amounts daily or medium amounts a few times a week
 - The recommended serving size of cheese is 1 ounce
 - The recommended serving size of yogurt is 1 cup
- Choose low-fat options

Poultry and Eggs

- Eaten in low to moderate amounts each week
- Good sources of protein that are lower in saturated fat than most meats
- A serving of chicken is 3 ounces, or about the size of a deck of cards
- One egg is about one ounce



Meat and Sweets

- Meat includes beef, lamb, and pork
 - Choose lean cuts and eat small portions (3 oz.)
 - Eat meat less often
- Sweets are enjoyed as an occasional treat, and in small portions
 - Often, fresh fruit is enjoyed for dessert as a naturally sweet treat



Red Wine



- The main type of alcohol in the diet
- Has antioxidants
 - Heart healthy resveratrol
- Enjoyed with meals
- In moderate amounts
 - One 5-ounce glass per day for women
 - Up to two 5-ounce glasses per day for men

Herbs and Spices

- To season food
 - Can be used in place of salt
- Adds color and flavor
- Fresh herbs include oregano, basil, thyme, rosemary, mint, parsley, sage
- Spices such as pepper, cumin, cloves, and garlic add interest and a depth of flavor to many dishes



Physical Activity & Water

- Daily activity
 - Moderate: walking, gardening, cleaning the house
 - Vigorous: Running, biking, hiking, swimming
- Aim for 150 minutes per week, or 30 minutes on most days, of moderate intensity physical activity
- Water is important for hydration, especially during exercise



Summary



- The Mediterranean diet is about enjoying a variety of healthful foods from all the food groups
- It is important to participate in some kind of physical activity every day
- Enjoy meals with friends and family



Resources

- www.ext.colostate.edu
- www.choosemyplate.gov
- www.oldwayspt.org
- www.mayoclinic.com