

Getting Started with the Mediterranean Diet

What is the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean diet is a lifestyle meant to promote health so you feel and operate your best, for years to come. The Mediterranean diet is not about specific recipes, but rather is a guide for how to eat. The Mediterranean diet is not specifically designed for weight loss, although many people do lose weight by following this diet.

Why should I follow the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean diet is proven to prevent heart disease in the general population. Also, the Mediterranean diet may be the best diet for you if you have diabetes. This diet has been shown to lower A1C (a measure of blood sugar). The impact of this diet on blood sugar may be as much or more than most diabetes medications! Research suggests that this diet also lowers your risk of getting Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and dying from cancer.

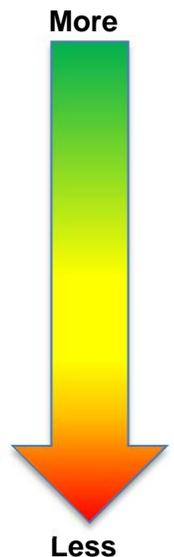
Where do I start?

Start by finding small changes that interest you. Then slowly work in more changes. It may be easier to make a permanent change to your grocery shopping and meals if you have an eating plan that works for the whole family – kids too!

Understand what foods to eat and what foods to limit.

The Mediterranean diet includes eating many servings of fruits and vegetables and limiting less healthy foods, such as red meat, sweets, white bread, and soda.

Food	Guidance
Fruits, Vegetables, Whole Grains, Olive Oil, Beans, Nuts, Legumes (lentils, chickpeas, peas), Seeds, and Herbs	Eat daily
Fish and Seafood	Eat often, at least two times per week
Chicken, eggs, low fat cheese, and yogurt	Eat moderate portions, daily to weekly
Dark/Red Meat, High Fat Dairy (butter, ice cream), Refined Carbohydrates (sweets, white bread, regular pasta, rice, baked goods, soda)	Eat weekly or less



Where do I get more information?

Hopefully this information has made you excited to try the Mediterranean diet! However there is a lot to learn and it is important to have good information to make lifelong changes.

Nutrition Experts

It may help you to meet with an expert, especially if you have diabetes. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to help you meet with a dietician, Certified Diabetes Educator or member of your primary care provider's Community Health Team. They will have lots of resources to help you manage your diet.

Books

- The Mediterranean Heart Diet by Helen V. Fisher and Cynthia Thomson
- Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating by M.D. Walter C. Willett and P.J. Skerrett

Trustworthy websites

- Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>
- Oldways: <http://oldwayspt.org/>