

Health tip: Eating Mediterranean



The Mediterranean Diet is modeled after the eating styles of adults living in certain regions bordering the Mediterranean Sea, where rates of chronic disease are among the lowest in the world.¹ In fact, research shows that the presence of heart disease seems to be lower among people living in Italy, Greece, and other countries around the Mediterranean, compared to those living in the United States. These studies suggest that diet may play a role.²

The traditional Mediterranean diet is characterized by a high intake of olive oil, fruit, nuts, vegetables, and whole grains; a moderate intake of fish and poultry; a low intake of dairy products, red meat, processed meats, and sweets; and wine in moderation, consumed with meals.

More than a diet and more of a lifestyle, the Mediterranean Diet focuses on

- Plenty of exercise
- Mostly plant-based meals
- Limiting red meat consumption, instead focusing on increasing fish intake
- Moderate healthy fats, particularly olive oil and nuts/seeds
- Use of herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor food
- Serving fresh fruit for dessert
- Drinking wine in moderation



Practical tips to make your diet more “Mediterranean.”

- Increase your day-to-day activity such as taking the stairs, standing/walking during phone calls, and planning physical outings.
- Substitute beans for meat, snack on nuts instead of chips, and try having Greek yogurt with nuts or fruit for dessert.
- Swap butter and refined seed oils for olive oil in cooking, use hummus, tahini, nut butter or mashed avocado on a sandwich/wrap, instead of mayonnaise or cheese.
- Make meat your side and vegetables your main course such as adding meat into a stir fry; use canned and water-packed tuna or salmon for a quick and easy way to increase fish intake.
- Enjoy a 5 oz. glass of red wine with dinner, if you don't drink, there is no need to start, having a glass of concord grape juice provides you with the similar health benefits.

¹ Mayo Clinic; Mediterranean diet: A heart-healthy eating plan, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>, accessed August 2021.

² Healthline, “5 Studies on the Mediterranean Diet — Does it Work?”, <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/5-studies-on-the-mediterranean-diet>, accessed August 2021.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.