

# MEDITERRANEAN DIET

## FACTS

- This healthy diet is a plant-based diet with foods commonly prepared and eaten in the Mediterranean region.
- Multiple research studies have shown a reduced risk of chronic diseases in study participants who follow this diet.

## HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduced risk of developing:
  - Alzheimer's disease
  - Parkinson's disease
  - Heart attacks and strokes
  - Type 2 Diabetes

## MEDITERRANEAN DIET FOOD CHOICES

### Protein

- Eat fish twice a week, especially salmon, trout, and sardines.
- Choose boneless, skinless chicken and turkey.
- Limit red meat consumption. A serving size is 3-4oz, roughly the size of a deck of cards.
- Add quinoa, soy, and buckwheat for plant-based complete proteins.

### Vegetables

- Buy from a local farm. Local produce typically has more nutrients than food shipped from other regions of the country.
- Use frozen vegetables for out-of-season produce.
- Add a variety of nutrients by choosing vegetables of different colors.
- Crunchy vegetables make a great snack!

## **Fruit**

- Buy from a local farm. Local produce typically has more nutrients than food shipped from other regions of the country.
- Wash and cut fruit ahead of time to make it a grab-and-go snack.
- Fruit is a great way to satisfy a sweet tooth; as a bonus, drizzle with honey.
- Remember to add variety to capture different types of needed vitamins and minerals.

## **Grains**

- Choose whole grains, breads, and pastas. Processed white flour removes nutrients essential for healthy living.
- Read food labels and look for “whole grain.” Manufacturers may add molasses to make a product look like it is whole grain.
- Oats and quinoa are great additions to a healthy diet.

## **Legumes**

- Legumes, which include beans, peas, lentils, and nuts, contain protein and healthy fats.
- A variety of seeds, such as flax and sunflower, can be sprinkled on yogurt or salads.
- Try nuts instead of chips or cookies for a midday snack.

## **Beverages**

- Drink lots and lots of water, striving for six-to-eight 8oz cups per day.
- Avoid drinks containing sugar and artificial sweeteners.
- Drinks sweetened with stevia are a good choice.
- Flavor water with slices of strawberry, melon, cucumber, or other fruits.
- Follow recommended limitations for alcohol consumption.
- Read the website document Alcohol and Aging for more information.

## **Fats and oils**

- Use extra virgin olive oil, canola, avocado, or walnut oil instead of butter and margarine.

## **Dairy**



- Moderate amounts of low-fat dairy products are permitted, such as 1% milk, Greek yogurt, and feta and goat cheeses.

## **KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL DIET**

- Balance – Choosing foods from all the food groups listed below
- Variety – Choosing different foods from within the food group
- Moderation – Limiting the quantity of any one food or food group