

Eating the Mediterranean Way for Good Health and a Longer Life!

There are powerful health benefits to eating in the traditional way of people living around the Mediterranean Sea. This includes eating healthy foods, enjoying meals with others and having an active lifestyle.

How will I benefit from eating this way?

Eating the Mediterranean way can:

- ✓ Improve your blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugars
- ✓ Lower your chance of developing health problems including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers
- ✓ Lower your chance of having another heart attack
- ✓ Delay development of cognitive disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease



What is eating the Mediterranean way?

Meals involve food that is minimally processed and plant based.

Eating the Mediterranean way includes:

- Lots of foods from plants (fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes)
- Eating fish and seafood more often
- Choosing healthy fats such as olive oil, nuts, and seeds regularly
- Having dairy, poultry, and eggs in low to moderate amounts
- Having very little red meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal) and sweets
- Eating fruit is a common dessert instead of sweets

Research shows that this combination of foods makes it a healthy way to eat.

There is no 'right way' to do this. You can choose foods that you like, using the pyramid as your guide. Foods near the base of the pyramid and being active should be chosen every day. Foods closer to the top should be chosen less often. Make water your drink of choice.



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The 12 steps to eating the Mediterranean way

1

Cook at home more often

- Use fresh, whole food ingredients to make your favorite dishes.
- Avoid processed or prepared foods.
- Eat foods prepared in restaurants and grocery stores less often.

2

Eat fruits and vegetables every day

- Fruits and vegetables are packed with heart healthy nutrients like vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants. Antioxidants protect the cells in your body from damage that could lead to health problems.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day to lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, and some cancers.
- **TIP:** Fill half your plate with vegetables at lunch and dinner.
- **TIP:** Have fruit as dessert or as a snack.

	How much a day?	What is a serving?
Fruits 	3 or more servings	1 medium fruit ½ cup fruit
Vegetables 	5 or more servings	½ cup cooked, raw or frozen vegetables 1 cup leafy greens

3

Choose whole grains regularly

- Whole grains contain **insoluble fibre** that keeps your bowels regular and makes you feel full. Some whole grains also contain **soluble fibre** that helps lower cholesterol and manage blood sugar.
- **TIPS:** Choose a whole grain cereal like oatmeal for breakfast, instead of processed cereals. At main meals, fill at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with whole grains.
- **NOTE:** Energy needs are different from one person to another. Your dietitian will help you with the servings that you need.

Whole grains**One serving is:**

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup barley, farro, quinoa, bulgur, buckwheat, brown, or wild rice, freekeh

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked oatmeal (large flake or steel cut)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole grain pasta

1 slice 100% wholegrain bread

$\frac{1}{2}$ small whole grain pita or tortilla

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Have legumes at least 3 times a week

- Legumes are rich in fibre, vitamins, minerals and protein.
- Legumes contain soluble fibre that helps lower cholesterol and control blood sugar.
- Legumes can help control blood pressure because they are high in nutrients like magnesium and potassium.
- **TIPS:** Use legumes as an alternative to meat. Sprinkle them on salads, add them to soups or enjoy them as a healthy snack.

Legumes

Beans (kidney, navy, black, pinto, black-eyed peas), split peas, lentils, chickpeas, soybeans (tofu, tempeh and edamame)

One serving is: Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate. This is about 1 cup cooked legumes.

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Use olive oil to cook and flavour food

- Extra virgin olive oil is a high quality, healthy oil. Use extra virgin olive oil.
- **TIPS:** Dip whole grain bread into olive oil, instead of using butter. Brush fish or vegetables with olive oil before broiling or grilling.
- Your dietitian will review how much you need.

Healthy fats

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Enjoy nuts each week

- Nuts are a source of healthy fats. Eating them regularly can help lower cholesterol.
- Eating one portion of nuts 3 or more times a week (as part of eating the Mediterranean way) can lower the risk of heart events in people at risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Nuts

Portion size is important because nuts contain a lot of energy (calories).

**One serving is:**

1 oz dry roasted, raw, or unsalted nuts
(This is about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup or a small handful)

2 tablespoons of all natural nut butter (such as peanut or almond butter). Choose ones that are '100% nuts' with no other ingredients.

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Choose fish and seafood about 3 times a week

- Fish and seafood contain healthy fats, which help prevent heart disease.
- Choose fatty fish such as tuna, salmon, herring, and sardines.
- Choose seafood such as clams, scallops, oysters, and mussels

Fish and seafood



Choose fresh, frozen or canned.

Choose canned fish or seafood that is packed in water and labelled 'low sodium'.

One serving is: 3 oz cooked.

This is about the size of a deck of cards.

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Choose low fat milk or alternatives

- Milk products (such as milk, yogurt and cheese) and alternatives (such as soy beverage) contain calcium and vitamin D. Double-check the food label of milk alternatives that they contain calcium and vitamin D.
- Choose low sodium cheese if available.
- Your dietitian will help you with the servings that you need.

Milk and alternatives



One serving is:

1 cup (8 oz or 250 mL) of milk, or soy milk

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain kefir, yogurt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup ricotta or cottage cheese

1.5 oz part-skim cheese with 15 to 20% milk fat (MF)

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Limit red meat

- Plan your meals around foods from plants (such as vegetables, whole grains, and legumes) instead of meat.
- Use meat and poultry (chicken, turkey or duck) weekly, in moderation, to add flavour to vegetable dishes.

When you do eat meat Choose poultry more often than red meat (beef, pork, goat, veal and lamb).

Avoid processed meats such as sausages, bacon and deli meats.

One portion is: 3 oz cooked.

This is about the size of a deck of cards.

10

Flavor foods with tomatoes, garlic and onion at least 2 times a week

- This sauce is used to flavour fish, chicken, pasta, vegetable and rice dishes.
- This sauce is an important part of eating the Mediterranean way because it is high in antioxidants. Antioxidants protect the cells of your body from damage that could lead to health problems.
- To make this sauce, sauté tomatoes, garlic and onions (or leeks) in a little olive oil and voila!

Sofrito



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Eat less salt (sodium)

- Flavour foods with herbs and spices instead of salt. Use little or no salt when cooking. Do not add salt at the table.
- Use store-bought sauces and processed foods less often.
- Eat out less often. When you do eat at a restaurant, ask for food to be prepared without salt or have sauces and dressings on the side.

Choosing foods low in sodium

Check the label! Choose products marked:

'Low in sodium'

'No salt added'

'% Daily Value' of sodium is 5% or less

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Limit sweets and desserts to 2 times or less per week

- Limit sugar, honey, jam, maple syrup, candy and ice cream
- Save desserts for special occasions
- Replace sugar-sweetened drinks and juice with water

For more information about eating the Mediterranean way:

Cardiac College

www.cardiaccollege.ca

<https://www.healthuniversity.ca/EN/CardiacCollege/Eating/>

Oldways Health through Heritage

<http://oldwayspt.org/>

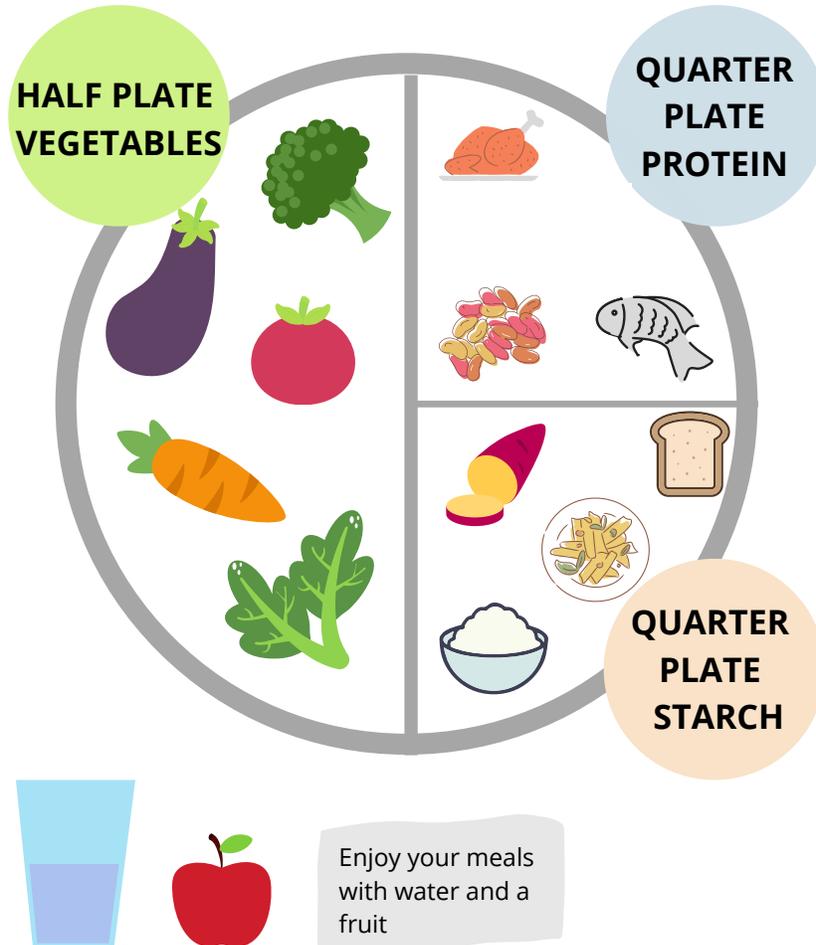
<https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet>

<http://tedrogersheartfunction.ca/>

<https://heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/recipes>

Heart Healthy Plate

This is the plate model. Use this visual guide to create healthy, balanced meals.



Sample menu

This is a sample menu. You may need more or less based on your individual needs. Your dietitian will help you with the amounts that you need.

Breakfast

Plain oatmeal (large flake or steel cut) with cup berries and cup plain Greek yogurt

Morning snack

1 medium fruit and

1 oz (or small handful) unsalted mixed nuts



Lunch

Bean pasta: mixed beans, wholegrain pasta, vegetables, extra virgin olive oil and fresh herbs

Side salad: avocado, tomato, cucumber and lettuce drizzled in extra virgin olive oil and fresh herbs and lemon or balsamic vinegar.

Afternoon snack

Chickpea dip (hummus) with

Sliced red and yellow peppers



Dinner

Fish dish: fish cooked in tomato, garlic and onion sauce with wild rice

Side salad: green salad with, 1 oz feta cheese, extra virgin olive oil, and fresh herbs with lemon or vinegar.

Dessert: 1 medium fresh fruit or ¼ cup dried fruit

Setting goals

Think about each of the steps in eating the Mediterranean way. How does your pattern of eating compare?

Notice what parts of the Mediterranean way of eating are missing in your diet.

How to set goals:

Identify one change that you feel sure you can make. Set that as your goal for the next 2 to 3 months.

- If you reach that goal, celebrate your success.
- If you don't reach it, think about the reasons why. Adjust the goal so that you feel certain you can reach it and try again!

My goal is:

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