

BRAINWORKS

The Mediterranean Diet

A PROGRAM BROUGHT TO YOU BY JANUS LABS®

MEDITERRANEAN DIET PYRAMID



Meats & Sweets

Less often

Poultry & Eggs

Moderate portions, every two days or weekly

Cheese & Yogurt

Moderate portions, daily to weekly

Fish & Seafood

Often, at least two times per week,

Fruits, Vegetables, Grains (Mostly Whole), Olive Oil, Beans, Nuts, Legumes, Seeds, Herbs & Spices

Base every meal on these foods

Be physically active, enjoy meals with others

As opposed to most traditional “diets”, the Mediterranean diet is more a philosophy than a list of dos or don’ts. Instead of focusing on what you can’t have, this approach emphasizes quality foods packed with beneficial nutrients that are good for the body, mind and soul. Included in the Mediterranean diet are not only suggested foods, but also recommendations to get daily physical activity and enjoy meals with the comfort of family and friends as often as possible.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Among all of the diet programs and specific nutrients studied by the Alzheimer’s Association, the Mediterranean diet is the only one shown to have a significant correlation with reductions in cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s disease. Many of the foods included in this diet are anti-inflammatory, and help optimize blood flow and decrease overall wear and tear on the body. Generous amounts of vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and polyphenols which have been shown to reduce oxidative damage in the body and brain, which may contribute to most major health concerns including heart disease, diabetes, dementia and cancer. Some studies show that people who eat a Mediterranean diet are less likely to experience depression. Because of the amount of healthy fats and complex carbohydrates, this nutrition regimen can be very satisfying and might also be beneficial to people trying to lose weight or sustain weight loss.

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The Mediterranean diet includes foods that are excellent at keeping the body functioning at its best due to the balance of nutrients, including whole grain carbohydrates, lean protein and healthy fat. Eating this way stabilizes blood glucose, providing a consistent and stable source of fuel for the body and brain. In addition to stabilizing energy levels, the quality of nutrients is also high impact. At the same time, there is a decreased focus on foods that may be harmful to our health such as saturated fat, trans fat and highly processed carbohydrates.

- Monounsaturated fat: Olive oil, olives, canola oil, avocado, almonds, peanuts, peanut oil
- Omega-3 fat: Fatty fish, some nuts and seeds, some eggs
- Lean protein: Fish, moderate amount of eggs and poultry, low fat cheese, low fat yogurt
- Fiber: Beans, lentils, fruits, vegetables, whole grain bread, cereal and pasta
- Vitamins and minerals: Fruits, vegetables, whole grain bread, cereal and pasta
- Antioxidants and polyphenols: Fruits, vegetables, moderate amount of red wine and other alcohol, coffee and tea

SAMPLE MEALS

Breakfast:

- Omelet with as many fresh veggies as you enjoy, may also add lean turkey, chicken, beans and salsa.
- Whole grain toast with peanut butter. Oatmeal with cinnamon, chopped walnuts and blueberries.

Lunch:

- Salad with lean protein such as fish, chicken, chickpeas, beans, and healthy fat such as chopped nuts, sunflower seeds and olive oil with or without balsamic.
- Soup with lean protein, beans and vegetables.
- Sandwich with whole grain bread, lean protein, low fat mozzarella cheese, veggies and hummus spread.

Dinner:

- Lean protein such as fish or chicken, side of grilled vegetables or salad and whole grain roll with extra virgin olive oil.
- Home made pizza with whole grain pizza crust, low fat mozzarella cheese, tomato sauce, and your choice of veggie toppings (may also add lean protein such as chicken or turkey).
- Soups, stews or casseroles containing whole grain pasta, beans, low fat cheese and vegetables.

More meal ideas and specific recipes are available online or in Mediterranean style cookbooks.

SAMPLE SNACKS

Because of their lean protein and healthy fat, many Mediterranean diet foods naturally make great low-glycemic snacks:

- Almonds
- Trail mix
- Cashews
- Mixed nuts
- Peanuts
- Whole grain bread with peanut butter
- Pita & hummus
- ½ whole grain bagel & smoked salmon
- Low fat cheese

OTHER MEDITERRANEAN DIET RECOMMENDATIONS

- Eat smaller portions of higher quality foods
- Eat a meal or snack about every 3–4 hours
- Get as much movement throughout the day as possible
- Exercise regularly
- Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, journaling or meditation
- Reduce stress
- Get enough sleep
- Enjoy social connections with friends and family



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