

*Primary Care Dietitians' Association Presents*



Primary Care Dietitians' Association  
*Blending the Science of Nutrition and the Art of Food*

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

*A Practical Guide  
to the MedDiet*



# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

## *A Practical Guide to the MedDiet*

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- Overview of the MedDiet Eating Pattern
- Practical tips for incorporating principles of the MedDiet
- The MedDiet in multi-cultural contexts
- Meal makeovers, food swaps and short cuts
- Resources





# What is a Mediterranean Diet Eating Pattern?

# The Mediterranean Diet is...



...based on traditional foods from countries that surround the Mediterranean Sea

Crete, Greece and S. Italy in 1950's/60's – highest life expectancy & lowest chronic disease rates

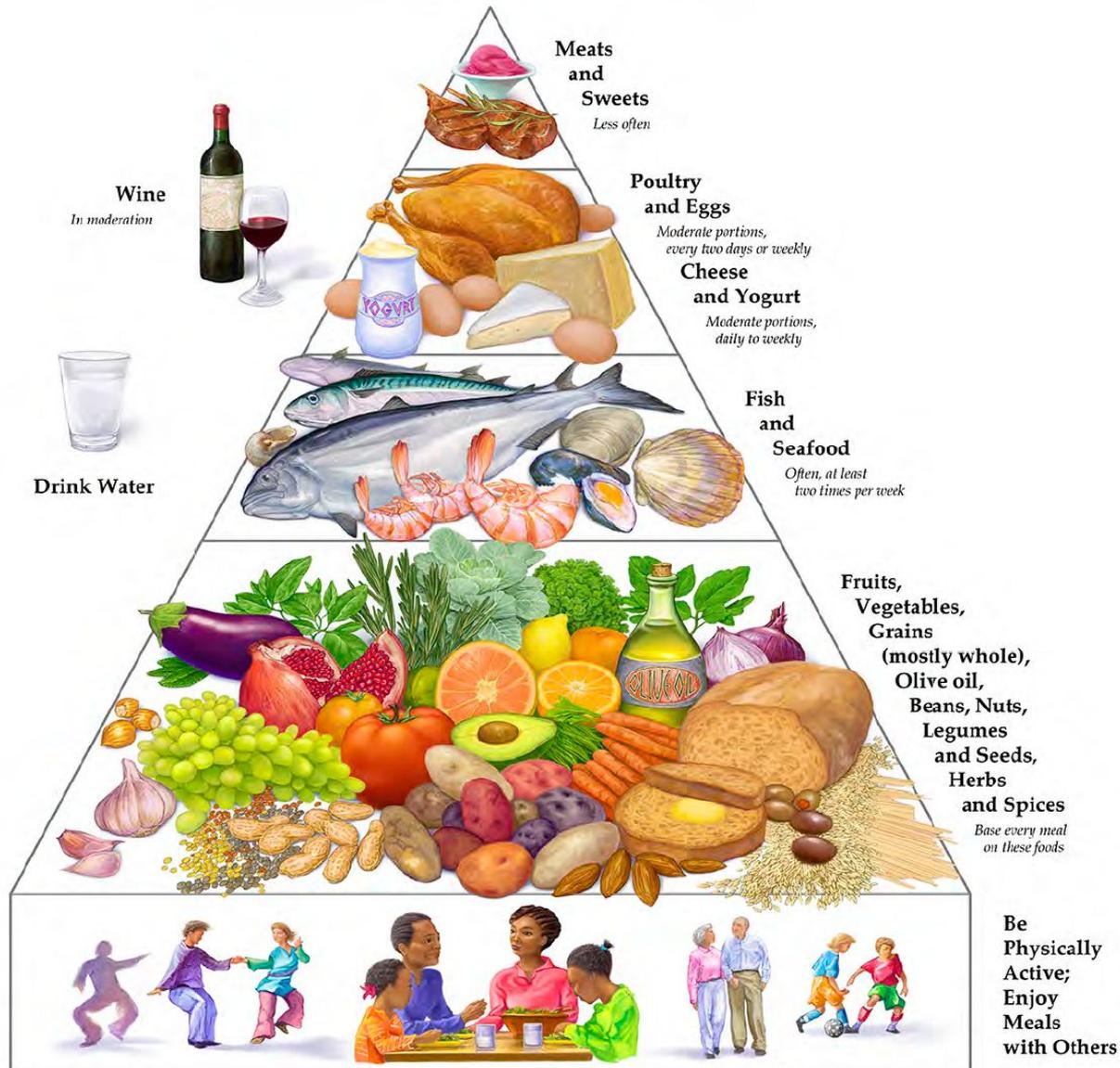
# It's a Lifestyle!

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- Enjoy meals with family and friends
- Choose homemade, whole foods, most often
- Limit ultra-processed foods



# Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



# The MedDiet Eating Pattern



High	Moderate	Low
Olive oil	Dairy (fermented: cheese, yogurt)	Red meat
Vegetables and fruits	Poultry/eggs	Processed meats
Whole grains	Alcohol (mainly red wine with meal)	Sweets
Nuts & seeds		
Legumes		
Fish (emphasis on fatty fish)		

# Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet Eating Pattern

**Decrease in:**  
**Mortality risk**  
**Cardiovascular disease**  
**Cancer incidence**  
**High blood pressure**  
**LDL (bad) cholesterol**  
**Type 2 diabetes risk**

## **Studies also show:**

- Reduces kidney function decline
- Reduces risk of depression
- Slows rates of cognitive decline and conversion to Alzheimer's
- Healthier pregnancy and baby



# MedDiet & Clinical Practice Guidelines

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World Health Organization



AMERICAN COLLEGE *of* CARDIOLOGY



Canadian Cardiovascular Society



Heart&Stroke™



American Heart Association®

**DIABETES CANADA**



Hypertension CANADA

A still life composition of various fresh ingredients on a wooden table. In the foreground, there's a piece of salmon with a sprig of rosemary, a small bowl of orange powder, a bowl of white cubes, and a bowl of light-colored seeds. Scattered around are pistachios, almonds, and other nuts. In the background, there's a loaf of bread, a glass bottle with a cork, and a variety of fresh vegetables like carrots, tomatoes, and leafy greens. The overall scene is bright and natural, suggesting a focus on healthy, whole-food nutrition.

**How do I get started?**

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

1

## Eat lots of vegetables

- Cut up veg and keep covered in a clear container in the fridge
- Use frozen veg in soups/sauces
- Grill veg using olive oil or canola oil (cook in larger amounts & refrigerate)
- Sauté veg with olive or canola oil
- Roast veg to bring out more flavour
- Add greens to smoothies
- Add garlic, lemon, fresh or dried herbs
- Use hummus or guacamole for dip



Include at lunch, dinner and snacks

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

1

## Eat lots of vegetables

You can also include at breakfast

- In omelettes
- Side dish (salsa frito) - sauté
  - mushrooms
  - tomatoes (or tomato sauce)
  - garlic
  - spinach
  - olive oil
  - oregano & basil



# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

2

## **Eat seafood 2-3 times per week**

- Choose fatty fish most often
- Enjoy canned salmon or skipjack tuna in sandwiches or salads
- Bake or grill fresh or frozen fish



Enjoy tuna, herring, salmon, trout, sardines, anchovies, shellfish (shrimp, mussels, crab, scallops, calamari) and other fish (cod, haddock)

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

## 3 Change the way you think about meat

- Make fish, poultry, legumes or veg the focus of your meal planning
- Stir-fry meat strips and add to veg rather than making meat the star
- Keep portions of meat to a deck of cards
- Use smaller amounts of meat and more beans and vegetables in chili



Enjoy small amounts as a garnish for flavour

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

4

## Enjoy some dairy products

- Try aged or fermented products including cheese, yogurt and kefir
- Aim for 2-3 servings a day for adequate calcium intake
- Aged cheese is high in Vit K2
- Garnish salads with feta or other fermented cheeses



Plain Greek or regular yogurt and a variety of traditional cheeses

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

## 5 Cook a vegetarian meal once a week

- Meatless Mondays!
- Use legumes regularly: beans, chickpeas, lentils
- Make an easy bean salad each week
- Add to salads, soups, dips (hummus)



When one night feels comfortable, try two

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

6

## Use healthy fats, nuts & seeds

- Use EVOO on non-cooked foods and cooking below 375F (pure/refined OO smoke point 390-470F; canola oil 375-450F)
- Canola oil has a similar fat profile to EVOO
- Use a variety of unsalted nuts like almonds and walnuts and include seeds like flax (ground), chia and hemp hearts
- Use natural peanut and nut butters
- Sprinkle on oatmeal or cereal or have as a snack
- Use avocados on salads and in sandwiches



# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

7

## Use whole grains most often

The fuller, nuttier taste of whole grains and their extra fibre can help keep you full for hours and contribute to stable blood sugar levels.

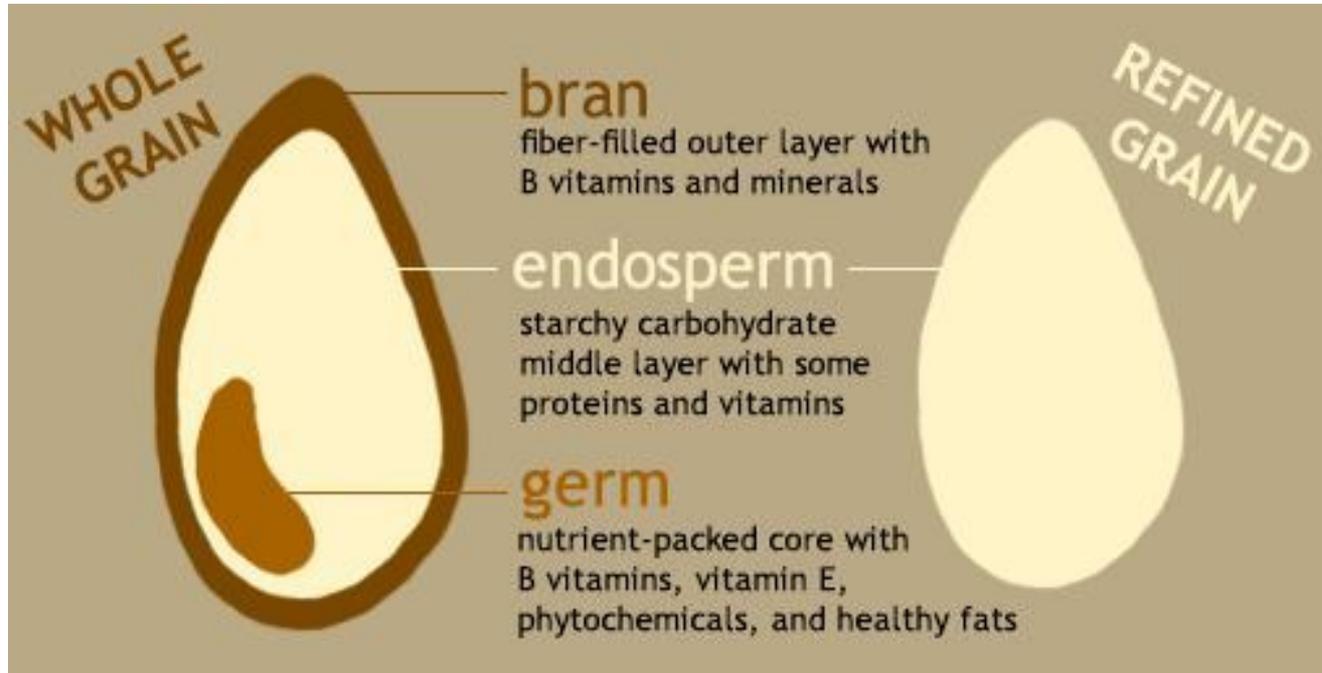
Whole grains also provide more vitamins and minerals compared to refined grains.



# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

7

## Use whole grains



**Examples: whole oats, 100% whole grain whole wheat, whole rye, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, whole barley, quinoa, brown rice, corn (popcorn)**

# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

## Easy combination of whole grains and seeds

- 1 ½ cup chia seed
- 1 ¼ cup hulled hemp hearts
- 1 cup buckwheat
- ½ cup ground flax
- ½ cup psyllium husk
- 1 tbsp cinnamon

Combine and refrigerate



**Add 2 tbsp to whole grain cereal or yogurt**

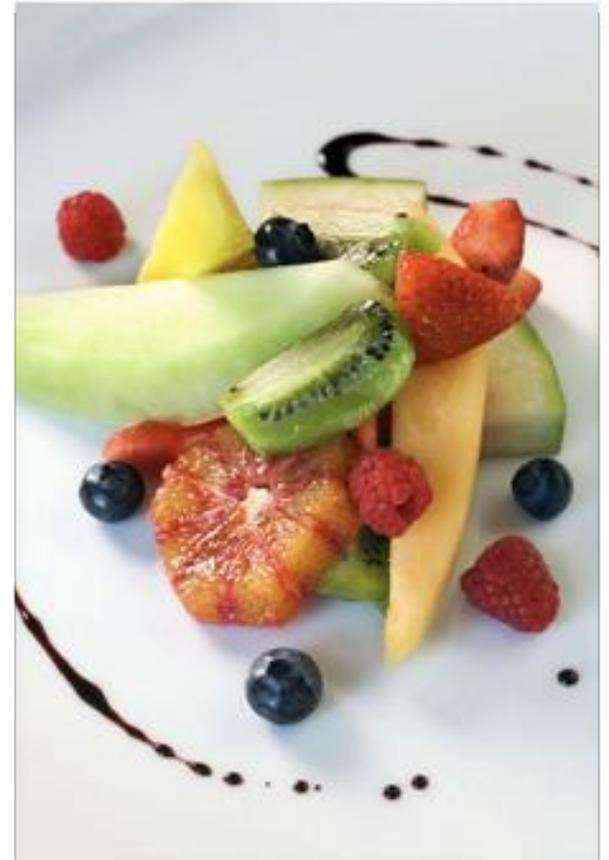
# The Mediterranean Eating Pattern

8

## For dessert, enjoy fresh fruit

- Baked
- Roasted
- Drizzled with flavoured vinegars or Greek yogurt

Save sweets for a weekly treat or special occasion



# MEDITERRANEAN DIET SCORE TOOL

The Mediterranean diet or MedDiet offers positive benefits on physical and mental health. Answer the following questions, giving yourself 1 point for each “yes” answer.

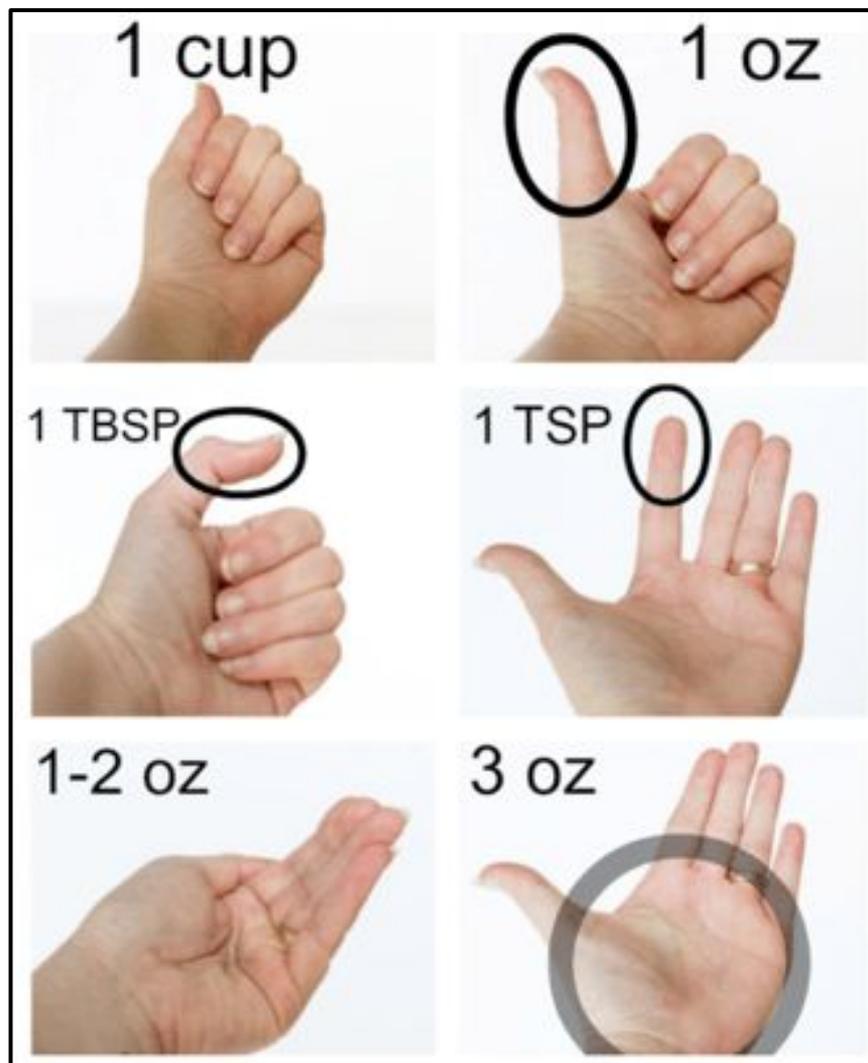
Research shows raising your score by 2 points is linked with improved health including lower death rates and reduced risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer’s and depression. Once you have your baseline score, look at your “No” answers and pick two areas to work on to improve your MedDiet score by 2 points.

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Nutritional Issue</b>
1	Is olive oil the main fat used in cooking?			<b>Choose Healthier Fats</b> Olive oil is high in monounsaturated fat. Using unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats in cooking and preparing food is advisable.
2	Do you have 4 tablespoons (60 ml) or more of olive oil each day?			<b>Healthy fats are better than low fat</b> Replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fat is better than replacing it with carbohydrates or protein.
3	Do you eat 4 servings of vegetables each day? (1 serving is ½ cup raw or cooked or 1 cup of raw salad greens)			<b>Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables</b> Eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables every day helps ensure adequate intake of many vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and fibre. Studies have shown that eating plenty of these foods is protective for CVD and cancer.
4	Do you eat 3 or more servings (1 small or 1/2 cup each) of fruit each day?			
5	Do you eat less than 1 serving (100-150 g; 3-5 oz) of red meat, hamburger, sausage and processed meats daily?			<b>Choose lean meats and consider cooking methods</b> Red and processed meats are high in saturated fat, can be high in salt and are best replaced with white meat or fish or vegetarian sources of protein.
6	Do you eat 1 tablespoon (15 ml) or less of butter, margarine or cream each day?			<b>Keep saturated fat low</b> These foods are high in saturated fat which can increase your blood cholesterol level. Choose plant-based alternatives.
7	Do you have < 1 can (355 ml or 12 oz) of sugar sweetened beverages each day?			<b>Limit sweet drinks</b> Excess sweet drinks can affect blood sugars and heart disease risk.

8	Do you drink 3 glasses or more of wine per week? (1 serving is 150 ml or 5 oz)		<b>Moderate alcohol intake with meals</b> While this does have some protective effect, <i>there is no evidence that non-drinkers should take up drinking alcohol.</i>
9	Do you have 3 servings or more of legumes (peas, beans, or lentils) each week? (1 serving is ½-2/3 cup)		<b>Include soluble fibre</b> These foods are high in soluble fibre, protein and other important nutrients and a budget-friendly way to get more protein.
10	Do you have 3 servings or more of fish or seafood each week? (Fish serving is 3.5-5 oz or 100-150 g, seafood serving 4-5 pieces)		<b>Eat more oily and white fish</b> Fish is an excellent source of protein. Choose fish high in omega-3 fats like salmon, trout, sardines, anchovies and herring.
11	Do you eat commercial baked goods such as cookies, doughnuts or cake no more than 2 times per week?		<b>Eat less processed food</b> Baked goods are often high in saturated fat, salt and sugar. Choose fruit or unsalted nuts or seeds for a healthy snack.
12	Do you eat nuts 3 or more times per week? 1 serving is 30 g or 1 oz		<b>Snack on modest servings of unsalted nuts</b> Nuts are rich in unsaturated fat, phytosterols, fibre, vitamin E and iron, e.g. walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts
13	Do you choose chicken or turkey more often than beef, pork, hamburger or sausage?		'White meat' choices are lower in saturated fat. Remove the skin and grill, roast, sauté rather than deep fry.
14	Do you consume vegetables, pasta or rice dishes with a homemade sauce of sauted garlic, onions/leek, olive oil and tomatoes 2 or more times a week?		Using an olive oil, tomato and garlic or onion or leek-based sauce regularly is a key feature of the MedDiet.
<b>Total Score</b> (total no. of 'yes' answers)			

# Judging Portion Sizes

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**More than just food**

# More than just good food...

**Look for ways to be active & social**



Dance Walk  
Swim Bike  
Garden Hike

Share your food,  
spiced with  
conversation



But what if you're not local to the  
Mediterranean?



# Non-Med Area Cohort Studies

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2014: U.S. Midwest, 780 firefighters, 18+ years

- After 5 years
- Higher MedDiet score inversely related to weight gain, metabolic syndrome; also higher HDL-C (good) and lower LDL-C (bad)

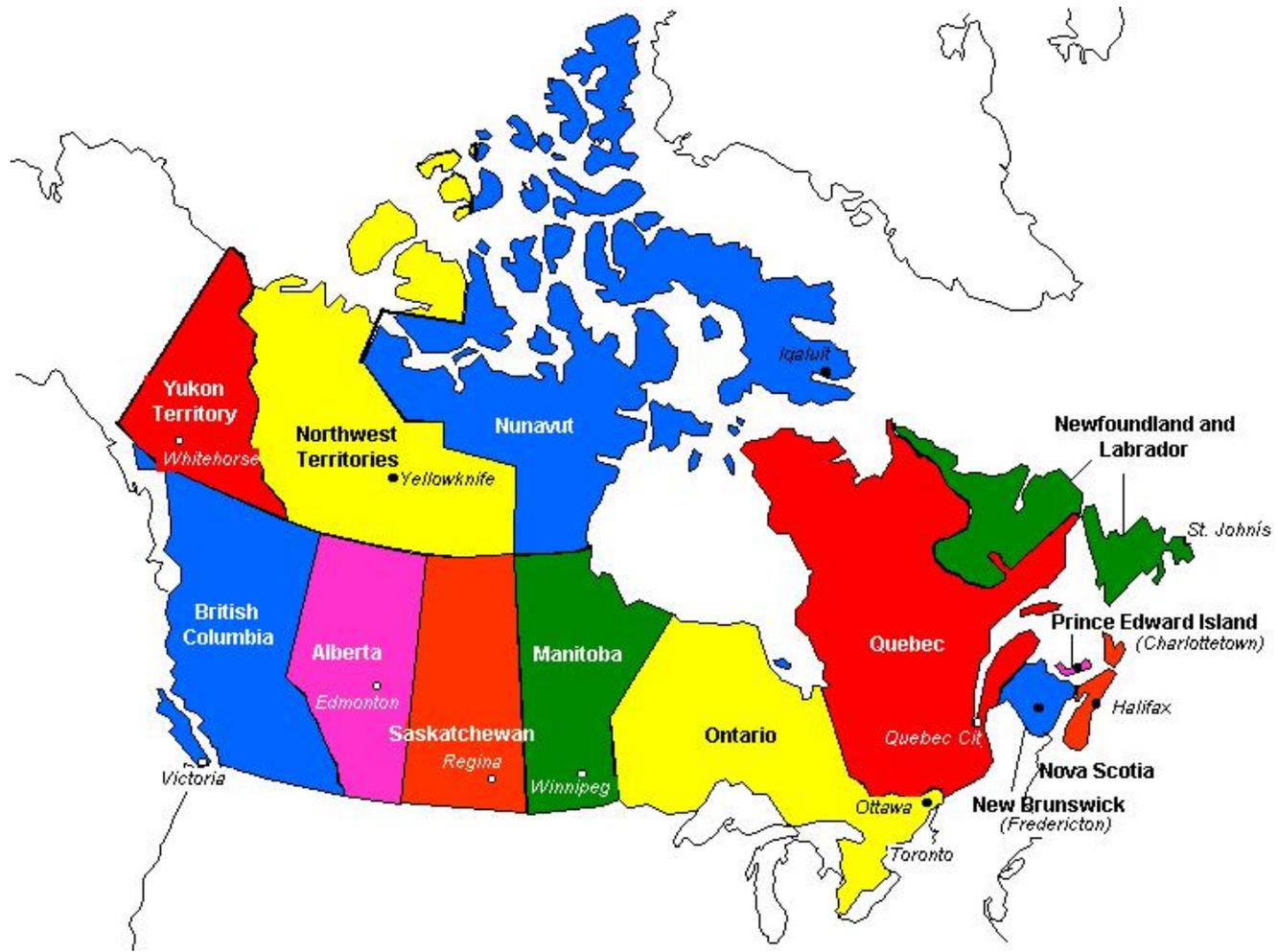
PLoS One 2014 9(2)

2016: Eastern England: 23,902 people, 40-79 years

- After 12 years
- Lower incidence of CVD incidents
- Lower all-cause mortality

BMC Medicine 2016 14:135

# The MedDiet in Multicultural Contexts

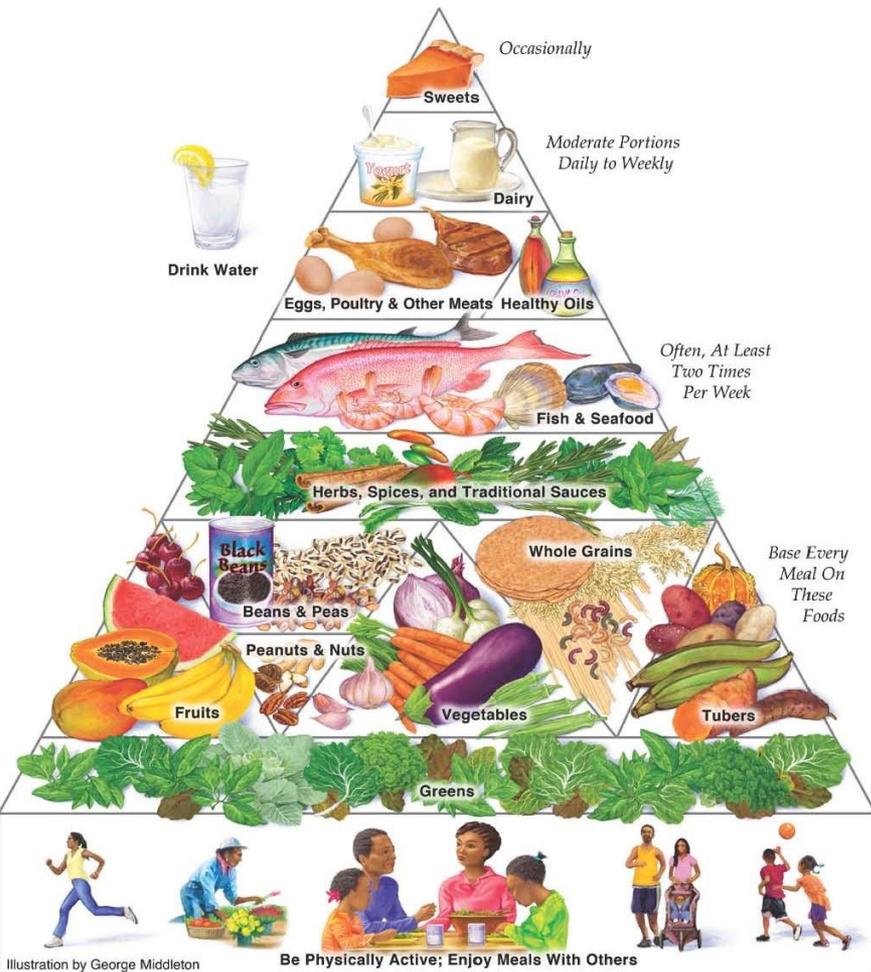


# Common Characteristics

Characteristics of the MedDiet		Asian	Indigenous	Indian
Plant Based	Abundant in fruits and vegetables; whole grains; and legumes, nuts and seeds	Traditional diets are higher in leafy greens, legumes, vegetables, soy foods, whole grains, herbs and spices	Local plant or animal foods through gathering and harvesting	Traditionally higher in plant foods like vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts/seeds and fruits, moderate in fermented dairy and low meat intake
Minimally processed	Limits ultra-processed food	Fish, shellfish	Traditional diets are high in animal protein, nutrient rich and low in fat or high in marine fat sources	Vibrant spices and fresh herbs
Limits sweets	Typically fresh fruits	Moderate portions: eggs, poultry, healthy cooking oils.	The physical demands of hunting, gathering, etc were traditionally high	Oils: coconut, peanut, sesame, olive
Uses high-quality fats	Olive oil is the primary source of fat	Infrequent: red meats and sweets		

# Other Traditional Diets

## African Heritage Diet Pyramid



## Asian Diet Pyramid



Enjoy A Healthy Lifestyle

Illustration by George Middleton

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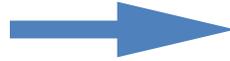
www.oldwayspt.org

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# Mediterranean Diet Swaps

**Instead of....**



**Choose....**



Mayonnaise on your sandwich

Hummus

Butter on your toast

Olive oil, nut butter or avocado

Meat in pasta sauce

More vegetables or lentils

Chocolate cake

Baked pear & yogurt sauce

A bagel with jam

Oatmeal with berries or

Greek yogurt with grain/seed mix

Potato chips

Handful of nuts

# Meal Makeovers

## ORIGINAL: SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS

Spaghetti and beef meatballs, served with white garlic bread



**Original Nutrition:** Calories: 1030, Total Fat: 59g, Saturated Fat: 20g, Sodium: 3440mg, Carbohydrate: 82g, Fiber: 6g, Protein: 49g

## REMAKE: PASTA PUTTANESCA WITH MIXED OLIVES AND WALNUTS

Salsa frito, whole wheat pasta, herbs, salad



**New Nutrition:** Calories: 440, Total Fat: 22g, Saturated Fat: 2.5g, Sodium: 380mg, Carbohydrate: 56g, Fiber: 3g, Protein: 12g

# Meal Makeovers

## ORIGINAL: STEAK AND POTATOES

16-ounce ribeye or T-bone steak, served with mashed potatoes and frozen mixed vegetables



**Original Nutrition:** Calories: 1830, Total Fat: 97g, Saturated Fat: 50g, Sodium: 630mg, Carbohydrate: 93g, Fiber: 5g, Protein: 144g

## REMAKE: SHISH KEBABS

Served on a bed of Bulgur and Walnut Pilaf



**New Nutrition:** Calories: 440, Total Fat: 22g, Saturated Fat: 2.5g, Sodium: 380mg, Carbohydrate: 56g, Fiber: 3g, Protein: 12g

# Meal Makeovers

## ORIGINAL: SCRAMBLED EGGS AND SAUSAGE

Served with buttered white toast



**Original Nutrition:** Calories: 780, Total Fat: 61g, Saturated Fat: 29g, Sodium: 1200mg, Carbohydrate: 26g, Fiber: 0g, Protein: 30g

## REMAKE: SPANISH FRITTATA

Served with avocado toast and fresh fruit

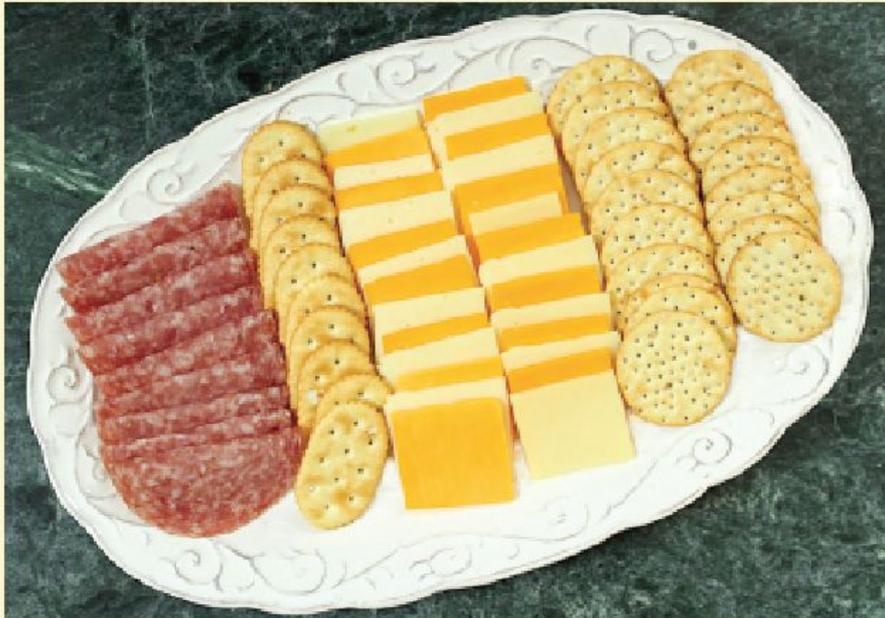


**New Nutrition:** Calories: 370, Total Fat: 24g, Saturated Fat: 4.5g, Sodium: 260mg, Carbohydrate: 25g, Fiber: 4g, Protein: 15g

# Meal Makeovers

## ORIGINAL: CHEESE AND CRACKERS

Typical mix of cheeses (cheddar, pepper jack, etc) with crackers and salami



**Original Nutrition:** Calories: 620, Total Fat: 49g, Saturated Fat: 23g, Sodium: 1680mg, Carbohydrate: 14g, Fiber: 0g, Protein: 30g

## REMAKE: ANTIPASTO PLATTER

Roast veg, walnut stuffed dates, dip, pita



**New Nutrition:** Calories: 340, Total Fat: 22g, Saturated Fat: 4g, Sodium: 550mg, Carbohydrate: 35g, Fiber: 6g, Protein: 8g

# MedDiet Short Cuts

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- ❑ Keep your pantry full
- ❑ Simplify by planning your main meals in advance
- ❑ Prep veggies ahead
- ❑ Prep whole grains in batches
- ❑ Have planned leftovers for lunch the next day
- ❑ Use your freezer



# MedDiet Short Cuts

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- ❑ Make a meze (appetizer type dish)
- ❑ Cook larger amounts and repurpose leftovers the next day
- ❑ Eat whole fruit or buy diced fruit or frozen fruit to save time
- ❑ Keep breakfast simple with no cooking
- ❑ Embrace canned legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas)
  - drain and rinse
- ❑ Use frozen vegetables



# MedDiet Recipe Generator

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<https://oldwayspt.org/recipes> (use the filters to refine search for Mediterranean Diet and 'course' or 'meal' or search for ingredients)

<http://www.pulsecanada.com/resources/> (Pulses: beans, peas, lentils)

<http://ontariobeans.on.ca/> (all about beans)

<https://www.olivetomato.com/recipe-index-2/> (Greek food)

<https://www.lentils.org/recipes-cooking/> (all about lentils)

<https://www.cookinglight.com/cooking-101/mediterranean-diet-recipes>

Google: 'healthy Mediterranean Diet recipes'

# Mediterranean Eating Pattern

Find lots of resources, menu plans and recipes at:  
<http://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets>



# Questions?



# Thank you for joining!



**Primary Care Dietitians' Association**  
*Blending the Science of Nutrition and the Art of Food*

For more Mediterranean Diet resources please visit:  
<https://primarycaredietitianassociation.org/resources/public-resources/>