

What is it?

- The Mediterranean Diet is an eating pattern based on foods eaten by people in countries such as Italy, Greece and Crete in the 1960s.
- It includes lots of **plant foods** (vegetables, fruit, legumes, wholegrains, beans, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices).
- Easy to follow and flexible – not a set diet.
- Tasty & filling – frequent use of extra virgin olive oil and other healthy fats.

Resource developed by
Greater Newcastle Sector
Diabetes Service
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Why should I try it?

Research shows that the Mediterranean Diet can help to:

- Achieve a **healthy weight**
- Protect yourself against **heart disease, stroke and some cancers**
- Reduce your risk of getting **Type 2 Diabetes**
- **Improve blood glucose control** if you already have Diabetes
- **Reduce your medications** (for some people)
- **Improve brain function**, reduce dementia risk



How can it help my health and risk of disease?

- The Mediterranean diet recommends moderate amounts of carbohydrate foods that are mostly high in fibre and have a **low Glycaemic Index (GI)**. These foods will keep you full for longer and provide a sustained source of energy.
- It also contains **healthy unsaturated fats** that do not cause insulin resistance (which leads to Type 2 Diabetes) like saturated (unhealthy) fats do.
- It is **low in salt**, helping you to maintain healthy blood pressure and protect your kidneys.
- The moderate amounts of healthy fats and foods **high in fibre** fill you up and make you enjoy your food more, meaning you won't eat as much at meal times, and are less likely to be hungry between meals.

How do I do the Mediterranean Diet?

EAT EVERY DAY:

In main meals (at least lunch and dinner)

- **Vegetables** – at least 2 serves per meal (at least 1 uncooked serve per day, such as salad or chopped veggie sticks with healthy dip).
- **Fruit** – 1 serving per meal.
- **Cereals/Grains** – 1-2 serves per meal, wholegrain options. *Corn is part of this group.*

Include a wide range of these foods, such as vegetables and fruits of various colours.

ALSO INCLUDE DAILY

- **Olive Oil** – Extra Virgin if you can, about 1 tablespoon per day. Use as a dressing or for cooking.
- **Other healthy fats** – nuts, seeds and avocados.
- **Water** – include at least 1.5-2L per day* (more in hot weather, when more active or when pregnant). You may include other options like coffee, tea or herbal teas. **unless fluid restricted for medical reasons*
- **Herbs & spices**, onion & garlic – avoid adding excess salt.
- **Dairy foods** – aim to include 2 serves of low-fat dairy, mostly yoghurt (without added sugar) and cheese. Women over the age of 50 may need more than this.
- Optional: 1 small glass wine per day with a meal. *Do not drink when pregnant, or if you've been advised not to drink for any other reason*

SPREAD ACROSS THE WEEK:

Include a mixture of plant and animal proteins (if you wish)

- **Legumes, such as beans and lentils** – 2 or more serves per week.
- **Fish and seafood** – 2 or more serves per week.
- **Eggs** – 2-3 serves per week (up to 6 eggs).
- **Poultry** (chicken, turkey, duck) – up to 3 servings per week. No skin.
- **Red meat** (beef, lamb, pork, veal and mince) – up to 2 serves per week. Choose lean cuts and remove visible fat.
- **Protein foods from animal sources** are not used as the main part of a meal, aim to make protein $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate, and the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of the plate should be plant based foods.

Potatoes, sweet potatoes – up to 3 serves per week.

How do I do the Mediterranean Diet?

LIMIT THESE FOODS

(only eat sometimes – less than once per week, in small amounts):

- Sweetened or drinks high in sugar such as soft drinks, fruit juice or flavoured milk
- Processed snack foods such as chips, biscuits, salty crackers, muesli bars or muffin bars
- Lollies and chocolates, ice-cream, custard, pudding
- Pastries and other bakery goods (pies, sausage rolls, cakes, croissants, cream buns, muffins)
- Processed meats such as sausages, salami, hot dogs, devon, bacon, ham
- Refined grains such as white bread, processed breakfast cereals
- Unhealthy or refined fats & spreads – butter, lard, ghee, margarine, refined oils, Cofpa/coconut oil products, palm oil
- Deep-fried or takeaway foods that are high in fat and/or salt

The Mediterranean Diet is best when included as part of a lifestyle based on the following ideas:

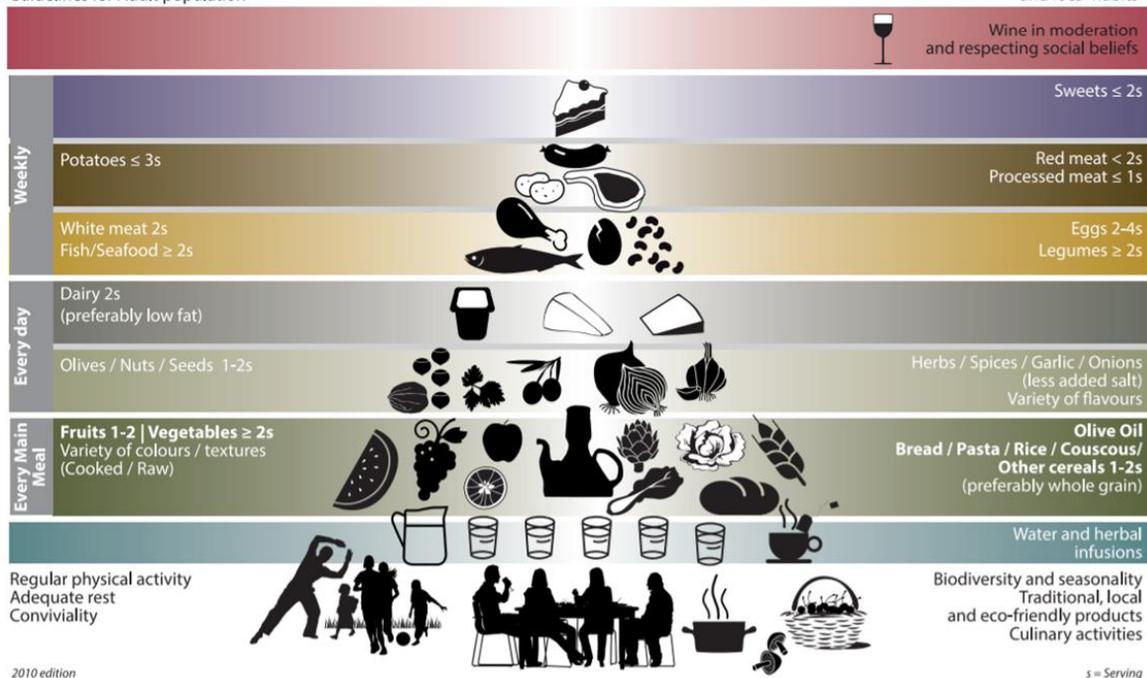
- **Moderation** – match portion sizes to how active and hungry you are. Stop eating when you are full
- **Sharing** – enjoy cooking and eating meals with others
- **Seasonality** – choose fresh, unprocessed foods when you can to reduce cost, waste and environmental impact
- **Activity** – enjoy regular movement, as often as you can, aiming for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days
- **Rest** – good quality sleep and time to relax are important for health

*You may not feel ready or able to change your diet all at once.
Choose the parts that you feel you can do to start,
and keep working on it over time.*

The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid

Mediterranean Diet Pyramid: a lifestyle for today
Guidelines for Adult population

Serving size based on frugality
and local habits



Fundación
Dieta Mediterránea

ICAF
International Commission on the
Anthropology of Food and Nutrition

FORUM ON
MEDITERRANEAN
FOOD CULTURES

Predimed
Prevención con Dieta Mediterránea



CIISCAM
Mediterranean Commission for
the Study of Public Health
& Community Medicine



H.H.F.
HEALTHY HEART
FOUNDATION



IUNS
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF
NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES



CIHEAM
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR APPLIED
MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES



EUROPEAN UNION



fenS
FORUM ON EUROPEAN
NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast: Wholegrain toast topped with avocado, tomato and cheese plus 1 orange

OR untoasted muesli with berries and nuts + natural (unsweetened) yoghurt or milk

AND glass of water

Lunch:

Spinach, pumpkin, beetroot and chickpea salad with cous cous and walnuts, olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing, sliced apple for dessert.

OR hummus, vegetable and egg on pita wrap, peach for dessert

AND glass of water

Dinner:

Grilled salmon topped with herbs with a small serve of mashed potato and steamed mixed vegetables drizzled with olive oil, mixed berries + yoghurt for dessert

OR bean-based soup or casserole with mixed vegetables and small serve diced lamb or chicken, banana with yoghurt for dessert

AND glass of water

You don't need to eat more than 3 meals per day, but if you feel hungry, snack on foods such as fruit, nuts, small serves yoghurt or cheese, carrots or other raw chopped vegetables, leftover foods from main meals, wholegrain crackers or olives.

Dietitian: _____ Ph: _____