



Mediterranean Diet

Foods at the bottom of the pyramid should be eaten more often. Foods at the top of the pyramid should be eaten less often.

Choose everyday:

- ✓ 100% Whole grains
- ✓ Fruits
- ✓ Vegetables
- ✓ Beans, lentils, nuts
- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Low fat dairy

Choose weekly:

- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Chicken
- ✓ Eggs

Choose monthly:

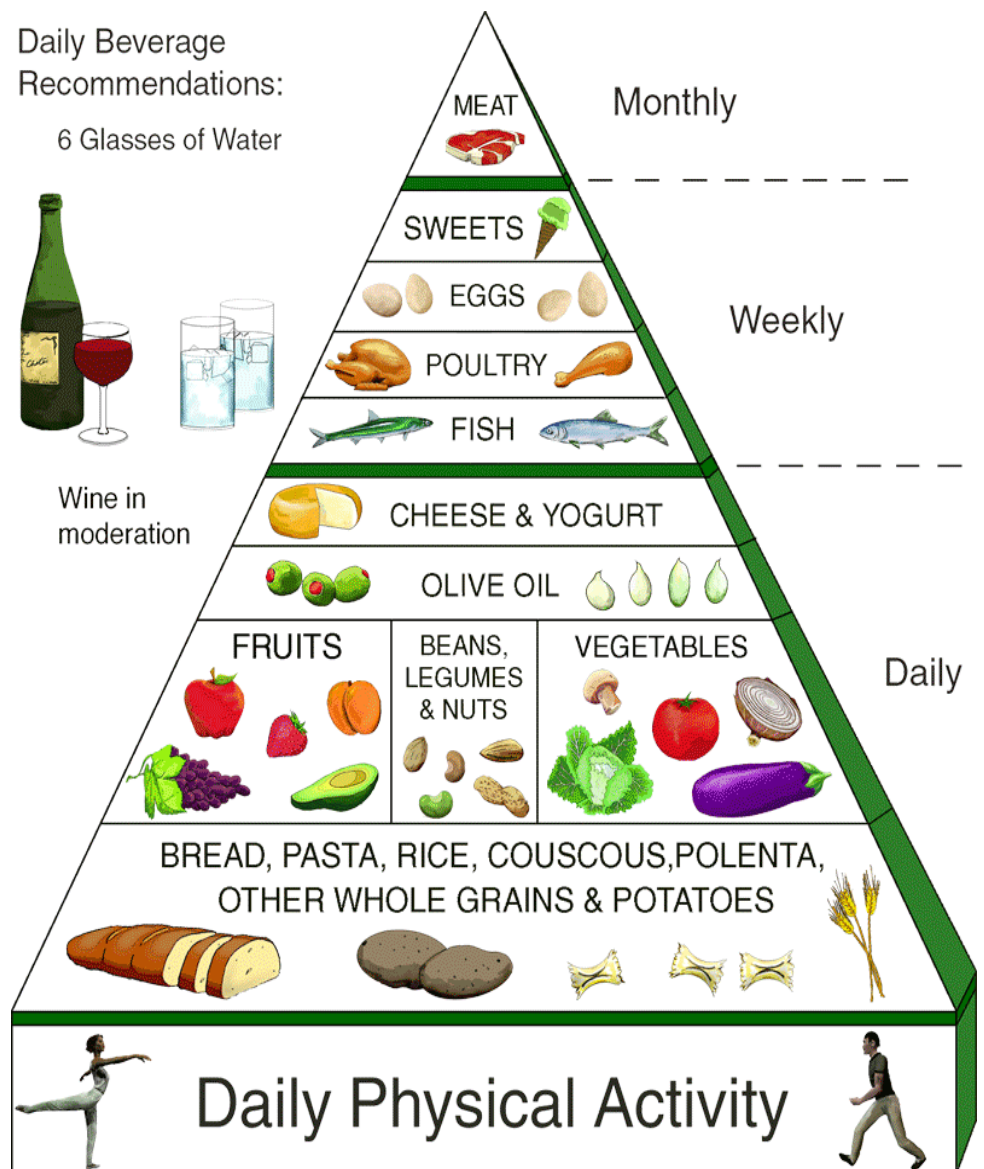
- ✓ Red meats

Also....

- ✓ Drink 6-8 cups of water daily
- ✓ Alcohol in moderation
 - Men (1-2 drink/day)
 - Women (0-1 drink/day)

1 drink= 12oz beer, 4oz wine, 1.5oz spirits

The Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



The Research....

British Medical Journal
Reviewed all the
Mediterranean diet
research from 1966-
2008, and reported that a
greater adherence is
associated with improved
health status, including a
decrease in:

- ✦ Overall mortality by 9%
- ✦ Mortality from CVD by 9%
- ✦ Incidence of or mortality from cancer by 6%
- ✦ Incidence of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease by 13%

(*BMJ* 2008;337;a1344)

PrediMed & Diabetes

This was a 4 year
randomized trial of over
400 non diabetic patients
of the Mediterranean diet
(either with extra olive
oil or nuts) or a low fat
diet. The Mediterranean
group showed a:

- ✦ 52% reduction in incidence of diabetes
- ✦ the diabetes risk reduction happened without significant weight loss or increase in exercise

(*Diabetes*, 2011;34 (14-19)

How does the diet work?



First, this isn't your typical *diet* it's a lifestyle! The pyramid emphasizes healthy sources of fat, a very low intake of saturated and trans fat, a high fibre intake, and a high intake of fruits and vegetables.

Healthy Choices Everyday!

Physical Activity is at the base of the pyramid, which means that activity should be part of your everyday life. Regular exercise can include walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, skipping, and recreational sports and leisure activities.



Grains are the second largest group. Grains break down into simple sugars, which our body and brain use for fuel. You should choose *whole* grains over *white* grain products more often. Whole grains are packed with protein, fibre, B vitamins, and iron.

Fruits & Vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fibre! Fresh fruits and vegetables are very desirable, but frozen and canned are also good choices during certain seasons or if you are on a budget.



Legumes (beans, peas, & lentils) are high in protein, folate, potassium, iron, and magnesium. They are also an excellent source of soluble fibre which helps to lower blood sugars and cholesterol.

Nuts & Seeds should be a part of your regular diet. They help reduce LDL (bad cholesterol) and increase HDL (good cholesterol) and are packed with nutrients, healthy fats, and energy. You need to watch your portion sizes, because nuts are high in calories. A healthy portion of nuts is 10 almonds, 5 walnuts, or 15 shelled pistachios.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil is the major source of added fat rather than butter or lard, but don't worry because it's a healthy fat which helps to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and increase HDL (good cholesterol), which is essential for the prevention of heart disease



Cheese & Yogurt are great dairy choices to compliment daily milk consumption. All dairy has some saturated fat (bad fats that can damage your heart), so it is important to choose low fat dairy products. The fat in dairy is called milk fat (M.F. %), try 0-2% milk, 0-3% yogurt, and less than 25% cheeses more often.

Prevention of heart disease in risk individuals (PREDIMED)

Over 7,000 people at risk for heart disease either ate the MediDiet with extra nuts or olive oil or followed the American Heart Association diet. Both MediDiets resulted in a 30% relative risk reduction in high risk people.

NEJM: 2013

Mediterranean and Memory

The authors found that the Medi Diet had a protective effect in preventing Alzheimer's. In those with MCI – mild cognitive impairment, fewer went on to develop Alzheimer's

(Arch Neurol.2009;66(2):216-225))

There is a large body of research that focuses on the Mediterranean diet and the link between nutrition and health. For more information, speak to your registered dietitian.

Weekly vs Daily Choices

There are certain foods that you should eat regularly, but not on a daily basis. Eating foods on a weekly basis means that you should eat them on 1-3 days of the week.

Fish & Seafood should be eaten 2-3 times/week. Try fattier fish like salmon, mackerel, or sardines that are high in omega-3 fatty acids. White fish doesn't have the healthy fat, but it is low in calories and not as fishy tasting.



Poultry is an excellent protein source! It includes chicken, duck, goose, turkey, and pheasant. These white meats have less fat than red meat because they are not marbled with fat and the skin can easily be removed. Poultry fat is not healthy like fish fat is.

Eggs are packed with nutrients, including protein, iron, and B vitamins. People used to avoid eggs because they contain cholesterol, then research showed that dietary cholesterol doesn't affect blood levels of cholesterol in most people. Now we know that it is the large amount of saturated fat (found in the yolk) that increases LDL (bad cholesterol). Eggs should not be eaten daily, but a few times per week is okay.

Sweets & treats are a okay in moderation for most people. Although, people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, should discuss with their Dietitian.

Only on a Monthly Basis

Red meats include beef, pork, goat and lamb. You should only be eating these meats 1-2 a month. There is some research to show that diets high in red meat can lead to cancer. We also know that red meat is hard for our bodies to digest and it is high in saturated fat.

Alcohol in moderation

If you do not already drink alcohol regularly, we do not recommend that you start. Research on alcohol consumption is controversial, while many promote the regular consumption of red wine others have found that alcohol consumption can lead to diseases of body organs and cancer. Diets that are high in fruits and vegetables provide plenty of protective antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals.

**For more information and advise contact your registered dietitian
Marg Alfieri, RD**

