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What is the Mediterranean Diet?

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The Mediterranean diet is touted as the healthiest diet in the world and is the only diet actually endorsed by the Mayo Clinic.

In Western society, heart disease is the number one killer. According to [CDC heart disease figures](#) heart disease accounts for more than 25% of overall deaths per year, and that figure is increasing. The first step toward heart health is having a nutritionally balanced diet and an active lifestyle. The American Heart Association has introduced updated guidelines for the people's healthy heart. Here is some basic information you ought to understand about it and what is the Mediterranean diet they referred to?

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The main focus of the Mediterranean Diet is actually on vegetables, fruit, unrefined carbohydrates such as root vegetables and wholegrain cereals (refined carbohydrates being things like bread, cakes, pasta and refined cereals). It is also high in fibre, and low in sugar and fat, with the exception of olive oil which is a good fat, more on that in a moment. This describes the Mediterranean Diet in a nutshell. Once you successfully incorporate this in your routine, you certainly won't go wrong.

What is the Mediterranean Diet Secret to Heart Health?



Part of it is their approach to meat. The focus is less on red meat and more on poultry and seafood. In general, people in the Mediterranean only eat red meat a few times per month but they eat poultry at least once per week and fish and seafood even more often. As you can imagine, this reduces their cholesterol levels significantly, hence the reduction in heart disease risk. They also eat dairy products daily like goats cheese and yogurt.

Quite obviously, lower cholesterol levels are the first step toward heart health. But where do we get cholesterol from? Cholesterol comes from saturated (bad) fats found in dairy foods and meats. Another contributing factor to heart disease is sodium (salt), although our body needs sodium in western society we tend to consume too much sodium. As much as possible, avoid foods high in the saturated fats found in meat and dairy, when eating red meat, try to have lower fat options.

What is the Mediterranean diet's answer to this? The secret is food high in healthy polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats like those found in seafood, and olive oil. These also contain plenty of Omega 3 fatty acids which actively reduce cholesterol levels. Omega 3 fatty acids are found in fatty fish. Popular varieties in the Mediterranean diet include sardines, whitebait (often sold in beach bars, restaurants and huts). salmon, tuna, herring and mackerel. Other popular Mediterranean seafood choices include mussels, crab, shrimp, red mullet, squid, swordfish and sea bass..

There are many health benefits to following a [Mediterranean diet](#). The people of the Mediterranean have a much lower incidence of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and even things like alzheimers as a result of their diet compared to those of us in western societies. All of these things lead to to living a long and healthy life.

The final secret of the Mediterranean diet is a healthy exercise regime. While most acknowledge the importance of exercise, very few people actually maintain a regular exercise routine. It doesn't have to be anything strenuous, a 20-30 walk per day is sufficient. But many of us are too lazy to do this, we'd rather rely on the car. Or we feel that we are too busy to find time to exercise. But think of it this way, if we don't find time, we'll live less time!

So now you have the answer to what is the Mediterranean diet, to achieve healthy weight and heart is should also means keeping the blood flowing efficiently with the help of exercise.

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