

A Heart Healthy Diet



If you're looking for a heart-healthy diet, the Magna Wellness team recommends you take a look at the Mediterranean diet. The Mediterranean diet incorporates the basics of healthy eating with lots of healthy fats including olive oil, fish, nuts and seeds (and perhaps even a glass of red wine). It's simple and easy to follow, it helps to prevent many diseases and it's a great plan the whole family can get onboard with.

Benefits of the Mediterranean diet

Research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean diet reduces the risk of heart disease. In fact, an analysis of more than 1.5 million healthy adults demonstrated that following a Mediterranean diet was associated with a reduced risk of death from heart disease and cancer, as well as a reduced incidence of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. The Mediterranean diet is a delicious and healthy way to eat. Many people who switch to this style of eating say they'll never eat any other way.

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Key Components of the Mediterranean diet

- **Eat your veggies and fruits — and switch to whole grains.** A variety of plant foods should make up the majority of your meals. They should be minimally processed — fresh and whole are best. Include veggies and fruits in every meal and eat them for snacks as well. Switch to whole-grain bread and cereal, and begin to eat more whole-grain rice and pasta products. Keep baby carrots, apples and bananas on hand for quick, satisfying snacks. Fruit salads are a wonderful way to eat a variety of healthy fruit.
- **Go nuts.** Nuts and seeds are good sources of fiber, protein and healthy fats. Keep almonds, cashews, pistachios and walnuts on hand for a quick snack. Choose natural peanut butter, rather than the kind with hydrogenated fat added. Try blended sesame seeds (tahini) as a dip or spread for bread.
- **Pass on the butter.** Try olive or canola oil as a healthy replacement for butter or margarine. Lightly drizzle it over salads. After cooking veggies, add a touch of olive oil, some garlic and green onions for flavoring. Dip bread in flavored olive oil or lightly spread it on whole-grain bread for a tasty alternative to butter. Try tahini or hummus as a dip or spread for bread too.
- **Spice it up.** Herbs and spices make food tasty and can stand in for salt and fat in recipes.
- **Go fish.** Eat fish at least twice a week. Fresh or water-packed tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel and herring are healthy choices. Grill, bake or broil fish for great taste and easy cleanup. Avoid breaded and fried fish.
- **Rein in the red meat.** Limit red meat to no more than a few times a month. Substitute fish and poultry for red meat. When choosing red meat, make sure it's lean and keep portions small (about the size of a deck of cards). Also avoid sausage, bacon and other high-fat, processed meats.
- **Choose low-fat dairy.** Limit higher fat dairy products, such as whole or 2 percent milk, cheese and ice cream. Switch to skim milk, fat-free yogurt and low-fat cheese.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801?pg=2>