



AHW Weeks 9 & 10

Benefits of the Mediterranean Life-Style

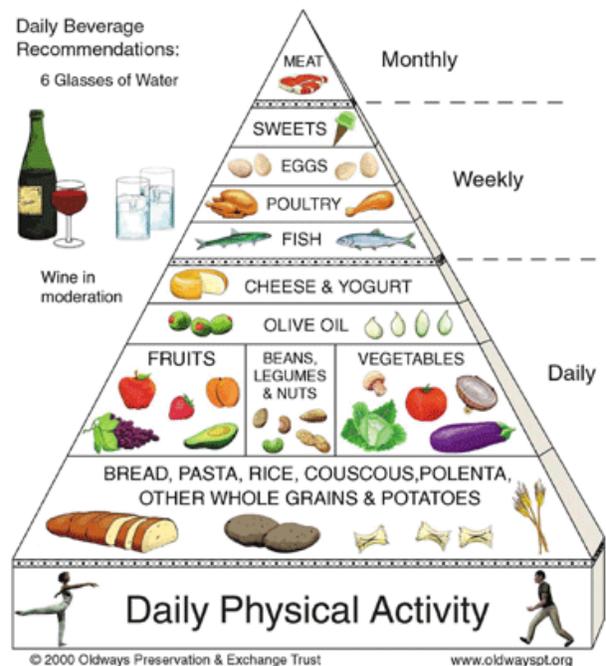
If “I am going to eat better” or “I really need to make healthier choices this year” sound like the types of New Year resolutions you have made, why not try something new to help you get started?

The Mediterranean Diet is a dietary pattern or life-style discovered and studied in the 1940’s. Researchers discovered people who lived along the Mediterranean Sea were living long healthy lives. Comparing the life-styles of Americans to the life-styles of men in seven different Mediterranean countries, researchers attributed the lower rates of heart disease to differences in diet and physical activity in the Mediterranean countries. Studying the Mediterranean diet continues today because of the health benefits it offers. Recently, it was reported in the Tufts University “Health & Nutrition Letter” from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Polity, that this diet or life-style is not only linked to lower risk of heart disease, stroke and metabolic syndrome, it may even be associated with less damage to small blood vessels in the brain. Therefore, it is linked to less late-life cognitive impairment or dementia.

The Mediterranean diet/life-style offers a good example of the USDA dietary guidelines. This life-style follows a pattern of lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein from a variety of sources, low-fat dairy, water and physical activity every-day.

The primary components of the Mediterranean life-style and the benefits for health are:

- **Whole-grains** maintain a high nutritional content because they contain all parts of the grain, unlike foods that are refined or processed, like white flour. Grains like couscous, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, oats, polenta, brown rice, and quinoa have higher amounts of fiber, B vitamins, minerals (like magnesium, iron, and selenium), and phytochemicals. More dietary fiber can lower blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI and triglycerides.
- **Wide Variety of Fruits and Vegetables** provides bioactive compounds like antioxidants that help protect the body against toxins and cancer. They are nutrient dense, low calorie and high in fiber as well. Eating a variation of colors of fruits and vegetables will ensure capturing adequate amounts and types of vitamins and minerals. For example:
 - Fruits- avocados, apples, apricots, cherries, clementines, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, oranges, melons, nectarines, olives, peaches, pears, potatoes, pomegranates, strawberries.



- Vegetables-artichokes, arugula, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, celery, collard cucumber, eggplant, fennel, kale, leeks, lemons, lettuce, mushrooms, nettles, okra, onions, peas, peppers, pumpkin, radishes, scallions, spinach, sweet potatoes, turnips, zucchini
- **Legumes, nuts, and seeds** provide a plant based source for protein, minerals, fiber, complex carbohydrate and healthy fatty acids. Including these in your diet may reduce the risk for coronary heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer. Almonds, beans, cashews, hazelnuts, lentils, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts are good sources of legumes, nuts, and seeds.
 - **Olive Oil** is a main source of heart-healthy fat as opposed to less-healthy saturated fat choices like butter. Olive oil is high in monounsaturated fatty acids, which may protect against heart disease and stroke. It also contains properties that have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-clotting properties, protecting the body from disease. Olive oil can raise good cholesterol and lower bad cholesterol, and helps the body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K better. Lower rates of heart disease and breast cancer are linked to olive oil consumption.
 - **Seafood, poultry and eggs** are consumed more over red meats. Seafood, in particular, is another source of the heart-healthy monounsaturated fatty acids that protect against heart disease and stroke. Fish contains higher levels of the good cholesterol HDL, omega-3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA, also protecting against heart attack and stroke.
 - **Fish & Seafood-** abalone, cockles, clams, crab, flounder, lobster, mackerel, mussels, oysters, salmon, sardines, tilapia, tuna, yellowtail.
-Baking, broiling, grilling or simmering in liquid are healthy alternatives to preparing fish, instead of pan frying.
 - **Poultry & Eggs-** chicken, duck, guinea fowl.
 - **Moderate amounts of dairy** are consumed a few times a week, mostly as yogurt (Greek yogurt) or cheese (Brie, Chevre, Corvo, Feta, Pecorino, Ricotta).
 - **Red wine** may help prevent damage to red blood vessels, reduce LDL or “bad” cholesterol and prevent blood clots due to the compound called resveratrol it contains. Red wine is consumed moderately with meals, meaning 1-2 drinks per day. A drink is considered 5 ounces of wine. Remember that while 1-2 drinks per day can have positive health effects, more than that can have adverse consequences to your health.
 - **Physical Activity** is common on most days of the week for at least 30 minutes. Just like during meals, time to enjoy family and friends is part of the activity.
 - Taking walks with the dog and family, playing at the park, flying a kite, working outside together.
 - **Plenty of water** takes the place of other highly sugared, high calorie drinks. Staying hydrated is important to maintain body functions.

- **Fresh herbs and spices** are used for seasoning instead of salt. Salt contains the mineral sodium (Na), which is important for many body functions, such as nerve impulses and muscle contraction. Sodium is only needed in small quantities and is found naturally in foods. By adding salt to meals or by eating processed foods, Americans are adding sodium to their diets. This may increase the risk of osteoporosis in women and be a factor involved in the development of high blood pressure or hypertension. Hypertension then can lead to developing cardiovascular disease.
 - Use these to flavor your foods: anise, basil, bay leaf, chilies, clove, cumin, fennel, garlic, lavender, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, pepper, rosemary, sage, sumac, tarragon, thyme, zatar.
- **Sweets are limited** to only a few times a week and reserved for special occasions with family and friends. Examples are: baklava, biscotti, crème caramel, chocolate gelato, fruit tarts, sorbet, tiramisu, lokum, mousse au chocolat, or fresh fruit.

Remember this is a life-style. Any change in a life-style can take time. So, begin trying healthier choices of the Mediterranean life-style a few times a week. As you make these choices, over time you may find it easier and easier to follow many components of this healthy life-style.



To Learn More:

Look at the following online resources for more information related to the Mediterranean life-style visit:

www.oldwayspt.org

<http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu/eat/healthy-diet/mediterranean/index.php#.WHf0sX3ilVr>

2017 A Healthier Weigh

Putting It into Action

Weeks 1 and 2

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and your healthy goal setting. Write a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Putting It Into Action results by online response form, email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office. Each team member who completes this by the deadline of March 20th will earn 25 bonus points for the team.

Option 1: Whole Grains

If you have never tried a variety of grains, it might be time to try something new. Check out one or more new grains. Try cooking and eating a new food, like quinoa, buckwheat, millet or amaranth; and let us hear about your experience.

<http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu/eat/nutrition101/foods-a-z/index.php#.WKctVH8tEbN> ,
<http://www.foodnetwork.com/healthy/photos/healthy-whole-grain-recipes> or
<https://www.verywell.com/great-whole-grains-to-try-2506889>

Option 2: Eat More Fish

One of the goals is to eat fish a couple times a week to get more omega 3 fatty acids and other healthful benefits. Plan and prepare a couple meals this week using fish. Try baking or pan-searing it instead of frying. What would help you to eat more healthy fish?

Option 3: Increase Physical Activity into your lifestyle

As an individual or family, what are some of the ways you can increase your daily physical activity and enjoy the health benefits of a more active lifestyle?