

Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet concept is that of a healthy diet consisting of vegetables, fruit, cereals, legumes and nuts that are low in saturated fats. It also includes low consumption of dairy products, seafood, poultry, red meat and small to moderate quantities of wine. The Mediterranean diet is one of the most studied dietary patterns. It has been noticed that people in the Mediterranean region, an area of three continents, differ in their culture, tradition and food habit, but lead very similar active lifestyles and share similar eating habits. It was observed that cases of chronic heart diseases, diabetes, gallstones and cancers were minimal in the Mediterranean region. The daily Mediterranean diet includes mostly fresh vegetables, fruit mainly as dessert, cereals, whole grain breads, pastas legumes, beans and nuts cooked in olive oil. The diet is supplemented by low to moderate use of milk, cheese and yogurt along with mostly red wine or water. Seafood, poultry and eggs are a weekly add on to the diet, and the consumption of red meat is limited to few times a month. Sweet and dessert intake is also limited to a few days a week. Fruit is the most preferred type of dessert. The Mediterranean diet is well-balanced with a supply of essential vitamins, minerals, low in saturated fat, salt and sugar to ensure good health. As stated, people in the Mediterranean region lead active lives, but they also find enough time to relax, enjoy and socialize with every meal. This, in turn, helps in digestion of food and proper functioning of body systems. Interestingly, the Mediterranean diet does not exclude any food from the diet that has a reasonable amount of saturated fats. In fact, it is the combination of the food products in the diet that provides the necessary nutrition to reduce possible health hazards, even curbing the chances of gaining extra weight. For instance, olive oil is the main source of fat in the Mediterranean diet. Olive oil is a monosaturated fat that is "good" fat and does not increase the blood cholesterol level. It is therefore believed that a healthy Mediterranean diet can be practiced to fight heart ailments and to stay healthy and fit.

About the Author

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