



# Healthy Living with the Mediterranean Diet

## How can the Mediterranean diet benefit long-term health?

### Physical activity & leisure are also important

In addition to eating a variety of foods, physical activity and leisure also play a role in the Mediterranean lifestyle. It is important to include at least **30 minutes of physical activity** on most days of the week, and to take time to relax and **enjoy meals and activities with family and friends.**

Multiple studies conducted in Europe and the United States showed that following the Mediterranean diet was associated with a reduced risk for various chronic diseases. The overall risk of death was also lower and the *more closely* that people followed the Mediterranean diet, the *lower the occurrence* of those diseases. Following the Mediterranean diet may help reduce the risk of: Metabolic Syndrome, Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, and Parkinson's Disease.

## How the foods in the Mediterranean diet improve health

- **Fruits and Vegetables**

These are low-calorie, nutrient-dense, high fiber and abundant in beneficial bioactive compounds like antioxidants that help protect the body against toxins and cancer.

- **Whole-grains** are minimally processed and therefore maintain high nutritional content, including fiber, B vitamins, minerals (like magnesium, iron, and selenium), and phytochemicals. Eating more dietary fiber may lower blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and triglycerides.

- **Legumes** are a good source of protein, minerals, fiber, complex carbohydrate, and healthy fatty acids. Making legumes part of your diet may reduce the risk for coronary heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.

- **Seafood and Olive Oil** are both excellent sources of the heart-healthy monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) and low in saturated fat. MUFAs may protect against coronary heart disease and stroke. Olive oil is also high in phenolic compounds, which may have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-clotting properties.

- **Red wine** contains a compound called resveratrol that may help prevent damage to blood vessels, reduce LDL or "bad" cholesterol and prevent blood clots.

