

Eat the Mediterranean Way!

The Mediterranean diet is considered by many to be one of the world's healthiest ways to eat. Research shows that following the Mediterranean diet lowers risk for heart disease, metabolic syndrome, heart attacks and some cancers. It also helps with losing weight and maintaining weight loss over time.

The Mediterranean diet is based on traditional foods and eating patterns of more than 16 countries in and surrounding the Mediterranean Sea including Albania, Spain, Morocco, France, Greece, Syria and Italy. These countries have different customs and traditions, but share common themes in the foods enjoyed. The diets include eating plenty of vegetables, whole fruit, and whole wheat breads. Protein comes from legumes (beans) and fish. Red meat and pork are rarely eaten. Healthy fats found in olive oil, olives, and nuts are eaten often. Wine is included in moderate amounts.

Choose the same healthy foods! For example:

- Eat plenty of vegetables every day.
- Eat whole fruit for snacks and desserts.
- Use olive or canola oils in cooking.
- Eat more legumes/beans and fish for protein. Eat less beef, pork and hamburger.

- Eat whole wheat breads, pastas and whole grains like barley and bulgur.
- Snack on almonds instead of cookies or crackers.
- Spread avocado on a sandwich instead of mayonnaise.
- If you drink alcohol, drink wine in moderate amounts (one glass a day for women and one to two glasses per day for men).

Possible health concerns with the Mediterranean include:

- Weight gain, from the fats in olive oil and nuts.
- Reduced iron levels. Be sure to eat some foods rich in iron or in vitamin C, to help absorb iron.
- Calcium loss from eating fewer dairy products. Ask your doctor about a calcium supplement.
- Wine is not an essential part of the diet. Avoid it if you are prone to alcohol abuse, are pregnant, at risk for breast cancer, or have other conditions that alcohol could make worse.

Resources: *Mayoclinic.com*; *US News Diet Review*;
<http://oldwayspt.org/mediterraneandiet>
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstruction>

Recipe of the Week: Tuna Pasta Salad

Serves 6

Salad:

2 cups uncooked whole wheat pasta (penne, rigatoni, macaroni)
2 cups broccoli florets, fresh
2 cans (6 ounces each) light tuna packed in water, drained
2 or 3 green onions (scallions), sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half

Dressing:

2/3 cup reduced fat mayonnaise (or reduced fat Miracle Whip type salad dressing)
½ teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

- Cook pasta according to package directions. During the last minute of cooking, add broccoli florets. Drain noodles and broccoli. Rinse immediately with very cold water.
- In small bowl, mix together dressing ingredients.
- In a large bowl, combine the cooled cooked pasta, broccoli, tuna, green onions, tomatoes and dressing.
- Refrigerate until ready to eat.
- You may prefer to add the dressing right before you serve the salad, because the pasta will absorb the dressing as the salad sits.

Nutrition Information

Calories: 191	Carbohydrate: 18g
Total fat: 6g	Fiber: 2.4g
Saturated fat: 1g	Protein: 16g

Tip of the Week:

Planning to travel soon? Think about how you can work in some activity that will be fun. Take a walking or bike tour to introduce you to your destination, or try a new sport you've always wondered about, like sea kayaking. Walk to activities, rather than taking a taxi. Ask local residents or hotel staff about places and routes to walk or run.
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