

# Mediterranean Diet

The evidence is clear the Mediterranean Diet is optimal  
Currently about 15 versions exist, they consistently consist of:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:**
  - about 10 servings a day (average American consumes 1 ½ servings/day)
  - fresh is best, canned is pretty much void of valuable nutrients and fiber and many times laden in high fructose corn syrup (non physiologic junk sweetener, blocks insulin receptor)
  - dark green leafy vegetables, ice berg lettuce doesn't count because it is nutrient poor
- **Olives and Oil Products** (excellent source of omega-3) – the darker green oils are richer in omega-3.
- **Whole Grains** – there is nothing inherently evil about carbohydrates, it's the FORM they are in. Refined and processed grains lack valuable nutrients and by their nature promote disease.
- **Deep Sea Fish**
  - Mediterranean's consume 5-6 servings of fish per week (a serving is about the size of a deck of cards)
  - Wild Salmon is the best for it's omega3's and lower concentration of mercury, PCB's and other toxins (smaller fish like sardines will also have lower toxin concentrations).
  - Fish oil supplementation is beneficial for cardiovascular health, immune function, mental stability and many more benefits as proven by dozens of studies over the past several years. It is feasible to take therapeutic doses now because of microfiltration processes, which remove the toxins. The higher quality the source the less "fishy" it tastes. Carlson Labs and NutriWest have products that have been microfiltered.
- **Legumes** – dark red beans are superior in antioxidants. Mediterranean's regularly consume a variety of legumes.
- **Limited red meat, Sweets, and Full Fat Dairy (saturated fat)**
  - Americans consume far too much red meat (free radicals and saturated fat) and are addicted to sweets. Red meat should ideally only be consumed once or twice a month.
  - Mediterranean's consume more fermented dairy such as kefir.
- **Red Wine**
  - Men should have two 5 oz glasses a day, women should have 1 glass
  - resveritrol in red wines is what benefits HDL's and lowers LDL's.
  - polyphenolics are also in teas and dark beers, but the concentrations in red wine far outreaches in benefit.
  - French wines don't use sulfites (the most popular drink in the U.S. is Coke, which has about 9 tsp of sugar per can. Diet sodas are worse because of the excitotoxins and other chemicals that really screw up your brain function and actually cause you to crave carbs. Remember the poster boy for Diet Coke? Michael J. Fox.)
  - The phosphates in carbonated drinks leach calcium from your body. Studies are showing alarming rates of osteoporosis in teens from drinking soda regularly and increased bone fractures. Recently New York took all regular soft drinks out of school pop machines to study obesity groups, but unfortunately left diet drinks.

Two important studies:

1. HALE study 2004 (follow-up Eur J Clin Nutr; Jan 2006, 1-10)  
KEY: small changes that are sustained yield LARGE benefits  
-Mediterranean-like diet starting at age 70!, and followed moderately (2 pt change: American Diet being 0, Mediterranean 10)  
-23% reduction in all-cause mortality  
-65% reduction when combined with other lifestyle factors.  
Findings observed with VERY MODEST lifestyle changes.
2. Lyon Heart Study  
Mediterranean Diet versus usual Western Diet  
-72% reduction in all-cause mortality  
-70% reduction in recurrent cardiovascular disease mortality

Both of these studies are impressive and show HUGE changes related to what we eat!

- The Mediterranean Diet has been shown to help prevent CVD (including strokes), prevent weight gain, lower the risk of some cancers, reduce inflammation, slow RA progression, etc.
- As an American, you enjoy some of the poorest quality of health and life amongst other industrialized nations.
  - The World Health Organization ranks the 39 industrialized nations of the world based on disease rates and quality of health.
  - Last year the U.S. came in 37<sup>th</sup>.
  - We have the most advanced medicine in the world available to us, which shows that medicine does NOT have the ability to make you healthy (you already knew that though).
  - Our quality of health and high disease rates are largely due to nutrient poor diets, sedentary lifestyles, and fast-paced high stress lifestyles along with poor spinal health.
  - 70-75% of your health is explained by HOW YOU LIVE.
- 9 major studies and over \$100 million suggest ANY version of the Mediterranean diet reduced death rate by 20%.
- Studies show that obese adults take 9 years off their life expectancy (77 in the U.S.) If they were also obese as adolescents take 16 years of life expectancy. There is no single lifestyle factor that affects life expectancy more than obesity or center waist girth.
- 20% of cancers are related to a sedentary lifestyle.
- 30% of cancers are related to obesity.
- Pomegranite** juice reduces many CVD and cancer biomarkers.
  - Long-term CVD study shows 31% reduction in carotid artery stenosis (arthroma) versus 9% per annum increase in control group.
  - 25+ point in systolic blood pressure.
  - Endothelium function, LDL oxidation, and many other measures improve post-consumption.
  - John's Hopkins study show improvement in many markers of prostate cancer prevention.
  - How much? Studies vary from 2-4 oz/day of the real juice, not concentrate.
- Like pomegranite juice, there is emerging and strong evidence that unique phytochemicals in dark chocolate are clearly protective. How much? 50 – 100 g/day of 85% cocoa. Mars makes a CocoaVia bar that is 85% cocoa but has something added to reduce the bitter taste (in the pharmacy sections of Target and Walgreens).