



EATING THE MEDITERRANEAN WAY



How should I eat to improve my health?

The way you eat will affect conditions you might have like: high blood sugar, high blood pressure, a large waist measurement, high bad cholesterol or triglyceride and low good cholesterol.

One way to improve your health and reduce your chances of having heart disease, stroke and diabetes is to eat like people living in the Mediterranean. This eating plan helps you to eat more fruit and vegetables, whole grains, extra-virgin olive oil, nuts, beans, fish and poultry. It will also help you to eat smaller amounts of red meat, processed meats and baked goods like doughnuts, cookies and cakes.

Below are the basic principles of a Mediterranean way of eating. Check off the principles you would like to start this week:

DO EVERY DAY

- ☐ Use extra-virgin olive oil as your main source of fat for cooking, simmering, seasoning, frying (limit this), and in salad dressings. Try to consume up to 4 tablespoons (60 mL) per day based on your weight.
- ☐ Eat at least 4 servings of vegetables every day with at least 2 of these servings as raw vegetables or in a salad.
- ☐ Eat at least 3 pieces of fresh or frozen fruit every day. Limit fruit juice.
- ☐ Choose chicken and turkey (skinless) more often than red or processed meat.
- ☐ Choose whole grains instead of white flour, bread and pasta.
- ☐ Drink less than one sugary drink per day. Sugary drinks include pop, soft drinks, fruit-flavoured drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks.
- ☐ Eat less than 1 tbsp (15mL, 12g) of butter, cream, or hard (hydrogenated) margarine.
- ☐ If drinking alcohol, drink only 1 serving a day and choose wine (5oz or 150 mL).

DO EVERY WEEK

- ☐ **Three times a week:** Eat one serving of nuts, including shelled nuts and peanuts.
- ☐ **Three times a week:** Eat one serving of legumes (kidney beans, white or black beans, lentils, split peas, chickpeas).
- ☐ **Three times a week:** Eat one serving of fish or seafood. Fish that is naturally fatty is a good choice like: salmon, trout, char, herring, mackerel, or sardines.
- ☐ **Two times a week:** Eat pasta sauce made by simmering extra virgin olive oil with garlic, onions or leeks, and tomatoes.
- ☐ **Limit red meat** to less than 100g (3-4oz) per day or 500g (16oz) per week.
- ☐ **Limit processed meat** like ham, bacon, sausage or luncheon meats to once a week.
- ☐ **Limit store-bought** cookies, pastries, cakes, biscuits, candy, chocolate, and chips and salty snacks to less than three times per week
- ☐ **Limit fast food restaurants** and frozen processed foods such as pizza, lasagne, and high-fat prepared dinners to less than one time per week.

What is 1 serving?

Vegetables

- ½ cup (125mL) fresh, frozen or cooked
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables

Legumes

- Includes beans, lentils, split peas, chickpeas and soybeans and their flours.
- ¾ cup (175mL) cooked

Nuts

- ¼ cup (60mL) shelled
- 2 tbsp nut butters like peanut butter

Fish/Seafood

- 100 g (3-4oz) of fish
- 200 g (6-8oz) or 1 ¼ cup of seafood

Fruits

- ½ cup (125 mL) fresh or frozen fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) 100% fruit juice – limit to ½ cup per day



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The CHANGE program is an initiative of Metabolic Syndrome Canada.



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