

Mediterranean Diet: Foods to include or limit

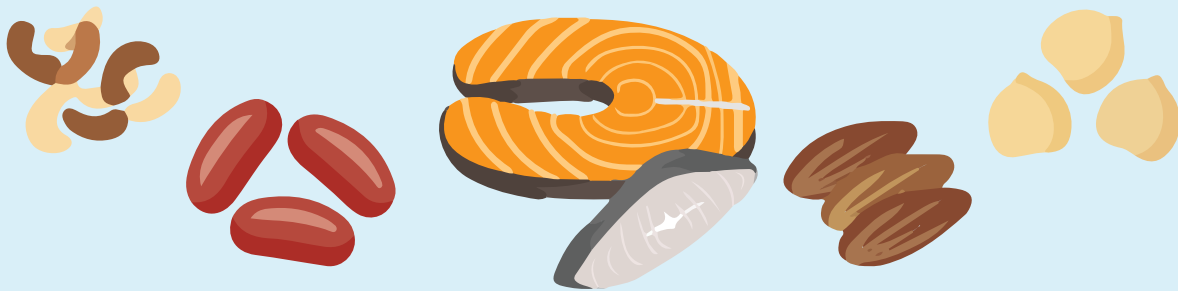
EAT AT EVERY MEAL

Fruits, veggies, whole grains, extra virgin olive oil



EAT AT LEAST 3 SERVINGS A WEEK

Fish, seafood, nuts, beans, chickpeas, lentils



LIMIT TO ONE SERVING A DAY

Poultry like chicken and turkey, low-fat milks and cheeses, eggs



LIMIT TO ONE SERVING A WEEK

Red meat like beef and pork, sugar and sweets



What is a Mediterranean diet?

A Mediterranean diet is a healthy way of eating. It includes foods and cooking styles from many countries around the Mediterranean Sea, like Greece and Italy. The exact foods included vary from place to place.

A Mediterranean diet involves eating a lot of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains. It uses olive oil instead of other fats. It also includes some fish, poultry, and dairy products, but not a lot of red meat.

Wine is often thought of as part of a Mediterranean diet. It is not needed, and you might choose not to include it. If you do drink alcohol, limit the amount to

- For females, no more than 1 drink a day
- For males, no more than 2 drinks a day

Why is a Mediterranean diet good for my MS symptoms?

Recent research has shown that following a Mediterranean diet can help reduce fatigue and protect against disability for MS patients. The Mediterranean diet has been well-documented as a way to help reduce inflammation.

More research is needed, but many experts also now see a link between following a Mediterranean diet and brain health over time. Experts think the nutrients gained when your diet relies heavily on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and fish are linked to slower brain aging. These nutrients include higher levels of specific fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins, such as

- Certain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids
- Lutein
- Zeaxanthin
- Vitamin E
- Choline

What are the other benefits of a Mediterranean diet?

A Mediterranean diet can also help

- Improve your overall health, and help you lose weight
- Lower your risk of stroke
- Lower your risk of heart problems such as a heart attack
- Manage your blood sugar if you have diabetes





Foods to eat and drink on a Mediterranean diet

A Mediterranean diet is more of an eating pattern than a strict diet. Try to cover two-thirds of your plate with fresh fruits and vegetables. Some examples of foods that are often part of this pattern:

- **Grains** – Whole grains like whole-grain bread and pasta, oats, couscous, brown rice, barley, and orzo.
- **Fruits** – Many kinds and colors of fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits. Frozen or canned fruits with 100% fruit juice or water (without added sugar). Examples: apples, pears, berries, melons, bananas, plums, raisins, figs, and peaches.
- **Vegetables** – Many kinds and colors of fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables. If canned, low sodium or salt free. If frozen, without added fat and sodium. Examples include avocados, peppers, tomatoes, spinach, kale, beans, carrots, peas, olives, cucumbers, hummus, soybeans, lentils, and kidney beans.
- **Dairy** – Low-fat milk, cheese, and other dairy products. Greek yogurt, kefir, and plant-based milk alternatives like soy milk.
- **Lean meats, poultry, seafood, and proteins** – Salmon, tuna (limit to one serving per week), cod, and other fish. Shrimp, clams, scallops, and mussels. White meat chicken and turkey, eggs, dried beans, lentils, and tofu. Nuts such as walnuts, almonds, pecans, hazelnuts, cashews, peanuts, and nut butters. Seeds such as pumpkin, sesame, flax, and sunflower seeds.
- **Fats, oils, and other foods** – Foods with healthy fats found in fish, nuts, and avocados. Limit use of oils to olive oil only. Use onions, garlic, spices, and herbs to season food.



Foods and drinks to avoid or limit on a Mediterranean diet

A Mediterranean diet involves avoiding or limiting certain types of foods. Try to avoid foods with additives like artificial sweeteners. Avoid foods that are processed, refined, or preserved. These are often foods with a very long shelf life, are usually found in the inner aisles of the grocery store and generally don't need to be refrigerated.

- **Grains to avoid** – White bread, pasta, white rice, crackers, and biscuits.
- **Fruits to avoid** – Fruits canned or frozen with extra sugar.
- **Vegetables to avoid** – Commercially prepared potatoes and vegetable mixes, regular canned vegetables and juices, and vegetables frozen with sauce or pickled vegetables.
- **Dairy to avoid** – Whole-fat dairy products like cheese, ice cream, whole milk, cream, and buttermilk.
- **Meats, poultry, seafood, and proteins to avoid** – Red meat such as beef, pork, and lamb. Processed meats such as sausages, deli meats, salami, hot dogs, and bacon.
- **Fats and oils to avoid** – Butter, margarine, lard, gravies, sauces, and salad dressing.
- **Sweets to avoid** – Cookies, cakes, candy, doughnuts, muffins, ice cream and other highly processed sweets.



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