

Diet and Nutrition Care Manual

The Mediterranean-style Diet

This is not a specific diet but rather an eating pattern that has been shown to prevent cardiovascular events (1) and is generally considered “heart healthy”. Specific portions of most foods have not been identified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); however nutritional needs can be met by following a USDA Food Pattern^a. Total fat content may be higher than other meal patterns, but saturated fat intake is low. Fruits and vegetables are generally fresh and seasonal in the studies of this eating pattern, and foods are minimally processed. No guidelines are given for given for sodium content, but because food are minimally processed, low to moderate sodium levels can be easily achieved. Provide adequate nutrients as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines and National Research Council by using these guidelines to provide three balanced meals and up to three snacks daily:

Food	Foods to Choose*	Foods to Avoid
Protein Foods (fish, seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, dry beans/peas/lentils, soy products, nuts, etc.) 5-6 ounces/day	Fish, especially fatty fish, seafood, poultry Legumes ≥ 3 servings/week Tree nuts and peanuts ≥ 3 servings per week Eggs 0-4 times per week	Red meats Processed Meats Visible fat on meat
Dairy ≥ 3 servings per day	Low fat cheese, yogurt, and milk	Butter, cream, whole-fat dairy foods
Fruits (usually fresh) ≥ 3 servings per day	Fruits of all kinds, especially fresh fruits	Limit fruits canned in sugar syrups
Vegetables ≥ 2 servings daily	Vegetables of all kinds, especially green and root vegetables Sofrito (a cooked mixture of onions, garlic, and tomato) is commonly used	Limit use of butter and cream sauces on vegetables
Grains ≥ 3 servings per day	Minimally processed breads, cereals, rice and pasta. Whole grains preferred	Commercial baked goods
Fluids Based on individual needs	Wine with meals (optional, not recommended for those who don't or can't drink alcohol)	
Liquid Fats and Oils ≥ 2 Tbsp/day	Olive oil, canola oil, includes that used in cooking and food preparation	Limit use of other oils
Solid Fats and Added Sugars (SoFAS)	Sweet fruits Sweets home-made with oils, not solid fats Margarines blended with oils	Commercial bakery goods, sweets, pastries Fried foods

*Foods to choose based on one study of the benefits of a Mediterranean-style diet (Source: 1,2)

Recommended Nutritional Composition	
Calories¹ Vary depending on content of diet	Dietary Fiber: 25-35 gms/day
Carbohydrates 45-65% of calories	Sodium: ≤2300 mg/day ³
Protein² 10-35% of calories	Calcium⁴ ≥1000-1200 mg Vitamin D⁵ 600-800 IU
Fat: 32-35% of calories <10% from saturated fat	Vitamin A F 700/M 900 mg RAE Vitamin C 90 mg Potassium 4700 mg
Nutrients may vary day to day, but should average to the above estimates. Added sodium, saturated fats, sugars and alcohol will alter nutritional composition.	

¹Depending on activity level, based on reference heights/weights adults aged 61+: Males (5'10", 154#) need 2000-2400 calories; Females (5'4", 126#) need 1600–2200 calories (2). For specific calorie level patterns, see *Appendix*.

²Based on individual needs.

³Sodium intake will be higher with processed foods/added salt. For individuals with prehypertension and hypertension further reduction to 1,500 mg sodium per day can result in even greater blood pressure reduction.

⁴Calcium: 1200 mg for females 51+, 1000 mg for males 51+ and 1200 mg for males 71+.

⁵Vitamin D: 600 IU for 51+ and 800 IU for 71+.

Note: Nutritional composition will change with diet liberalization.

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- ◆ Limit animal fats, saturated fats, cholesterol
- ◆ Use a wide variety of nutrient-dense foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, cooked dry bean/peas/lentils) rich in vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.
- ◆ Older adults may need individualized/less restrictive diets especially if intake is poor. Honor food preferences and cultural norms.
- ◆ Those with chewing or swallowing problems often cannot safely consume nuts or seeds. Use nut butters and cooked dried beans to meet recommendations for nuts, seeds, and legumes
- ◆ Use caution for those with renal failure; evaluate need to limit potassium, sodium, or phosphorous.

Sample Daily Meal Plan for the Mediterranean-style Diet

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
¾ c Orange Juice ½ c Oatmeal ¼ c Scrambled Egg 1 Slice Whole Wheat Toast 1 Tbs Jelly 1 tsp Margarine* 1 c Skim or 1% Milk Sugar, Salt, Pepper Beverage of Choice	2 oz Baked Chicken ½ c Seasoned Quinoa ½ c Seasoned Peas and Mushrooms 1 c Green Salad with ¼ c Garbanzo Beans with 1 Tbs Salad Dressing*** 1 Whole Wheat Roll ½ c Fruit Sorbet with 1 c Strawberries 1 c Skim or 1% Milk Sugar, Salt, Pepper Beverage of Choice	4 oz Red wine (optional) 6 oz Vegetable Soup 3 oz Baked Fish drizzled with 1 tsp olive oil ½ c Mashed Potatoes ½ c Sautéed Spinach*** 1 Baked Apple 1 c Skim or 1% Milk Sugar, Salt, Pepper Beverage of Choice
P.M. Snack		
½ Peanut Butter Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread ½ Banana Beverage of Choice		

Bold/italicized items indicate differences from the Regular Diet menu.

*Low in saturated fats and *trans* fats, blended with canola oil

Condiments may include pepper or other spices, sugar, sugar substitute, non-fat coffee creamer, etc. based on nutrition goals. Additional condiments and garnishes (i.e. margarine, gravy, sauces, ketchup, etc.) may round out the menu and make it more appealing and palatable. These add additional calories, micro- and macronutrients (i.e. calories, fat, carbohydrates, sodium, etc.) and may not be appropriate for some individuals.

***Prepare full-fat salad dressings with olive or canola oil, use olive or canola oil for sautéing and seasoning

USDA Food Patterns are provided for various calorie levels from 1000-3200 and can be accessed at http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/usda_food_patterns/USDAFoodPatternsSummaryTable.pdf. See *Appendix* for *USDA Food Patterns*.

References for Mediterranean-style diet:

1. Mediterranean Diet. American Heart Association Web site. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/Mediterranean-Diet_UCM_306004_Article.jsp. Accessed March 1, 2016.

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2. Mediterranean Diet. Cleveland Clinic Web site.
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/heart/prevention/nutrition/healthy-diet/mediterranean-diet>.
Accessed March 1, 2016.
3. Estruch R, Ros E, Salas-Salvado J, et al. Primary prevention of cardiovascular disease with a Mediterranean diet. *NEJM*. 2013;368:1279-90. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1200303. Accessed March 1, 2016.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>. Accessed January 11, 2016.