



MHFL RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Mediterranean-Style Eating Is The Only Eating Regimen That Not Only Reduces Weight, But Also Can Prevent And Reverse A Wide Array Of Chronic Health Conditions. And Quickly! It Can Even Shield Us From Bad Health Outcomes Caused By Previous, Bad Lifestyle Choices.

Mediterranean Style Eating Is Proven To Address Multiple Health Issues Even Better Than Some Popular, High-Cost Prescription Drugs & Surgical Procedures.

The Sponsor Of This Research, Mediterranean Harvest For Life, Was Deemed By University Nutrition Scientists As Having As Great A Potential To Impact Health As The Removal Of Trans Fats.

Presented by
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A Dietary Regimen With Unsurpassed “Cradle-To-(Keep You Out Of The)-Grave” Health Impacts

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Helping People Benefit From Mediterranean-Style Eating

Despite medical advances and huge healthcare spending, our world is reeling from cancers, COPD, diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, Alzheimer's & Parkinson's disease, ulcers, asthma, and birth defects. And much of the problem is fueled by our unhealthy diets. According to experts, left unchecked, our eating may soon overtake tobacco as America's leading health problem.

Conversely, eating a healthier dietary regimen is proven to help avert health problems and can even extend life.

And, if you're not eating healthfully, you could soon be feeling a huge financial impact, as we're all being forced to assume more of the costs for our health care. Our nation recently transformed into a "Consumer Directed Care" system that shifts more responsibility for healthcare costs from health insurance sponsors to individuals. Retiree health plans are being reduced. And employers are exploring differentiating employee benefit costs based on lifestyles. Finally, more and more people don't have health insurance.

Bottom line: consuming the wrong foods impacts both our health and our wallet. Our poor eating habits are leading to what we call, *a global "girth trajectory" of negative health and economic consequences.*

There's great news, however. After exhaustive research on dietary regimens, time spent in both home and commercial kitchens, and focus group findings, Lifestyle Management International is launching a solution – the Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ (MHFL) dietary regimen. We want everyone to realize the important, life-altering benefits of Mediterranean-style eating – via an exciting new dietary regimen offering fitness, more enjoyable lives, extended lifespans, and financial payback.

We became convinced of the need for this dietary regimen while serving on the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Employee Benefits Council and seeing the impact of the typical American diet on our lives, finances and families.

Over the past few years, we've also been at the bedside of multiple friends as they've prepared to undergo open heart surgery. We comforted the families with prayer, but their unease was obvious. Each time, the emotional, physical, spiritual and financial concerns were significant.

Having served multiple industries in a strategic planning capacity, we set out to address these most critical issues.

Enjoy Life More... Enjoy More Life™ with the Mediterranean Harvest For Life™

We've harvested the incredible health benefits and sensory pleasures of the Mediterranean style of eating and incorporated it – along with other key eating and lifestyle strategies -- into a new dietary regimen. In particular, we provide unique support for migrating to a healthier lifestyle. We call it, *the Mediterranean Harvest For Life.™*

With this dietary regimen and migratory guidance, people will be able to *Enjoy Life More... Enjoy More Life.™*

Reviewed and affirmed by university nutrition scientists, the Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ is based on a proven dietary regimen that works to combat many of the maladies plaguing our families. As you'll see in the following pages, Mediterranean style eating can reduce the incidence of atherosclerosis, cancers, COPD, diabetes, heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke. It can cut bad cholesterol and improve good cholesterol. It can reduce the incidence of peptic ulcers. It can address metabolic syndrome and help reduce our weight and our waistlines. Mediterranean-style eating can also ward off childhood respiratory allergies. A true life-long "cradle-to-keep-you-out-of-the-grave solution", it can prevent birth defects and impact Alzheimer's disease.

Mediterranean Harvest For Life (MHFL) can help people realize these tremendous health impacts. We provide concise Mediterranean-style eating guidelines in our "**MHFL Trapezoid.**" More than just Mediterranean style eating, MHFL and our Trapezoid uniquely blend Mediterranean style eating with high performance, "High Octane" foods and foods that help you feel full while keeping calorie intake low. So you fill up (on good stuff), without filling out! MHFL also includes strategies on how to migrate from our current eating styles to the Mediterranean style of eating – in our "**Healthy Eating & Living Plan**" (H.E.L.P.).

Want more life?

Research studies have concluded a Mediterranean-style dietary regimen dramatically lowers the risk of dying by various causes, and they proved participants in this type of eating could extend their lives. One study indicated if participants started this eating regimen at age 60, they'd extend their lives a year. Another indicated Alzheimer's disease patients can gain up to 4 years of life by strictly adhering to this type of diet!

According to the research, this type of dietary regimen can work with greater efficacy -- and at far less expense -- than many medical procedures and prescription drugs. A Mediterranean-based dietary regimen is even being prescribed as part of discharge routines for heart patients to help avert recurrences.

Plus, Mediterranean eating isn't just a "diet" – it can reverse or shield us from the negative impacts of our historically bad dietary lifestyles. Consider just two of the rapid, preventative, and countering benefits sited:

1.) "Intriguingly, many people in this group also had the biggest accumulation of risk factors for the disease (diabetes) -- they were older, fatter, had a family history of diabetes, more sedentary lifestyle or were ex-smokers. But they appear to have been shielded by the diet." 2.) Start a Mediterranean-style diet, add regular exercise and expect your blood vessels to be healthier in only eight weeks. .

Importantly, the Mediterranean Harvest For Life should also help many families cut costs, too.

If we in the US had the same levels of chronic illness as Europeans, we'd each save between \$1,200 and \$1,750 per year each on medical bills, according to a recent study.

How would you like an extra \$825 a year? That's the amount of money overweight people saved on medical expenses the year after losing just 5% of their weight (just 9 pounds if you weigh 185 pounds.) And, if you're not overweight, this type of diet can help you stay trim and avoid these excess costs in the future.

The Mediterranean Harvest For Life dietary regimen isn't a fad. It's a new eating regimen fashioned after the proven, long-standing Mediterranean style of eating and tweaked to help us make the move to this great lifestyle.

First and most importantly, there's plenty of flavor and culinary joy in this regimen. This stuff tastes great.

The Mediterranean Harvest for Life™ incorporates the pleasures and benefits of legumes, fruits, vegetables, fish, grains, olive oil, nuts, and lean meats in moderation, to provide a highly enjoyable and satisfying experience.

At Lifestyle Management International, we also recognize that many of us are consuming too many calories – and far too many unproductive calories. But we know that changing entrenched eating styles will not be easy. Let's face it, we enjoy our food. And lots of it.

So we've also tweaked our Mediterranean style of eating with an overlapping concept proven to be effective in attaining healthy weight reduction while keeping us satiated – particularly given our current high calorie eating habits. While we advocate portion control, MHFL also emphasizes high nutrient/low calorie foods to help people feel full without consuming all the calories. We encourage eating a higher proportion of the kinds of food that don't contain a lot of calories. We want to help people feel satisfied. Our bottom line on waist lines: participants should feel full without filling out.

In other words, through the Mediterranean Harvest For Life,™ we're helping people take enjoyable steps to migrate away from their high-calorie, low-nutrient eating -- towards a more healthy, fun and rewarding eating experience using low-calorie, high-nutrient foods. And we've built in other strategies to help people migrate to this healthier eating and stick to this plan.

But enough about health. Let's visit a moment about life itself. Wouldn't it be great to be able to ride a mountain bike, fit into that swimsuit, face our graduating class with glee, hit the badminton court, or just enjoy the grandchildren more? With the Mediterranean Harvest For Life, you'll really enjoy life more and enjoy more life.

Join The Excitement. Make An Impact In Your Own Life And In The Lives Of Others. Start Sharing Today!

We're now packaging the benefits of this eating style so many more people can benefit from it. In fact, we want to create a close community of people who are convinced this dietary regimen is needed, and who will commit to following its guidelines and sharing the results with one another.

It's a proven fact that people who share their dietary goals, strategies and steps for success with others – and hold each other accountable to their desired actions and outcomes – are more effective in achieving their goals.

So, we're also building a community of like minded, caring, health-conscious people through the web, churches and community forums. We call it: the Mediterranean Harvest For Life League. Why not join?

We'll also be working with the food industry on licensing this concept for restaurants, commercial cafeterias and grocer shelves. Because for people to succeed, they'll need multiple venues that offer and support this.

Don't Just Take Our Word For It. Read The News Articles On A Mediterranean Dietary Regimen.

We became aware of the value in this eating style – especially in contrast to our current eating styles -- as we kept researching studies articulating the health attributes of a Mediterranean-style dietary regimen.

The following pages provide multiple articles on the awesome health benefits of Mediterranean-style eating. These articles and their related studies are from trusted sources like hospitals, universities, the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, WebMD and major newspapers and scientific magazines. We also include summaries on the economic consequences of our current poor dietary choices and lifestyles.

Facts Don't Lie: It's Time For A Change. Try Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ Today

We believe Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ will help people migrate to a higher-nutrient, lower-calorie combination of foods proven to improve health and lower healthcare costs -- for far happier living.

A DIVINE MIX

As an authoritative contributor to the WebMD health website noted, there's a "Divine Mix" at play with the Mediterranean dietary regimen.

"Olive oil plays a central role, but it is not alone," says Dimitrios Trichopoulos, MD, PhD, of Harvard School of Public Health. "It's among the divine mix of several factors that, when used in combination, help provide strong evidence of something that is very important -- eating the proper diet can significantly reduce your risk of early death."

"God knows what sorts of interactions take place within the foods, and we need further research to pinpoint them exactly," Trichopoulos tells WebMD.

Please familiarize yourself with this research on the merits of Mediterranean-style eating and review our HELP document and Trapezoid. And please join us in harvesting all the benefits of this tasty, life-enriching, healthful and economically sound dietary lifestyle – and in encouraging those you know and love to participate as well.

I wish you very happy Mediterranean Harvest For Life,

Tim Maurer

P. S. This document is not intended to provide medical advice. Please consult your doctor for all matters of medical evaluation, advice and treatment. Please direct your inquiries to tim.maurer@mediterraneanharvest.com.

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND ARTICLE EXCERPTS VALIDATING THE INCREDIBLE HEALTH BENEFITS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN STYLE OF EATING

The following articles, web pages and research summaries attest to the health attributes of the Mediterranean style of eating. These were included without modification, although some editing was done to reduce length.

Mediterranean Diet Lengthens US Lives

Eating the Mediterranean way could help you live longer, according to the first study to look at how the dietary pattern relates to mortality in a US population. **Men whose diets were closest to the Mediterranean ideal were 21% less likely to die over five years than men whose diets were least Mediterranean-like. Similar results were seen in women.**

"These results provide strong evidence for a beneficial effect of higher conformity with the Mediterranean dietary pattern on risk of death from all causes, including deaths due to cardiovascular disease and cancer, in a US population," Doctor Panagiota Mitrou of the University of Cambridge in the UK and colleagues conclude.

A number of studies have linked the Mediterranean diet, which is rich in fish, fruits and vegetables and nuts and low in dairy foods and red meat, to health benefits, the researchers note in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

They looked at diet and mortality in 380,296 men and women, 50 to 71 years old, who were participating in the National Institutes of Health-AARP Diet and Health Study.

For both men and women, the researchers found, the risk of death from any cause over the five-year follow-up period was lower for those with the most Mediterranean-like diets. Deaths from cancer or cardiovascular disease were also significantly lower in this group. The benefit was especially strong in smokers who were not overweight, who nearly halved their risk of death if they closely followed the Mediterranean diet pattern. Smokers may have had the most to gain from the antioxidant and blood fat-lowering effects of Mediterranean-style eating, Mitrou and colleagues suggest.

Dec 11, 2007, TVNZ.co.nz

Mediterranean Diet Means Longer Life

ATHENS, Greece, April 7, 2004 (UPI) -- A Greek study finds that elderly Europeans who embrace the Mediterranean diet can expect to live longer than those who eat the high-fat way.

Researchers from the University of Athens Medical School tracked 74,000 men and women over the age of 60 living in nine European countries. They found that mortality was lower among those who stuck most closely to a diet of cereal, fish, unsaturated fats like olive oil and moderate wine drinking with low consumption of meat, dairy products and saturated fats.

The association between diet and mortality was closest in Greece and Spain, the study found, possibly because residents of those countries adhere most closely to the Mediterranean style.

The researchers found that a 60-year-old man who keeps to pasta, fish and olive oil (Mediterranean style) would live an average of a year longer.

The study was published in the British Medical Journal, COPYRIGHT 2004 Advanstar Communications, Inc.

Mediterranean Diet Cuts Death From Chronic Diseases

September 12, 2008, By **Steven Reinberg** *HealthDay Reporter* **People who eat a strict Mediterranean diet are at less risk of developing heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, Italian researchers report.** "This study helps us to support all the recommendations and the nutritional guidelines on the benefit of Mediterranean diet on mortality from all the causes, as well as on the incidence of cardiovascular, neoplastic and degenerative diseases," said lead researcher Dr. Francesco Sofi, from the Department of Medical and Surgical Critical Area at the Thrombosis Centre at the University of Florence. "By improving the food quality of the population, we would likely reduce the incidence of these diseases by nearly 10 percent," Sofi added.

People who adhered strictly to a Mediterranean diet had significant improvements in health. These people saw an overall drop in mortality of 9 percent, a 9 percent drop in death from cardiovascular disease, and a 13 percent reduction in cases of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, and a 6 percent drop in cancer. These findings confirm the current guidelines and recommendations from all major scientific institutions that encourage a Mediterranean-like diet for the prevention of major chronic diseases, the researchers concluded.

"The Mediterranean diet has been reported to be associated with a favorable health outcome, with no differences among countries, gender and study quality," Sofi said. "By improving diet, we would reach a significant improvement of health quality and duration of life."

Eat Like A Mediterranean And Live Longer

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2004 W.H. White Publications, Inc. **If you've heard about the health advantages of the "Mediterranean diet" but thought you might be too old to benefit, a new study has good news: It's never too late to start eating right.** The Mediterranean diet emulates the eating habits of southern Europeans--high in fish, whole grains, fruit, nuts, vegetables and olive oil; low in meat, dairy products and polyunsaturated fat. **Combine this diet with daily exercise (such as a half-hour walk), moderate alcohol use and avoiding smoking, and you'll likely live longer--even if you're over 70 when you start.**

Researchers at Wageningen University in the Netherlands studied participants in HALE (Healthy Aging: a Longitudinal study in Europe), a 12-year tracking of more than 2,300 people in 11 countries, ages 70 to 90. As reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), **individuals following the Mediterranean diet had a combined 23 percent lower rate of death from all causes, including heart disease, cancer and stroke. Those who also adhered to the three other lifestyle rules--exercise, moderate drinking, nonsmoking--had a 65 percent lower all-cause death rate. What's more, the Mediterranean group improved more than the control group on all measures of the metabolic syndrome--large waist size, low HDL ("good") cholesterol, and higher-than-optimal blood sugar, blood pressure, and triglycerides.**

What to do: Eat more fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and seafood. Replace saturated fats from meat and dairy with unsaturated fats from oils and nuts. **Eating a Mediterranean diet making use of olive oil, along with not smoking, being active, and moderate alcohol consumption, helped reduce the death rate of elderly people by more than 60 per cent.**

Mediterranean Diet Promotes Health

Essential Natural Health News 2004 PRIMEDIA Intertec, **Two studies--both published in the September 22, 2004 issue of The Journal of the American Medical Association--have come down strongly in favor of the Mediterranean diet, finding that it promotes healthy longevity and helps prevent metabolic syndrome.**

In a Dutch study, individuals between the ages of 70 and 90 who followed this diet experienced a 23 percent lower risk of death from all causes. The second study, by the University of Naples, found that people sticking to the Mediterranean diet were less likely to develop metabolic syndrome--a condition characterized by obesity, high blood pressure, high triglycerides and increased blood sugar levels--and that **the diet can often reverse these conditions if they do occur.** April 7, 2005 pNA *Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter*, Nov 2004 v22 i9 p1(1)

Mediterranean Diet Reduces Heart Attacks, Blood Pressure, Strokes

ROME, Aug 4, 2004 (Xinhua via COMTEX) **The Mediterranean diet halves the risk of heart attacks**, according to a new study released here on Wednesday. The four-year study of 11,000 heart patients in 170 Italian hospitals was conducted by the Italian Hospital Cardiologists' Association (Anmco) along with Milan's prestigious Mario Negri research institute.

According to Dr. Carlo Schweiger, president of Anmco's Health Care Foundation, **the Mediterranean diet, based on fish, vegetables, fruit, olive oil and a glass of wine at meals, halves the risk of heart attacks**. The research was the first in-depth study of the impact on health of the widely touted Italian-style diet and its ability to cut down the risk of death from heart attacks.

Study Fuels Low-Fat vs. Low-Carb Debate – Mediterranean A Winner For Overall Health

(Analysis Of Low Fat Vs. Atkins Vs. Mediterranean Diets Validates Overall Value In Mediterranean Eating)

Wall Street Journal, July 17, 2008; By William M. Bulkeley. **Overweight people on low-carbohydrate and Mediterranean diets lost more weight and got greater cardiovascular benefits than people on a conventional low-fat diet, according to a study that endorses alternative diets published in a major medical journal.**

The study, which tracked 322 Israelis for two years, surprisingly found that a low-carb diet, often associated in the U.S. with high levels of meat consumption -- was better than a low-fat diet in boosting blood levels of "good" cholesterol, or high-density lipoproteins associated with cardiovascular health benefits. **It also determined that the Mediterranean diet, which includes wine, olive oil, whole grains and fruits, was better than the low-fat diet in controlling glucose levels. (NOTE: Beyond affecting weight loss, Mediterranean style eating can be key to managing and preventing diabetes.)**

"A lot of people believe a low-fat diet is the only sanctioned weight-loss diet," said Meir J. Stampfer, an epidemiology and nutrition professor at the Harvard School of Public Health who was senior author of the report, published in Thursday's edition of the New England Journal of Medicine. The study found that "there are alternatives that work better."

The study's leader, Iris Shai of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, said, **"We believe that this study will open clinical medicine to considering low-carb and Mediterranean diets as safe, effective alternatives for patients."**

The study was funded with a \$497,000 grant from the ...nutritional-research foundation established by Robert Atkins, the late diet guru whose Atkins diet is controversial because it allows dieters to consume large amounts of meat and cheese, while eliminating bread and pasta. The foundation said it didn't influence the findings, and the study's authors said they didn't have any financial conflicts under the New England Journal guidelines.

Dean Ornish, a doctor and University of California at San Francisco professor who advocates extremely low-fat diets, said **the Israel study shouldn't be seen as endorsement of the Atkins diet because the low-carb participants in the study were encouraged to consume vegetable fats, as opposed to the meat fats that Atkins dieters typically ingest. "A vegetarian Atkins diet is almost an oxymoron," he said.**

In the Israel study, after two years, those in the group assigned to the low-carb diet lost an average of 10.3 lbs. -- 58% more than the 6.5 lbs. lost by dieters who followed the low-fat diet based on the Heart Association recommendations. **Those on the Mediterranean diet, which includes lots of carbohydrates like pasta and more calories from fat in the form of olive oil than the Heart Association recommends, lost 10 lbs, nearly as much as the low-carb diet.**

AP, Mike Strobbe, 7/18/08 **The new study's results favored the Atkins-like approach less when subgroups such as diabetics and women were examined. Among the 36 diabetics, only those on the Mediterranean diet lowered blood sugar levels. Among the 45 women, those on the Mediterranean diet lost the most weight.**

Mediterranean Diet May Be Far More Efficacious Than Cholesterol Drugs

DO YOU REALLY NEED ALL THOSE PRESCRIPTION PILLS THAT YOU ARE POPPING? MAYBE NOT...
Forbes, November 29, 2004.

... Let the un-drugging of America begin. Millions of us are popping prescription pills for innocuous ills, **when simple lifestyle changes of diet and exercise – harped on by physicians for decades – are more effective and a lot cheaper.**

Dr. John Abramson, a Harvard Medical School instructor and author of *Overdosed America: The Broken Promise of American Medicine*, adds: “We have exaggerated belief in biomedicine, in the same way that primitive society believed in folk cures.” **He blames drug makers for exaggerating the benefits and minimizing the side effects of patented medicines, and he urges the medical establishment to emphasize cleaner living.**

But Big Pharma argues the opposite case: that the real problem is under-medication. For great numbers of people, better diet and more exercise simply aren't enough, this argument goes. A Rand Corp. study a year ago found significant under-treatment of diabetes, heart disease, asthma and stroke. Congress last year extended Medicare coverage to drugs in part because of such concerns.

And yet, America, which leads the world in developing new drugs, ranks a mediocre 29th in life expectancy. Demographics have something to do with this, but another reason is that we are fatter and more out of shape than ever before. A fourth of Americans are obese (i.e. at least 30 to 40 pounds over their recommended weight). Thirteen million people live with heart disease. Another 18 million have diabetes, which could soar to 30 million in 25 years, despite new designer drugs.

In a perverse kind of symbiosis, the cascade of disease and medical complications growing out of America's excesses and lack of fitness triggers more demand for more drugs. In the U. S. employers, government and consumers spent \$216 billion on prescription drugs last year (or 2% of the U. S. economy), up 11.5% in a year, says IMS Health. That paid for 3.4 billion prescriptions, a dozen for every man, woman and child in this country.

This penchant for chemicals, stoked in part by \$3.2 billion that drug makers spend on ads to reach consumers (part of a \$25 billion marketing budget), distracts doctors and patients from the lifestyle changes that could have far greater impact. Decades of nagging from doctors have failed to get people off the sofa and into the gym. “Physicians are somewhat hardened,” says Cleveland Clinic cardiologist Eric Topol. **“There’s a sense that we have tried (to preach a better lifestyle) but patients don’t do it.”**

Heart patients who go on a Mediterranean diet reduce their risk of future heart attacks and cardiac death by up to 70%; cholesterol-lowering drugs cost us \$13.0 billion a year and lower the risk only half as much...

For Many People, Cholesterol Drugs May Not Do Any Good

Business Week, January 28, 2008. Research suggests that except among high risk-heart patients, the benefits of statins, such as Lipitor, are overstated... There was no overall reduction in total deaths or illnesses requiring hospitalization – despite big reductions in “bad” cholesterol.” Most people are taking something with no chance of benefit and a risk of harm.... Data suggest that for patients without heart disease, only 1 in 100 is likely to benefit from taking statins for years...

And the widespread use of statins comes at the cost of billions of dollars a year, not just for the drugs but also for doctors' visits, cholesterol screening, and other tests. Since health-care dollars are finite, “resources are not going to interventions that might be of benefit,” says Dr. Beatrice A. Golomb, associate professor of medicine at the University of California at San Diego School of Medicine. **What would work better? Perhaps urging people to switch to a Mediterranean diet...**

Mediterranean Diet, As Part Of A Healthy Regimen, Is Proven To Reduce Heart Attack Risk Better Than Surgery

Drugs, Diet And Exercise Are Proven To Reduce The Risk Of Heart Attack. Angioplasty and Bypass Are Not.

AARP Magazine, November/December 2004

...Yet, neither bypass (in which a healthy blood vessel is grafted around the blockage) nor angioplasty has been shown to prevent heart attacks. Bypass makes it less likely that a heart attack will prove fatal, but only in patients with the most severe disease (for example, those with a blockage in the left main coronary artery, which supplies a large portion of the heart with blood.

Shah (Prediman K. Shah, M.D. Director of cardiology and Artherosclerosis Research Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center In Los Angeles) says that a comprehensive, non-invasive approach can reduce heart attack risk by as much as 80%. His recommendation begins with medications – aspirin, blood pressure lowering drugs (ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers), and cholesterol-modifying medications...**The second component of a heart-healthy lifestyle is diet: “We know that a Mediterranean-style diet, which is low in saturated fat and rich in omega 3 fatty acids from fish, can be a powerful intervention,”** says Shah... The third is exercise. Exercise increases the heart’s efficiency, lowers blood pressure, boosts protective HDL cholesterol, and accelerates the formation of collaterals – tiny blood vessels that reroute blood flow around narrowed arteries.

Greater Adherence To The Mediterranean Diet

Has Been Associated With A Lower Incidence Of Cardiovascular Disease And Cancer

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Sept 2005 v82 i3 p694(6).Author's Abstract:

Objective: We studied the effect of the Mediterranean diet on total antioxidant capacity (TAC) in 3042 participants who had no clinical evidence of cardiovascular disease.

Design: During 2001-2002, a random sample of 1514 men and 1528 women aged 18-89 y from the Attica area of Greece was selected. TAC was measured with an immune-diagnostic assay. Food consumption was evaluated with a validated food-frequency questionnaire, and adherence to the Mediterranean diet was assessed on the basis of a diet score that incorporated the inherent characteristics of this diet.

Results: TAC was positively correlated with diet score. The participants in the highest tertile of the diet score had, on average, 11% higher TAC levels than did the participants in the lowest tertile, even after adjustment for relevant confounders ($P < 0.01$). On the other hand, the participants in the highest tertile of the diet score had, on average, 19% lower oxidized LDL-cholesterol concentrations than did the participants in the lowest tertile ($P < 0.01$). An additional analysis showed that TAC was positively correlated with the consumption of olive oil ($[\rho] = 0.54$, $P = 0.002$) and of fruit and vegetables ($[\rho] = 0.34$ and $[\rho] = 0.31$, respectively; $P < 0.001$ for both), whereas it was inversely associated with the consumption of red meat ($[\rho] = -0.35$, $P = 0.02$).

Conclusion: Greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet is associated with elevated TAC levels and low oxidized LDL-cholesterol concentrations, which may explain the beneficial role of this diet on the cardiovascular system.

New Thinking on How to Protect the Heart

By [JANE E. BRODY](#) Published: January 12, 2009

If last week's column convinced you that surgery may not be the best way to avoid a heart attack or sudden cardiac death, the next step is finding out what can work as well or better to protect your heart.

Many measures are probably familiar: not smoking, controlling cholesterol and blood pressure, exercising regularly and staying at a healthy weight. But some newer suggestions may surprise you.

It is not that the old advice, like eating a low-fat diet or exercising vigorously, was bad advice; it was based on the best available evidence of the time and can still be very helpful. But as researchers unravel the biochemical reasons for most heart attacks, the advice for avoiding them is changing.

You'll be happy to know, the new suggestions for both diet and exercise are less rigid. The food is tasty, easy to prepare and relatively inexpensive, and you don't have to sweat for an hour a day to reap the benefits of exercise.

The well-established risk factors for heart disease remain intact: high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, abdominal obesity and sedentary living. But behind them **a relatively new factor has emerged that may be even more important as a cause of heart attacks than, say, high blood levels of artery-damaging cholesterol. That factor is C-reactive protein, or CRP, a blood-borne marker of inflammation that, along with coagulation factors, is now increasingly recognized as the driving force behind clots that block blood flow to the heart. Yet patients are rarely tested for CRP, even if they already have heart problems.**

Even in people with normal cholesterol, if CRP is elevated, the risk of heart attack is too, said Dr. Michael Ozner, medical director of the Cardiovascular Prevention Institute of South Florida. He thinks that when people have their cholesterol checked, they should also be tested for high-sensitivity CRP.

Diet Revisited

The new dietary advice is actually based on a rather old finding that predates the mantra to eat a low-fat diet. In the Seven Countries Study started in 1958 and first published in 1970, Dr. Ancel Keys of the University of Minnesota and co-authors found that **heart disease was rare in the Mediterranean** and Asian regions where vegetables, grains, fruits, beans and fish were the dietary mainstays. But in countries like Finland and the United States where plates were typically filled with red meat, cheese and other foods rich in saturated fats, heart disease and cardiac deaths were epidemic.

The finding resulted in the well-known advice to reduce dietary fat and especially saturated fats (those that are firm at room temperature), and to replace these harmful fats with unsaturated ones like vegetable oils. **What was missed at the time and has now become increasingly apparent is that the heart-healthy Mediterranean diet is not really low in fat, but its main sources of fat — olive oil and oily fish as well as nuts, seeds and certain vegetables — help to prevent heart disease by improving cholesterol ratios and reducing inflammation.**

Virtues Confirmed

It was not until 1999 that the value of a traditional Mediterranean diet was confirmed, when the Lyon Diet Heart Study compared the effects of a Mediterranean-style diet with one that the American Heart Association recommended for patients who had survived a first heart attack.

The study found that within four years, the Mediterranean approach reduced the rates of heart disease recurrence and cardiac death by 50 to 70 percent when compared with the heart association diet.

Several subsequent studies have confirmed the virtues of the Mediterranean approach. For example, a study among more than 3,000 men and women in Greece, published in 2004 by Dr. Christina Chrysohoou of the University of Athens, found that adhering to a **Mediterranean diet improved six markers of inflammation and coagulation, including CRP, white blood cell count and fibrinogen.**

The same year Kim T. B. Knoops, a nutritionist at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, and co-authors published a study showing that among men and women ages 70 to 90, those who followed ***a Mediterranean diet and other healthful practices, like not smoking, had a 50 percent lower rate of deaths from heart disease and all causes.***

“The Mediterranean diet is one people can stick to,” said Dr. Ozner, author of “The Miami Mediterranean Diet” and “The Great American Heart Hoax” (BenBella, 2008). “The food is delicious, and the ingredients can be found in any grocery store.

“You should make most of the food yourself,” Dr. Ozner added. “When the diet is stripped of lots of processed foods, you ratchet down inflammation. Among my patients, the compliance rate — those who adopt the diet and stick with it — is greater than 90 percent.”

Among foods that help to reduce the inflammatory marker CRP are cold-water fish like salmon, tuna and mackerel; flax seed; walnuts; and canola oil and margarine based on canola oil. Fish oil capsules are also effective. Dr. Ozner recommends cooking with canola oil and using more expensive and aromatic olive oil for salads.

Other aspects of the Mediterranean diet — vegetables, fruits and red wine (or purple grape juice) — are helpful as well. Their antioxidant properties help prevent the formation of artery-damaging LDL cholesterol.

Healthier Blood Vessels

American Heart Association Conference, April 2005:

Start a Mediterranean-style diet--one rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds and healthful fats, such as olive oil--add regular exercise and expect your blood vessels to be healthier in only eight weeks.

Study participants--38 adults who had elevated blood pressure or were near-diabetic--showed such dramatic improvements in their arterial health that Canadian researchers told an American Heart Association conference in April 2005 that **the regimen may help prevent high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attacks and stroke.**

Even better: "There is no reason to expect different results in healthier people," says lead investigator Robert Petrella, MD, PhD, of the University of Western Ontario's Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging.

The Mediterranean Diet: A Good Option For Treating High Cholesterol (And Lowering The Risk For Heart Attack And Stroke)

ConsumerReportsMedicalGuide.org 1/18/2006

A review of the evidence finds that switching to a Mediterranean diet can lower your cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke if you already have heart disease.

DOES THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET WORK?

If you already have heart disease and you eat a Mediterranean diet, there's a good chance that your cholesterol level will fall. You are also likely to reduce your risk of having a heart attack or a stroke.

HOW CAN THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET HELP?

If you have heart disease and switch to a Mediterranean diet, you're 70 percent less likely to die from heart disease. But more research is needed.

WHY SHOULD IT WORK?

The Mediterranean diet is rich in a type of fat called alpha-linolenic acid.

This fat is part of the family of polyunsaturated fatty acids known as omega-3 fatty acids. It's found in walnuts, walnut oil, pumpkin seeds, canola oil, linseed oil, salmon, mackerel, and a green vegetable called purslane.

In your body, alpha-linolenic acid is turned into the fats that are found in oily fish (called eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid). These can protect you against heart disease. **They do this by making your blood less sticky so that it is less likely to form blood clots that can block blood vessels and eventually lead to a heart attack or a stroke.**

One study found a strong link between the level of these helpful lipids in the blood and the risk of having a heart attack. **In this study the risk of having a heart attack fell by 70 percent among people who spent just over two years on the diet. During the same time, the levels of this helpful lipid rose by 68 percent.**

The researchers suggest that alpha-linolenic acid may help keep blood from clotting when you don't need it to. If blood clots form when a vessel isn't cut or damaged, the clots can block your blood vessels.

This makes it more likely that you will have a heart attack or a stroke. Alpha-linolenic acid may also stop the heart from beating irregularly (or developing what doctors call an arrhythmia).

Irregular heartbeats can sometimes cause someone to die suddenly from a heart attack. This acid can also reduce blood pressure. Having high blood pressure increases your risk of heart disease.

Fresh Approach To Diet And Medication Improves Recovery After Heart Attack (Mediterranean Diet As Good As American Heart Association Diet)

NEW ORLEANS, La. (March 25, 2007) — *After a heart attack, cardiovascular health and even survival can be improved by intensive dietary therapy and early dosing with a medication that blocks the harmful hormonal effects in the heart*, according to research presented today at the American College of Cardiology's 56th Annual Scientific Session in New Orleans, La. ACC.07 is the premier cardiovascular medical meeting, bringing together cardiologists to further breakthroughs in cardiovascular medicine.

American Heart Association or Mediterranean Diet Improves Cardiovascular Outcomes After Myocardial Infarction Trial (Presentation Number 404-7)

A low-fat, low-cholesterol diet, as recommended by the American Heart Association (AHA), is equally beneficial for people who have had a heart attack as a Mediterranean-style diet rich in fish, monounsaturated fats, and other sources of omega-3 fatty acids, according to a community-based study that featured intensive nutrition counseling and tracked patients for an average of nearly four years.

Dr. Tuttle and her colleagues recruited 101 patients who had had a heart attack within the previous six weeks to participate in The Heart Institute of Spokane Diet Intervention and Evaluation Trial (THIS-Diet), randomly assigning patients to the AHA Step II diet or a Mediterranean-style diet. Each patient met twice with a dietitian for individual counseling within the first month, and again at three, six, 12, 18, and 24 months. In addition, study participants attended six or more group nutrition classes over 24 months.

Patients in both groups were advised to limit cholesterol intake to no more than 200 mg daily and saturated fat intake to no more than seven percent of calories. Those assigned to the AHA diet were also advised to keep total fat intake to less than 30 percent of calories, while those assigned the Mediterranean diet were allowed to consume up to 40 percent of calories as fat, with the difference made up of healthy, monounsaturated fats. In addition, the intake of omega-3 fatty acids was higher with the Mediterranean diet (more than 0.75 percent of calories as compared to 0.3-0.45 percent of calories with the AHA diet).

After an average of nearly four years, there was no difference between the two groups in the combined rates of death, repeat heart attack, unstable chest pain, stroke or hospitalization for heart failure. *When the two groups of patients were combined and compared to a matched "usual care" group of 101 patients who did not receive intensive dietary counseling after heart attack, the relative risk of cardiovascular complications was reduced by two-thirds in the dietary intervention groups.*

"Our study shows that, in addition to excellent medical care, **dietary intervention truly benefits patients**," Dr. Tuttle said.

NOTE: While both diets may be equal for health impact after Myocardial Infarction, the Mediterranean style of eating has also been cited for delivering incremental benefits across blood pressure; healthier blood vessels; cholesterol; cancer(s); COPD; Alzheimer's disease; rheumatoid arthritis; asthma; birth defects; metabolic syndrome; obesity/weight loss; stroke; and overall impact on longevity/all cause morbidity.

Diet Strong In Omega 3 Fish Oils May Help Keep Arteries Clear

Reuters, 2008-07-28 Mexico City - A diet rich in oily fish, which contains omega-3 fatty acids, may be why middle-aged men in Japan have fewer problems with clogged arteries than white men and men of Japanese descent in the United States, a study has found. The research, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, found that Japanese men living in Japan had twice the blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids and lower levels of atherosclerosis compared to middle-aged white men or Japanese-American men living in the US.

A diet that includes plenty of oily fish -- including salmon as well as mackerel, lake trout, sardines and albacore tuna -- appears to prevent clogged arteries, according to a study of men in Japan and the United States. The fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are good for the heart.

Atherosclerosis is the buildup of plaque inside the arteries. Over time, they harden and narrow the arteries and can lead to serious problems like heart attacks and stroke.

"The death rate from coronary heart disease in Japan has always been puzzlingly low," said Akira Sekikawa, assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh, in a statement. "Our study suggests that the very low rates of coronary heart disease among Japanese living in Japan may be due to their lifelong high consumption of fish."

Japanese eat about 3 ounces of fish a day on average, while Americans eat fish perhaps twice a week. Nutritional studies show that intake of omega-3 fatty acids from fish averages 1.3 grams per day in Japan, compared to 0.2 grams per day in the United States.

Earlier studies showed Japanese men had significantly less cholesterol build-up in their arteries despite similar blood cholesterol and blood pressure readings, similar rates of diabetes and much higher rates of smoking.

Mediterranean Diet Halves Risk Of Progressive Lung Disease/COPD

Science Daily/BMJ Specialty Journals, May 15, 2007

A Mediterranean diet halves the chances of developing progressive inflammatory lung disease (COPD), reveals a large study, published ahead of print in Thorax.

COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) is an umbrella term for chronic progressive lung disease, such as emphysema and bronchitis. It is expected to become the third leading cause of death worldwide by 2020, with cigarette smoking the primary factor in its development.

The researchers tracked the health of almost 43,000 men, who were already part of the US Health Professionals Follow up Study. This began in 1986 and involved more than 50,000 US health care professionals aged between 40 and 75, who were surveyed every two years.

They were asked questions about lifestyle, including smoking and exercise, diet and medical history. Dietary intake was assessed in detail every four years. Eating patterns fell into two distinct categories: those who ate a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains and fish (Mediterranean diet); and those who ate a diet rich in processed foods, refined sugars, and cured and red meats (Western diet).

Between '86 and '98, 111 cases of COPD were newly diagnosed. **The Mediterranean diet was associated with a 50% lower risk of developing COPD than the Western diet, even after adjusting for age, smoking, and other risks.**

And men who ate a predominantly Western diet were more than four times as likely to develop COPD, even after taking account of other influential factors. The higher the compliance with a Mediterranean diet, the lower was the risk of developing COPD over the 12 year period. Conversely, the higher the compliance with the Western diet, the higher was the risk of developing COPD.

Patients Eating The Mediterranean Diet Had Less Than Half The Number Of New Cases Of Cancer

Another benefit of the Mediterranean diet - less cancer?

By: Thomas Pickering, MD, DPhil, FRCP, Director of Integrative and Behavioral Cardiology Program of the Cardiovascular Institute at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York.

The 'Mediterranean' diet, which is rich in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat and red meat, has frequently been advocated for the prevention of heart disease. Most of the evidence for this comes from observations that people living in countries where such diets are prevalent are at low risk of getting heart disease.

The theory has been tested in only one human study, the Lyon Diet Heart Study performed in France. In this study 605 people (nearly all men) who had survived a first heart attack were randomly allocated to eat one of two diets.

One was a diet similar to the step 1 diet of the American Heart Association (which restricts the intake of saturated fat to 30% of the total calories and cholesterol to 300 milligrams a day), the other an experimental Mediterranean-type diet.

The latter was characterized by more bread and cereals, more fresh fruit and vegetables, more fish, less meat (and beef and pork replaced by chicken); butter or cream were replaced with a canola-oil based margarine which was rich in oleic and alpha-linolenic acids. Canola and olive oil were used for salads and food preparation.

During the one to five years of follow-up, the patients eating the Mediterranean diet had fewer deaths from cardiovascular disease (1%, versus 5% in the patients eating the regular diet). These findings were published in 1994. A second report on the rate of development of cancer in the study participants now follows. **The patients eating the Mediterranean diet had less than half the number of new cases of cancer, and the overall death rate (from all causes) was also reduced by about half.**

Doctor's comments

The finding that a Mediterranean diet may prevent cancer was unexpected and was not one of the original goals of the study. It does, however, make sense. Vegetables contain a number of antioxidants (which protect against cancer) and there is other evidence that eating a lot of vegetables is associated with less cancer. The Mediterranean diet is also rich in omega-3-fatty acids, which could have a protective effect.

Where it was published

de Lorgeril M and colleagues. Mediterranean dietary pattern in a randomized trial. Prolonged survival and possible reduced cancer rate. *Archives of Internal Medicine* 1998;158:1181-1187.

www.Lifeclinic.com/focus/blood/articleView.asp?MessageID=94

Mediterranean Diet Reduces Cancer

In 2005, American Cancer Society announced lifestyle changes could help prevent at least half of all cancer deaths. ...maintaining a healthy body weight, exercising and *eating a balanced diet really do play a large role in cutting people's risk for developing several types of cancer. 190,090 of 570,280 estimated cancer deaths can be attributed to obesity, poor nutrition and physical activity and other lifestyle factors, vs. 168,140 attributed to tobacco.* Dow Jones Newswires.

American Cancer Society Website Notes: "Mediterranean diet may lower cancer risk"

A Mediterranean diet consisting mostly of fruits, vegetables, cereals, canola and olive oil with a low intake of cholesterol, saturated and polyunsaturated fats may protect against cancer in non-Mediterranean populations, a new study suggests.

Data collected in the Lyon [France] Diet Heart Study, which was published in the June 8, 1998 issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine, led researchers to conclude a Mediterranean diet reduced the risk of cancer. Compared to an American Heart Association diet, **those on the Mediterranean diet had 61 percent fewer cancers diagnosed.** From the perspective of heart disease and cancer prevention, this diet is considered far better than the average American or European diet.

What the diets mean

The AHA diet is characterized by 30 percent of total caloric intake as fats (10 percent as saturated fats, 10 percent monounsaturated fats, 10 percent polyunsaturated fats) and a cholesterol intake of less than 300 mg per day. In comparison, the Mediterranean diet contains less cholesterol, less polyunsaturated and saturated fats, more fiber and more vitamin C.

www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_2_1x_Mediterranean_diet_may_lower_cancer_risk.asp

Thursday, December 21, 2006

Olive Oil May Hinder Cancer Formation

Researchers in Europe found evidence that the Mediterranean staple can reduce damage to cells that could otherwise lead to the disease. (Cancer.)

People who use plenty of olive oil in their diets may be helping to prevent damage to body cells that can eventually lead to cancer, new research suggests.

In a study of 182 European men, researchers found evidence that **olive oil can reduce oxidative damage to cells' genetic material, a process that can initiate cancer development.** They say the findings may help explain why rates of several cancers are higher in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe, where olive oil is a staple.

They also support advice to replace saturated fats from foods like meat and butter with vegetable fats, particularly olive oil, said study co-author Dr. Henrik E. Poulsen, of Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark.

At the end of the study, they (research subjects) showed an average 13 percent reduction in a substance called 8oxodG, which is a marker of oxidative damage to cells' DNA. Such damage occurs when byproducts of metabolism called reactive oxygen species overwhelm the body's antioxidant defenses. Olive oil contains a number of compounds, called phenols, believed to act as powerful antioxidants.

However, those compounds didn't seem to account for the drop in DNA oxidative damage, according to Poulsen's team. The men in the study used three different olive oils with varying levels of antioxidant phenols, and oxidative damage declined regardless of the phenol content. **Instead, the researchers suspect that the monounsaturated fats in olive oil are behind the effect.**

The findings, they say, suggest that olive oil may be part of the reason that certain cancers, including breast, colon, ovarian and prostate cancers, are less common in Mediterranean countries than in Northern Europe.

At the beginning of the study, men from Northern Europe had higher levels of 8oxodG than those from Southern Europe. This is consistent, according to Poulsen's team, with the expected effects of the olive-oil-rich "Mediterranean diet." However, Poulsen said the diet is more than just olive oil. Ideally, it's also rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fish. Regardless of its benefits, he added, olive oil is no substitute for calorie control and regular exercise.

Olive Oil May Lower Ovarian Cancer Risk

August 14, 2002 ***A diet high in olive oil may lower a woman's risk of developing ovarian cancer, according to a study reported in the journal Cancer Causes and Control*** (Vol. 13: 465-470).

The study found that women whose diet included large amounts of olive oil **reduced their risk of ovarian cancer by 30%**. www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_1_1x_Olive_Oil_May_Lower_Ovarian_Cancer_Risk.asp

Olive Oil Link To Reduced Breast Cancer

Spanish researchers have identified anti-cancer chemicals in extra virgin olive oil that may help explain the apparent link between eating an olive oil-rich Mediterranean diet and a reduced risk of breast cancer.

Extra virgin olive oil, which is produced by pressing olives without heat or chemical treatments, contains phytochemicals that are otherwise lost in the refining process.

The study was published in the current issue of BMC Cancer.

"Our findings reveal for the first time that all major complex phenols present in extra virgin olive oil drastically suppress overexpression of the cancer gene HER2 in human breast cancer cells," Javier Menendez of the Catalan Institute of Oncology said in a BioMed Central news release. Louisville Courier-Journal, 01 Jan 2009

Mediterranean Diet Cuts Risk Of Breast Cancer

Northwestern University. Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2005 The Food Institute

Scientists in Chicago say they have uncovered why a Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil seems to cut the risk of developing breast cancer. The key is an ingredient of olive oil called oleic acid, they say. Northwestern University laboratory tests on breast cancer cells showed the acid sharply cut levels of a gene thought to trigger the disease ... BBC News

Mediterranean Countries Have Lower Incidences Of Breast, Colon and Prostate Cancer

Mediterranean Diet For Flavor And Health

A recent study by Trichopoulou, published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, confirmed a lower incidence of cancer, particularly for breast, colon and prostate in Mediterranean countries. These forms of cancer are linked to dietary factors, such as the amount of fruits and vegetables, as well as the amount of red meat, consumed.

The current study calculated that up to 25% of the incidence of colorectal cancer, 15% of breast cancer, and 10% of prostate cancer could be prevented if populations of highly developed western countries would shift to the traditional healthy Mediterranean diet.

In conclusion, the Mediterranean diet could reduce the overall incidence of cancer in Northern Europe and North America by up to 10%.

Mediterranean Diet Wards Off Childhood Respiratory Allergies

A "Mediterranean" diet rich in fruits, vegetables and nuts protects against allergic rhinitis and asthma symptoms, suggests research published ahead of print in *Thorax*.

The researchers assessed the dietary habits, respiratory symptoms, and allergic reactions of almost 700 children living in four rural areas on the Greek island of Crete.

Skin allergies are relatively common in Crete, but respiratory allergies, such as asthma and allergic rhinitis are relatively rare.

The children were all aged between 7 and 18 years of age. Parents completed detailed questionnaires on their children's allergic and respiratory symptoms and dietary habits.

Whether the children ate a "Mediterranean" diet was measured against a set of 12 foodstuffs, including fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, legumes, nuts, and olive oil.

Eight out of 10 children ate fresh fruit, and over two thirds ate fresh vegetables at least twice a day.

The effect of diet was strongest on allergic rhinitis, but it also afforded protection against asthma symptoms and skin allergy.

Children who ate nuts at least three times a week were less likely to wheeze. And a daily diet of oranges, apples, and tomatoes also protected against wheezing and allergic rhinitis.

Nuts are a rich source of vitamin E, the body's primary defense against cellular damage caused by free radicals. And they contain high levels of magnesium, which other research suggests, may protect against asthma and boost lung power.

Grapes in particular seemed to protect against current and previous wheezing and allergic rhinitis, even after adjusting for other potentially influential factors. Red grape skin contains high levels of antioxidants as well as resveratrol, a potent polyphenol, known to curb inflammatory activity, say the authors.

But high consumption of margarine doubled the chances of asthma and allergic rhinitis, the findings showed.

Protective effect of fruits, vegetables and the Mediterranean diet on asthma and allergies among children in Crete [Allergy News](#) Article Date: 04 Apr 2007 - 1:00 PDT; *Online First Thorax* 2007; doi:10.1136/thx.2006.69419 <http://thorax.bmj.com>

Mediterranean Diet May Defend Against Alzheimer's, Study Says

April 18 2006 (Bloomberg) -- **The arsenal against Alzheimer's may get a pleasurable addition, a Mediterranean diet chock full of fish, olive oil, grains, fresh produce and moderate amounts of wine, a study suggested.**

Investigators who studied 2,258 New Yorkers found that those who followed the diet most closely were significantly less likely to develop Alzheimer's over the four-year follow-up, according to results in this month's Annals of Neurology.

Compared with people who followed the plan loosely, those who were most faithful to the diet, with low amounts of dairy products, saturated fats, meat and poultry, were about 40 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer's, the study showed. The diet already has been associated with a lower risk of cancer, heart disease and premature death, and elements of it showed promise against Alzheimer's in previous research, investigators said.

While there are treatments such as Pfizer Inc.'s and Eisai Co.'s Aricept, there is no cure for the illness, which affects an estimated 4.5 million Americans, according to the Web site of the National Institute on Aging.

The study was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging, the Charles S. Robertson Memorial Gift for Research in Alzheimer's disease, the Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Foundation, the New York City Council Speaker's Fund for Public Health Research and the Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging Brain.

Mediterranean Diet May Increase Alzheimer's Patients' Longevity

American Academy of Neurology. (ANI) Washington, Sept 11 (ANI): **Eating a Mediterranean diet that includes lots of vegetables, fruits and legumes can help people with Alzheimer's live an average 1.3 years longer than people who eat a more traditional Western diet, a new study has found.**

The Mediterranean diet includes a high intake of vegetables, legumes, fruits, cereals, fish, monounsaturated fatty acids; a low intake of saturated fatty acids, dairy products, meat and poultry; and a mild to moderate amount of alcohol whereas a Western diet is higher in saturated fat and meats and lower in fruits and vegetables.

The study was conducted by researchers at the Columbia University Medical Center in New York, who followed 192 people with Alzheimer's disease for an average of four and a half years.

They noted that those people who most closely followed a Mediterranean diet were 76 percent less likely to die during the study period than those who followed the diet the least.

"The more closely people followed the Mediterranean diet, the more they reduced their mortality," said study author Nikos Scarmeas, MD, MSc, of Columbia University Medical Center in New York, and member of the American Academy of Neurology. **"For example, Alzheimer's patients who adhered to the diet to a moderate degree lived an average 1.3 years longer than those people who least adhered to the diet. And those Alzheimer's patients who followed the diet very religiously lived an average four years longer,"** he added.

Scarmeas, who along with colleagues, had previously demonstrated that healthy people who eat a Mediterranean diet lower their risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, said that studies were confirming new benefits of the diet. New benefits of this diet keep coming out.

We need to do more research to determine whether eating a Mediterranean diet also helps Alzheimer's patients have slower rates of cognitive decline, maintain their daily living skills, and have a better quality of life," he said.

The study was published in the 9/11/07 issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. (ANI)

Mediterranean Diet May Reduce Birth Defects

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor Published: 31 January 2006

The Mediterranean diet has already been credited with increasing life expectancy levels in southern Europe. Now research has revealed that **it may also contribute to health of the unborn child in the womb.**

According to the first comprehensive estimate of the global burden of birth defects, France has the lowest incidence rate in the world, and researchers believe the Mediterranean diet could be the reason.

A high daily intake of leafy vegetables, high folic acid and staple of most Mediterranean cooking regimes, ensures that France, Italy and Spain fare significantly better than other nations in avoiding defects such as congenital heart problems and spina bifida.

Almost 250,000 babies are born with inherited birth defects each year in Europe, but the toll could be reduced if their mothers ate more fruit and vegetables as in Mediterranean countries, researchers say.

The Global report on Birth Defects published by the American charity March of Dimes says eight million affected babies are born each year, of whom 3.3 million die before they reach the age of five, a greater toll than from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

A further 3.2 million of those who survive may be mentally and physically disabled for life. The total does not include the one million babies born with defects caused by exposure to environmental or chemical agents in the womb, including infections...

The problem has been ignored by governments despite the availability of simple public health measures which could reduce the toll, the report says. Jennifer Howse, president of March of Dimes, said: "Our report identifies for the first time the severe and previously hidden global toll of birth defects. This is a serious, vastly under appreciated and under-funded public health problem."

Professor Bernadette Modell of the Royal Free and University College Medical School said boosting folic acid levels in pregnant women was the single most important element to prevent birth defects.

Professor Modell said: "...The Mediterranean diet doesn't just prevent heart disease – it seems to have an effect on birth defects too. It is probably the effect of folic acid, but it is quite possible there are multiple vitamin effects."

Mediterranean Diet Helps Keep The Weight Off

By Stephen Daniells

2/6/2006 - **People who eat a tradition Mediterranean diet are 60 per cent less likely to be obese, Greek researchers have said as the country's women top Europe's obesity table.**

The Med diet, rich in cereals, fruits, legumes and whole grains, fish and olive oil, has been linked to longer life, less heart disease, and protection against some cancers. The diet's main nutritional components include beta-carotene, vitamin C, tocopherols, polyphenols, and essential minerals.

A recent report from the International Obesity Task Force said 75 per cent of Greek women were overweight or obese, while the men were not far behind with 72 per cent. The prevalence of heart disease is also high in Greece, leading some people to link the unsaturated fat-rich diet to rising obesity levels.

"Greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with a 51 per cent lower odds of being obese and a 59 per cent lower odds of having central obesity," wrote lead author Demosthenes Panagiotakos in the journal *Nutrition* (available online February 2006, doi:10.1016/j.nut.2005.11.004).

Mediterranean Diet May Help People Avoid Obesity **(AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION)**

Schröder H, Marrugat J, Vila J, et al. *J. Nutr.* 134:3355-3361, 2004.

What is the problem and what is known about it so far?

Obesity is a growing problem in the U.S. and around the world. Obesity causes many health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and several kinds of cancer.

It is thought that the Mediterranean-style diet (a diet that includes fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, fish, olive oil, and other foods) may help people maintain a healthy weight and avoid health problems related to obesity.

...Researchers wanted to study people in Spain who ate a traditional Mediterranean diet to see how it affected their weight.

What did the researchers find?

The more the participants stuck to the Mediterranean diet, the lower their body mass index was and the lower their risk of becoming obese.

What are the implications of the study?

The Mediterranean diet is a healthy way to eat and contains essential nutrients in healthy quantities that can help a person avoid becoming obese.

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-research/summaries/schroder-mediterranean.jsp>

Europeans Who Drop Mediterranean Diet Are Gaining Weight

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2005 United Press International

LONDON, April 11 (UPI) -- While the evidence mounts that the Mediterranean diet is the key to long life, some in Europe are abandoning it and as a result are growing fat.

From Greece to Spain, young people and adults are putting on weight faster than those in the north and acquiring the same risk factors for heart disease that afflict the fast food cultures of the United States, Britain and parts of Europe, the Times of London reported Monday.

In France obesity jumped by 45 percent over six years to 2003, with similar increases in Spain and Portugal and to a lesser extent, Italy. Greek obesity rates are at a level with those of Britain and Belgium, which are among the highest in Europe.

"Cooking with olive oil is not enough. The Mediterranean diet is a combination of things -- fish, cereals that are not highly refined, dry vegetables that are rarely eaten any more and oil sources like walnuts and almonds," said Denis Lairon, director of the nutrition unit at the national medical research institute in Marseilles, France.

Fast Food Hits Mediterranean; a Diet Succumbs

By Elisabeth Rosenthal, New York Times, September 23, 2008

...The fact is that the Mediterranean diet, which has been associated with longer life spans and lower rates of heart disease and cancer, is in retreat in its home region. Today it is more likely to be found in the upscale restaurants of London and New York than among the young generation in places like Greece, where two-thirds of children are now overweight and the health effects are mounting, health officials say.

"This is a place where you'd see people who lived to 100, where people were all fit and trim," Dr. Stagourakis said. "Now you see kids whose longevity is less than their parents'. That's really scaring people."

That concern has been echoed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which said in a report this summer that the region's diet had "decayed into a moribund state." "It is almost a perfect diet, but when we looked at what people were eating we noticed that much of the highly praised diet didn't exist any more," said the report's author, Josef Schmidhuber, a senior economist at the food organization. "It has become just a notion."

(Global) Research on the diet took off in the 1990s, as scientists noted that people in Mediterranean countries lived longer and had low rates of serious disease despite a penchant for patently unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking. But that protection is now seen as rapidly eroding.

Greece, Italy, Spain and Morocco have even asked Unesco to designate the diet as an "intangible piece of cultural heritage," a testament to its essential value as well as its potential extinction. **The most serious effects of its steady disappearance are on people's health and waistlines. Alarmed by the trends, the Greek government has been swooping into schools in villages like Kasteli annually for the past few years to weigh children and lecture them on nutrition. The lessons include a food pyramid focused on the Mediterranean diet.**

Dr. Antonia Trichopoulou, a professor of epidemiology at the University of Athens Medical School, said the problem had grown acute with the spread of supermarkets and, especially, convenience foods.

The Mediterranean-Style Diet Reduces Metabolic Syndrome **--Key In Lowering Obesity, High Blood Pressure, Heart Disease and Diabetes**

Metabolic Syndrome -- What is the problem, and what is known about it so far?

Metabolic syndrome is a group of risk factors (like obesity, high blood pressure, and other things) that increases the chance of getting heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Researchers wanted to find out if a Mediterranean-style diet would help lower the chance of people getting metabolic syndrome.

How was the study done?

Participants in the study were put in one of two groups. One group, called the intervention group, was given detailed advice at monthly meetings on how to reduce the amount of calories they ate. They also were given diaries to keep track of what they ate.

The researchers recommended that the intervention group's daily calories should consist of 50–60% carbohydrates, 15–20% proteins, and less than 30% fat (with less than 10% saturated fat). Each person in the intervention group was given advice and had monthly counseling with a nutritionist for the first year. In the second year, each person had a private session every other month.

The second group, called the control group, was given general instructions about healthy food choices, but no specific or personalized information. For two years this group met every other month with researchers.

Both the intervention group and the control group were given general guidelines on how to increase their physical activity by at least 30 minutes each day.

What did the researchers find?

After 2 years, the intervention group showed a major decrease in body weight, blood pressure, and levels of glucose, insulin, total cholesterol, and triglycerides (fat in the blood). This group also showed a large increase in high-density lipoprotein (the "good" cholesterol) levels. **This meant that more than half of the intervention group no longer had metabolic syndrome and reduced their chances of getting type 2 diabetes and heart disease.**

The control group showed no major improvements in body weight, blood pressure, or the other factors. As a result, 78 of the 90 patients in the control group still had metabolic syndrome and increased risk of getting heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

What are the implications of the study?

This study suggests that when people follow a diet high in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, walnuts, and olive oil, they might lower their chances of getting metabolic syndrome, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. If they already have metabolic syndrome, following a Mediterranean-style diet might help them treat themselves.

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-research/summaries/esposito-mediterranean.jsp>

Mediterranean Diet Plus Nuts May Be Helpful In Managing Metabolic Syndrome

ScienceDaily (Dec. 9, 2008) — **A traditional Mediterranean diet with an additional daily serving of mixed nuts appears to be useful for managing some metabolic abnormalities in older adults at high risk for heart disease, according to a new report.**

"Traditionally, dietary patterns recommended for health have been low-fat, high-carbohydrate diets, which generally are not palatable," the authors conclude. "The results of the present study show that a non-energy-restricted traditional Mediterranean diet enriched with nuts, which is high in fat -- high in unsaturated fat and palatable -- is a useful tool in managing the metabolic syndrome."

Mediterranean Diet Reduces Long-term Risk Of Subsequent Weight Gain And Obesity Among Adults

ScienceDaily (Jan. 23, 2009) — A research group from Spain has studied the dietary patterns associated with a high intake of fruits and vegetables in Mediterranean populations. They have analyzed the associations between fruit and vegetable intake and weight gain over a 10-year period in an adult Mediterranean population.

The researchers found that increased fruit and vegetable intake was associated with significantly lower risk of a medium Weight Gain (3,41 kg) over 10 years among adults of a Spanish Mediterranean population. Dietary strategies to increase fruit and vegetable intake to prevent and control overweight and obesity should be promoted more vigorously.

The You Docs Tip of the Day: The Food That Makes You Healthier, Fast

BY MICHAEL ROIZEN, M.D., AND MEHMET OZ, M.D. - KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

Edition Date: 01/23/09

Say "Mediterranean diet" and the first thing many people think of is olive oil. But other, just-as-delicious parts of this diet - which is well-known for making your arteries more elastic and knocking down your risk of cardiovascular disease - deserve more of the spotlight.

A new study of the Mediterranean diet gave people who already ate this way either a liter a week of olive oil or about an ounce of mixed nuts per day. **A year later, the olive-oil eaters had a 6.7 percent reduced risk of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of health problems that can lead to heart disease, stroke and diabetes. The nut eaters had more than double that reduction, trouncing their risk by more than 13 percent.**

That's important, since more than one in five North Americans have metabolic syndrome already, and more are at risk. How about you? If you have three or more of these, you're a candidate: extra weight around your waist, high triglycerides, low HDL, high blood pressure or high blood sugar.

There's more good news than bad: **After just eight weeks on the Mediterranean diet, savoring foods like roasted tomato basil soup, grilled tilapia with red lentils and kale, and other dishes filled with vegetables, whole grains, fruits, fish and low-fat dairy, your arteries start to become more elastic. After only three months, your risk of heart disease can drop as much as 15 percent. So, even if you're at risk for metabolic syndrome now, you don't have to stay that way.**

Chowing down on lentil soup and pasta (a Mediterranean-style diet) seems to be the way to go if you have type 2 diabetes.

TUESDAY, Dec. 16, 2008 (HealthDay News)

A new study found that a diet of "low-glycemic foods" -- such as beans, nuts, peas, lentils and pasta -- was superior to a high-cereal-fiber diet when it comes to lowering blood sugar and other risk factors for heart disease in people with diabetes.

"This reemphasizes what we know -- at the end of the day, **the best diet is the Mediterranean-type diet: nuts, beans, lentils, fruits, vegetables,**" said Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, director of Women and Heart Disease at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, and a spokeswoman for the American Heart Association. "The study didn't exactly call it a Mediterranean diet, but the components of it were Mediterranean."

The data was published in the Dec. 17 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. The diabetes epidemic now affects some 20 million people in the United States alone, a staggering 7% of the population. The condition increases the risk for heart disease, cancer and other health problems.

Although many drugs are available to control blood sugar levels, the evidence on how well they reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems isn't entirely clear. This makes a proper diet crucial to help control the disease.

For the new study, researchers at St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto in Canada randomly selected more than 200 people with type 2 diabetes to follow either a high-cereal-fiber or a low-glycemic-index diet for six months. All the participants were already taking blood-sugar-lowering medications.

Carbohydrates in a low-glycemic-index diet are absorbed through the small intestine and converted to blood sugar at a slower rate than higher glycemic foods, meaning blood sugar is more stable, the researchers said. Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels, a longer-term measure of blood sugar levels, decreased by 0.5% in people on the low-glycemic-index diet, compared with a decrease of 0.18% in the alternate group.

Those in the low-glycemic group also saw an increase in their high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good") cholesterol of 1.7 mg/dL, compared to an HDL decrease of 0.2 mg/dL in the high-cereal-fiber group. Although the reduction in HbA1c levels was small, the study authors speculated that, based on previous studies, this might result in a 10% to 12% reduction in cardiovascular complications.

SOURCES: Dr. David J.A. Jenkins, Canada research chair, nutrition and metabolism, Univ/ of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital; Suzanne Steinbaum, D.O., director, Women and Heart Disease, Lenox Hill Hospital, NY, NY; Dec. 17, '08 Journal of the American Medical Association.

Recommended Diet for Diabetics May Need Changing (To Mediterranean), Study Suggests

By RONI CARYN RABIN

Published: December 18, 2008

People with [Type 2 diabetes](#) on a high-[fiber diet](#) kept their blood sugar under better control when they ate foods like beans and nuts (foods prevalent in a Mediterranean style of eating) instead of the recommended whole-grain diet, researchers have found. Beans and nuts are among foods that only modestly increase blood glucose levels; scientists describe these foods as having a low glycemic index.

Participants on the low-glycemic diet also saw significant improvements in [cholesterol](#) after six months, with increases in [HDL](#), the so-called “good” cholesterol associated with reduced risk of heart disease, the study found.

“That’s an important issue today, because there’s a double whammy for people who are diabetic,” said Dr. David J. A. Jenkins, lead author of the report and a professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Toronto. “If they’re men, they have twice the risk of heart disease, and if they’re women, they have four times the risk. If you can hit the heart disease to which they’re particularly vulnerable, you may have something useful.”

“Pharmaceuticals used to control Type 2 diabetes have not shown the expected benefits in terms of reducing cardiovascular disease,” he added.

The study was published on Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Some 210 patients with Type 2 diabetes were randomly assigned to a low-glycemic diet or a high-cereal, high-fiber diet. The high-cereal high fiber diet emphasized “brown foods” such as whole-grain bread and breakfast cereal, brown rice and potatoes with the skin on. The low-glycemic diet included beans, peas, lentils, pasta, quickly boiled rice and certain breads, like pumpernickel and rye, as well as oatmeal and oat bran cereals.

Both diets are low in [saturated fat](#) and [trans fat](#). Both groups were told to limit their consumption of white flour and to eat five servings of vegetables and three servings of fruit each day.

Participants on the low-glycemic diet saw their [hemoglobin A1C](#) levels — a measure of blood glucose levels over recent months — reduced slightly, by 0.5 percent on average, but experienced significant improvements in HDL, which increased by 1.7 milligrams per deciliter of blood on average. Those on the high-cereal diet saw smaller reductions in hemoglobin A1C and slight drops in HDL.

Dietitians who work with people who have Type 2 diabetes said earlier studies had not demonstrated the benefits of low-glycemic index foods as clearly as this report.

“We’ve been telling people to eat whole grains for a long time,” said Emmy Suhl, a nutrition and [diabetes](#) educator at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston. “What this study shows is that it’s not enough to have whole grains. It’s these very specific low-glycemic [carbohydrates](#) that do a much better job.”

But, she said, following such a diet is complicated, since the glycemic index of a food can change depending on how it is prepared and served.

“People tell us again and again that diet is the hardest part of diabetes management,” she added.

Mediterranean Diet Also Protects Against Diabetes: Study

Thu May 29, 2008 7:20 PM ET

PARIS (AFP) - **The Mediterranean diet, which is famously beneficial for the cardiovascular system, also helps protect against diabetes**, according to a paper published online Thursday by the British Medical Journal.

The mainstays of the Mediterranean diet are olive oil, fish, grains, fruit, nuts and vegetables, usually supplemented by a modest amount of red wine. Meat and dairy products have only a minor role.

Researchers at the University of Navarra in northern Spain recruited 13,753 people with graduate-level education between December 1999 and November 2007 and who had no history of diabetes when they were enrolled. Their health and dietary habits were then tracked in detail over the following months and years.

During the follow-up period -- an average of 4.4 years over the range of participants -- 103 people became diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, with a large preponderance of cases among those who did not follow the basics of the Med diet.

Those who adhered to the diet most strictly enjoyed a relative reduction of 83 percent in the risk of diabetes.

Intriguingly, many people in this group also had the biggest accumulation of risk factors for the disease -- they were older, were fatter, had a family history of diabetes, more sedentary lifestyle or were ex-smokers. **But they appear to have been shielded by the diet, the authors say.**

Type 2 diabetes has become an epidemic in developed and developing countries, with the blame being pinned on a switch to sugary and fatty diets and sedentary lifestyle.

A less common form of diabetes called Type 1 is caused by permanent destruction of insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas, and usually occurs early in life.

Without treatment by synthetic doses of insulin, diabetes can result in kidney failure, blindness, heart disease and death.

The International Diabetes Federation forecasts the number of cases -- including many adolescents -- will explode from 246 million today to 380 million by 2025.

Many previous studies have praised the Mediterranean diet for cardiac and vascular health, and a paper published in January this year in the British journal Thorax found that women who followed the diet while pregnant may also protect their baby from childhood asthma and allergy.

Could A Change Of Diet Reverse Diabetes?

www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article
12.06.07

The rate of Type 2 diabetes is soaring - and it's all down to diet

We're fatter and unhealthier than ever - and one of the consequences is a soaring rate of type 2 diabetes. The condition affects nearly three million people in the UK and costs the NHS £3.5 billion annually, an amount expected to double in the next five years.

Yet it's now being claimed that with the right diet, thousands of patients could effectively "cure" themselves, without the need for drugs.

All doctors advise using diet to help lower blood sugar, but **what makes the new claim so controversial is the idea that the right sort of diet can actually reverse diabetes, cutting out the need for drugs altogether.**

Type 2 diabetes is caused by the body becoming resistant to the hormone insulin, resulting in a gradual rise in blood glucose levels. People who are overweight and not physically active are more at risk, particularly those with lots of fat around the abdomen.

Longer term, the condition can lead to greater risk of heart attacks, kidney damage, blindness and damage to blood vessels in the legs and feet, which may even have to be amputated.

There are several drugs that boost insulin production - but when these stop working, patients have to inject themselves with the hormone itself.

One of the leading proponents of the new dietary approach is Dr Fedon Lindberg, a Norwegian endocrinologist who has treated more than 18,000 diabetic patients in his four clinics in his home country.

"My experience with type 2 diabetic patients is that a balanced low-glycaemic diet coupled with a healthy lifestyle can reverse the disease," he says.

"We have had many patients coming to us who were injecting high doses of insulin, as many as 200 units daily, who have managed to quit insulin and come off medications for blood pressure and other conditions."

One of his patients, Hanneremor Hultqvist, a retired nurse, weighed 19 stone and was injecting 150 units of insulin a day when she arrived at Dr Lindberg's Oslo clinic.

"I'd had type 2 diabetes for ten years and I was following the official low fat diet advice," she says.

"Within eight months of following Dr Lindberg's recommendations, I stopped taking insulin. Now I've lost seven stone and my blood sugar is normal.

"When I first told my doctor about the clinic and said I would probably be able to stop having insulin injections, he said he would eat his hat if that ever happened. He never has, even though I have given him several serving suggestions!"

Here in the UK, nutritionist Patrick Holford will be appearing on GMTV tomorrow to report on the results of treating one diabetic patient with a diet similar to Dr Lindberg's.

Dr Lindberg's Mediterranean type diet is based on unprocessed food such as fruit, vegetables, pulses and whole grains. It also involves a lot of olive oil, which means it contains more fat than the conventional weight-loss diet.

The key aspect for diabetes is that it has a low glycaemic load (GL), which means the carbohydrates don't raise blood sugar levels in the way that processed foods do.

The theory is that this diet not only results in weight loss - and being overweight is strongly linked to diabetes - but also improves the way the body responds to insulin, helping to keep blood sugar low.

Mediterranean Diet Is The Ultimate Functional Foods Diet

(Key To Satisfying \$32 Billion American/British Food Spend; 9 In 10 US Buyers Age 40-49)

Positive food additives promise health benefits on a plate, but can they deliver? asks Meg Carter

"Natural good, processed bad" is the view shared by many British shoppers frightened by health scares ranging from BSE and GM food to Sudan. But growing anxiety about our health and an acceptance that responsibility for it may rest in our own hands is fuelling soaring sales of nutraceuticals, so-called functional foods and drinks manufactured to contain positive additives to make us healthier, such as probiotics and calorie-reducing spreads.

Without doubt, functional foods are proving great business for a food industry battered by recent criticism that an over-emphasis on super-sizing, high fat, salt and sugar content has fuelled unhealthy lifestyles and overeating. British consumers' spending on functional foods and drinks is fast approaching Pounds 1 billion (\$1.85 b USD) and could double that by 2010 (\$3.7 b USD).

However, the dizzying array of functional additives now slipping into our daily diet - good bacteria to aid healthy gut function and plant sterols to lower blood cholesterol - raises an important issue. Do we really need to buy specially manufactured functional products, such as cholesterol-lowering spreads, many of which are priced at a premium? Wouldn't we be better off upping our intake of the unprocessed products in which many functional food ingredients occur naturally?

According to Julian Mellentin, the author of *The Functional Foods Revolution*, the answer lies in 21st-century consumers' preoccupation with quick fixes. **Functional foods are the food industry's future, he believes. "Consumers now look for health benefits from what they eat and the food industry is focused on building positive additives into their products to meet this demand."**

Functional foods represent a simple solution to our growing health worries, agrees a food industry analyst, Susie Johnson, of Leatherhead Food International. "The older you get the more you worry about stiff joints, heart attacks and cognitive decline," she says. "To feel like 30 once you hit your 50s you must do something about it today. This is why British consumers are increasingly aware of the need to take control of their health and eager to avoid the diseases associated with old age; the role food companies believe functional foods can play."

Tom Sanders, a professor of nutrition and dietetics at King's College London, dismisses any suggestion that natural products are inherently better than those manufactured to contain functional additives. "Skepticism about functional foods purely because they contain additives is misguided. Food is made of chemicals and often contains naturally occurring toxins that are far more dangerous than food additives. While I remain skeptical about certain products - for example, probiotics; how can you define what a claim such as 'Helps to maintain normal gut flora' means - others, such as cholesterol-lowering spreads, have an important role to play," he says.

Catherine Collins, the chief dietitian at St George's Hospital, South London, disagrees. **"Functional foods containing positive additives, however, are no substitute for a naturally balanced diet."** She advises anyone who thinks that they should eat more healthily to reassess their diet, then work towards striking the right balance in their nutritional intake.

The Mediterranean diet is the ultimate functional diet, she believes, with fruit and vegetables, whole-grain cereals, carbs, a modest amount of meat, olive oil and oily fish. "If pursued, there's no need for functional foods. And you don't need to strive for perfect balance every day; nutritional intake averaged out over a week is what counts," she says.

London Times, Copyright (c) Times Newspapers Limited 2005

The Benefits Of Olive Oil

OLIVE OIL has unfortunately associated itself in our minds with Luciano Pavarotti, whose favorite dish, he said, was pasta with olive oil, garlic and chili. In fact, although we may think of it as a fattening food, the fats contained in olive oil are heart- healthy monounsaturated fats, which, we now know, are far better for your health than the polyunsaturated fats contained in most refined vegetable oils.

It is no accident that olive oil is at the centre of the famous Mediterranean diet, the style of eating identified in the 1950s as leading to low rates of coronary disease: research is still revealing amazing facts about the properties of olive oil and their effects on high blood cholesterol. Olive oil is very rich in vitamin E, an important antioxidant (antioxidants are vital to help process the waste products thrown up by the daily functions of the body: they keep us healthy and young) as well as other less well-known antioxidants.

New Potential Health Benefit Of Olive Oil For Peptic Ulcer Disease

Science Daily — **Already fabled for an array of health benefits, extra virgin olive oil — a centerpiece of the Mediterranean Diet — may have a new role in helping to prevent and treat Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infections, which cause millions of cases of gastritis and peptic ulcer disease each year, researchers in Spain report.**

Mediterranean Diet: More Than Olive Oil – A “Divine Mix”

'Divine Mix' Prevents Death From Cancer, Heart Disease

Sid Kirchheimer, WebMD Medical News; Reviewed by Michael Smith, MD, 6/25/03

June 25, 2003 -- In the largest study ever done on the Mediterranean diet and one of the few to test it in adults of all ages -- in Greece, no less -- researchers found that the real bang of this ballyhooed magic bullet appears not to be olive oil but a combination of all food in the diet.

Scores of studies suggest that the high-fat Mediterranean diet translates to a slimmer risk of heart disease and cancer. And olive oil has sometimes gotten the lion's share of credit -- possibly undeservedly, according to the new findings.

Secret Sauce?

The olive oil-drenched diet is believed to be why residents of the 16 countries that border the Mediterranean Sea typically live longer than Americans and have lower rates of these diseases -- despite consuming a high-fat diet. The theory: Most of the fat comes from monounsaturated fat, the type in olive oil that -- unlike saturated fats -- is heart-healthy and may have cancer-prevention effects.

Not surprisingly, the researchers found that **Greeks who follow the Mediterranean diet more closely have significantly lower death and disease rates than those who don't.** But they also report in this week's issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* that olive oil itself produced no significant reduction in overall death rates.

Divine Mix

"Olive oil plays a central role, but it is not alone," says Dimitrios Trichopoulos, MD, PhD, of Harvard School of Public Health.

"It's among the divine mix of several factors that, when used in combination, help provide strong evidence of something that is very important -- eating the proper diet can significantly reduce your risk of early death."

He and researchers from Greece studied some 22,000 adults, aged 20 to 86, from all regions of that country; most previous studies tracked only older people who were more likely to die during the study. The participants answered detailed questionnaires about their eating habits throughout the four-year study. Then they were rated on how closely they followed the key principles of the Mediterranean diet.

Sticking to the Mediterranean diet cut the risk of death from both heart disease and cancer. For every two points higher on this 0-to-9 scale -- with top numbers going to those most closely following the Mediterranean diet -- the death rate dropped by 25%.

So what does that mean exactly? Substantially increasing the intake of monounsaturated fats relative to saturated fats and reducing in intake of meat would do the trick.

Olive Oil, Fish, Veggies ... What Is It?

When the researchers looked at the individual components of the Mediterranean diet, they found no significant decrease in death with any one type of food.

In addition to having olive oil with most meals, the typical Mediterranean diet is very high in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and cereals; moderate in fish intake; and has lower amounts of meat and dairy than the typical American diet. Drinking alcohol is also a frequently practiced dining ritual.

"God knows what sorts of interactions take place within the foods, and we need further research to pinpoint them exactly," Trichopoulos tells WebMD.

"But typically, people in Greece eat twice as many vegetables as Americans -- nearly a pound a day. And you really can't eat a pound of vegetables a day unless you have olive oil to make them appetizing. My advice is to try to double the amount of vegetables and fruits you currently have, and eat more fish, legumes, and non-refined cereals."

While olive oil itself showed little benefit, the researchers note a significant reduction in death rates from a higher overall ratio of monounsaturated fats to saturated fats. Olive oil is among the best sources of monounsaturated fats -- and happens to be the main cooking oil in most Mediterranean countries -- but other oils frequently consumed by Greeks and others surrounding the Mediterranean Sea also contain these healthy fats.

Calories Versus Healthy Oils

Trichopoulos' finding may also help explain why Asians, who typically use these other cooking oils, also have lower disease and death rates. Although they rarely use olive oil, they traditionally follow other principles of the Mediterranean diet -- lots of produce, legumes, nuts, and minimally processed grains, with little saturated fat.

"The message remains the same, and is consistent with other findings: A diet lower in saturated fats and higher in monounsaturated fats, and potentially, polyunsaturates, will result in better health outcomes," says Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc, of Tufts University and a spokeswoman for the American Heart Association.

"If the main message that Americans get is to just increase their olive or canola oil consumption, that's unfortunate because they will increase their caloric intake and they are already getting too many calories. What they need to do is eat more fruits, vegetables, and legumes and fewer foods rich in saturated fats."

THE BASICS OF A MEDITERRANEAN DIET

- _ Incorporate an abundance of food from plant sources, including fruits and vegetables, potatoes, breads, grains, beans, nuts and seeds.
- _ Eat minimally processed and seasonally fresh and locally grown foods.
- _ Use olive oil as the principal fat, replacing other fats and oils.
- _ Total dietary fat should range from less than 25 percent to more 35 percent of energy, with saturated fat no more than 7 to 8 percent of total calories.
- _ Eat low to moderate amounts of cheese and yogurt daily.
- _ Consume low to moderate amounts of fish and poultry weekly; and limit eggs from zero to four servings per week.
- _ Eat fresh fruit as a daily dessert; limit sweets with a significant amount of sugar and saturated fat.
- _ Only eat red meat -- beef, veal, pork, sheep, lamb and goat -- a few times per month.
- _ Incorporate regular physical activity at a level that promotes a healthy weight, fitness and well-being.

**A Mediterranean Dietary Regimen Is Essential
To Addressing The Global “Girth Trajectory”[®]
Of Unsustainable Medical Cost**

Healthcare systems worldwide must transform:

Modern Healthcare, November 7, 2005 5:05 PM ET

Many countries' health systems, facing rising costs, diminished resources and growing demands, will be unsustainable within 15 years without fundamental change, according to a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers Health Research Institute. **The institute projected global healthcare spending will triple over the next 15 years to \$10 trillion -- making up 21% of the U.S. gross domestic product and 16% of the GDP in other countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development.**

According to the report, countries are moving toward more shared financial responsibility between governments, private industry and consumers. In addition, consumerism, use of information technology and new reimbursement models, such as pay-for-performance, are gaining popularity globally. More than half of the 700 healthcare leaders surveyed in 27 countries said they expected healthcare spending growth to accelerate in the future.

CMS Forecast Summary

National health expenditures are projected to reach \$3.6 trillion in 2014, growing at a average annual rate of 7.1 percent during the forecast period 2003-2014. As a share of gross domestic product (GDP), health spending is projected to reach 18.7 percent by 2014, up from its 2003 level of 15.3 percent.

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Overweight workers cost employers big bucks. (HR)

The Kiplinger Letter. Sept 23, 2005 v82 i38 pNA.

Overweight workers cost employers big bucks...up to \$2500 a year in related health care bills and lost work for each obese employee.

But you may be able to do something about it. Some companies are mulling higher premiums for heavyweights who don't participate in slim-down programs or giving discounts to those who do and to workers who needn't pare their poundage. But it's not clear if the moves run afoul of antidiscrimination laws. Consult a lawyer before following through.

Prevention. May 2005 v57 i5 p42. Byline: Stanten, Michele Toth

\$825. The amount obese people saved on medical expenses the year after losing just 5% of their weight (9 pounds if you weigh 185).

The percentage of overweight American children and teens has more than doubled in the past decade. Moreover, two-thirds of the adults are either overweight or obese, and at least 300,000 Americans die each year from obesity-related diseases. The reasons aren't hard to fathom.

The U.S. food industry aggressively markets high-fat, high-sugar, super-sized foods. Modern communities encourage driving rather than walking. Physical education is being dropped by schools even as fattening snack foods are welcomed onto campus. And children are spending more time playing computer games than sports.

The question for policymakers is whether the weight gain is just a matter of individual responsibility, or whether a society that makes it so easy to get fat should be retooled. **At stake is not only the health of millions of Americans but also \$117 billion in annual health-treatment costs.**

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2005 Aspen Publishers, Inc. "The economic burden of morbid obesity among US adults is substantial. When compared with normal-weight adults, the odds of incurring any health care expenditure in 2000 were two-fold greater among adults with morbid obesity..

Per-capita health care expenditures for morbidly obese adults were 81% greater than normal-weight adults, 65% greater than overweight adults, and 47% greater than adults with class I obesity.

Excess costs among morbidly obese adults resulted from greater expenditures for office-based visits, out-patient hospital care, in-patient care, and prescription drugs. Aggregate US health care expenditures associated with excess body weight among morbidly obese US adults exceeded \$11 billion in 2000.

D E Arterburn, et al., International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders, 3/05

ATLANTA, June 27 (UPI) -- A new study says healthcare costs related to obesity-linked illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol are soaring.

Employers and privately insured families spent \$36.5 billion on obesity-linked illnesses in 2002, up from an inflation-adjusted \$3.6 billion in 1987, said USA Today.

The study, published in Health Affairs, an online journal of health policy and research, found that **treating an obese person cost an average of \$1,244 more in 2002 than treating a healthy-weight person. In 1987, the gap was \$272.**

National Underwriter Life & Health, Jan 10, 2005 v109 i2 p21(1)
Trimming the costs of obesity. (Employee Benefits) *Ronald S. Leopold.*

BENEFITS ADVISORS SHOULD BE offering employers ideas about ways to fight employee obesity.

The National Business Group on Health, Washington, estimates that obesity costs U.S. employers \$13 billion a year. Obesity has links to everything from an increased risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and kidney cancer to an increased risk of complications during surgery.

The expansion of the American waistline is having an obvious effect on the short-term disability and long-term disability claims that MetLife receives. At MetLife, the proportion of STD and LTD claims involving weight control surgery and other conditions and procedures directly related to obesity doubled between 2001 and 2003.

Employers with high proportions of middle-aged female workers were most affected by the increase in obesity-related claims. MetLife data indicates that females accounted for 85% of STD obesity claims processed over the past 3 years and that 48% of those claims were from women between the ages of 35 and 54. Most of these claims were connected with gastric stapling operations, gastric bypass operations and related "bariatric surgical" procedures.

The average absence for a worker who filed a direct obesity-related STD claim was 45 days

Paul Krugman. *The New York Times*. Nov 14, 2005 pA21(L).

Several readers have asked me a good question: we rely on free markets to deliver most goods and services, so why shouldn't we do the same thing for health care? Some correspondents were belligerent, others honestly curious. Either way, they deserve an answer.

It comes down to three things: risk, selection and social justice.

First, about risk: in any given year, a small fraction of the population accounts for the bulk of medical expenses.

In 2002, a mere 5 percent of Americans incurred almost half of U.S. medical costs.

OBESITY EPIDEMIC OFF THE CHARTS

[Cincinnati.Com](#) » [The Enquirer](#) » [Opinion](#) » Obesity epidemic off the charts
Last Updated: 12:00 pm | Wednesday, April 11, 2007

The percentage of Americans who are at least 100 pounds overweight has grown by 50 percent in just the last five years.

The finding, released in a Rand Corp. study Monday, comes in spite of grocery shelves bursting with reduced-calorie foods, library shelves groaning with books on specialty diets and home pantries bulging with packages that delineate every single fat gram in every single thing we eat.

We read, we calculate, we weigh and meanwhile, we just keep getting bigger.

We're not alone. The most recent estimates by the World Health Organization show that in 88 nations, more than half the population is overweight - 1.6 billion adults worldwide. The U.S. ranks ninth on the list.

There is no end in sight; WHO officials predict a 40 percent increase in the number of overweight adults worldwide in the next decade. Still, few researchers thought the number of the most morbidly obese Americans had grown so dramatically so quickly. Rand researcher Roland Sturm calls it "mind-boggling."

Just plain overweight - which affects so many Americans it has almost come to seem the norm - has grown by 24 percent in the same period. But the quick spike has been, to put it in street terms, in men who average 5 feet 10 and 300 pounds, and women who average 5 feet 4 inches and 250 pounds.

The heart of the problem, Sturm said, isn't the loss of American will power. It's an everyday environment that makes it harder for people to find reason - or places - to walk, a decrease in manual labor and constant access to appealing foods.

"In our daily lives, we have to make thousands of decisions every day, most of them unconsciously," he said. "If someone puts food in front of you, you're probably going to eat it. Trying to override those automatic decisions is extremely difficult. It can wear you down."

The rise in morbid obesity is a harbinger of increases in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, joint problems, even infertility. Rotundness is no longer associated with robustness, but with reduced energy, compromised movement, increased disease.

From homes to schools to community centers to corporations, the challenge is to turn the trend line in the opposite direction by conscious thought - the small changes in food offerings and physical environment that, as Sturm said, makes it easier for people to move and eat healthfully and harder for them to be sedentary and overindulge.

LIVING HEALTHIER TODAY CAN REDUCE MEDICAL COSTS IN RETIREMENT

Nationwide; Spiraling Health Care Costs Cause Sharp Rise in National Retirement Risk Index

Type: Expanded Reporting

2008 MAR 8 - (NewsRx.com) -- A dramatic increase in the number of working Americans who likely won't be financially prepared to retire is largely due to the escalating cost of health care, according to the most recent findings by the Center for Retirement Research (CRR) at Boston College.

The National Retirement Risk Index, released by the CRR, shows that **61 percent of today's workers will be at risk for not being financially prepared to retire**. The 17-point increase from the previous Index number of 44 percent - released in July 2007 - demonstrates how the surging cost of health care is having a significant effect on retirement savings.

"Boston College's findings add another arrow to the quiver of pessimism - but not hopelessness - regarding the retirement savings and spending habits of Americans, especially as health care costs escalate and company- and government-sponsored retirement plans trail off," said Paul Ballew, senior vice president of customer insights and analytics for Nationwide.

"Additional research continues to provide substantial evidence that most consumers are less prepared today for their retirement years compared to five, 10 or 20 years ago," Ballew said. "For example, **medical expenses have increased 43 percent in the last five years and will likely increase at a higher rate compared to overall consumer spending. And, health care now accounts for more than 20 percent of all personal spending; double what it was in 1970.**"

"When planning for retirement, one's health is an extremely valuable asset that is often overlooked, but it can have a significant impact on the Golden Years, especially as individuals expect to live longer and therefore incur greater health care costs," said Ballew.

"Americans need to ensure they are taking into account health care costs when planning for retirement and, further, that they are taking measures now - such as proper diet, regular exercise, and check-ups - to maintain their best health possible later."



Healthy Eating and Living Plan (H.E.L.P.) – Your Recipe For Lifelong Success

Because we recognize dietary transitions are difficult, Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ is providing this handy HELP (Healthy Eating And Living Plan). HELP offers tips to guide you in your migration to a new eating regimen. Mediterranean Harvest For Life™ advocates the Mediterranean style of eating. MHFL helps people experience the joy of tasty, healthy foods -- versus trading away health and joy with processed and modified foods. MHFL will not only help you improve your health, it will help you live longer and enjoy your friends and loved ones more.

Follow the Mediterranean Harvest For Life Trapezoid

- The MHFL Trapezoid is a guide for enjoying tasty, healthy foods – and knowing which foods to eliminate.

Eat For Fuel And Go “High Octane”

- MHFL encourages viewing food as exciting, enjoyable fuel -- and shifting gears from our current consumption of low performance fuels to “High Octane Foods.” This includes an array of flavorful foods: whole grains; fresh fruits and veggies; nuts; seeds; legumes; beans; fish rich in Omega 3 fatty acids; yogurt; poultry; and olive oil.
- MHFL encourages cutting processed, hydrogenated, fried, battered, buttered, trans-and saturated-fat food.

Emphasize “Fuel Efficient Foods” To Fill Up, While Managing Or Reducing Weight

- To address weight issues, MHFL emphasizes enjoying nutrient dense, low calorie foods – like high water and high fiber content foods. Fill up on foods like broth-based soups and non-starchy vegetables and fruits. Cut out those high fat, highly processed foods.

Ease In – And Eat Slower and Smarter

- Counter bad habits and the lure of today’s existing eating styles with migratory steps – and eat more slowly to feel full.
- Implement easy-to-digest changes like Shish Kebabs to shift the proportion of foods away from eating primarily red meats and toward eating more veggies. Use small plates; cut out poor vending food; go raw.
- Switch out certain foods for improved health: e.g. Turkey chili vs. beef chili; cultured non-fat plain yogurt with fruit added vs. ice cream; lean/breast meats vs. high fat meats; wild salmon vs. steak; etc. Use the grill to reduce fat.

Prepare For Convenience – And Buy Smart

- Make sure to prepare enough of the right stuff and put some into travel containers for whenever you’ll need it -- so you don’t end up in the cookie jar, vending machine or some burger bungalow seeking an unhealthy morsel. Consider freezing then thawing a supply of healthy foods and snacks for each day.
- Calculate the large percentage of your budget now spent on junk food and fast food and reallocate to grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, legumes and fish. You’ll be surprised how far your budget goes – and enjoy it.
- Offset any extra time or cost issues of cooking healthy via bulk cooking. Look for deals: e.g. frozen fruits & veggies.

Buddy Up, Share The Joy – And Be Accountable

- Share the joy of more healthy living with friends, relatives or a small group. Hold yourself accountable to your buddies. Influence them, too. Call, e-mail or blog to the MHFL website to share your challenges and progress.
- Join a group bulk-cooking club. If there’s none nearby, ask a local church to allow you to start one.
- Learn enough to teach a class on MHFL eating, and thus compel yourself to stick to it.
- Share the benefits and how-to’s of MHFL with those who need it: cardiac patients; those discharged from heart surgery; blood pressure or cholesterol patients; diabetics; cancer patients; arthritics; pregnant moms.
- Send loved ones, friends, neighbors and co-workers copies of the MHFL White Paper, Trapezoid & H.E.L.P.

Exercise In A Manner You Can Enjoy

- Garden. Walk up stairs or in the mall. Park away from work and the stores. Jog. Bike. Swim. Badminton.

Get Spiritual

- Renowned health expert, Mayo Clinic, published a book citing the merits of spirituality along with a good diet.

Share The Wealth – And Enlist The Global Community In Helping You Manage Your Health

- As we’re blessed with so much, while over 4 billion people in the world live on under \$2.00 per day – and struggle now more than ever to survive, given recent price hikes in food – consider adopting “Shared Portions”. Choose to eat less or share restaurant meals and direct the value of the food you could have eaten toward those less fortunate.

Stick To It!

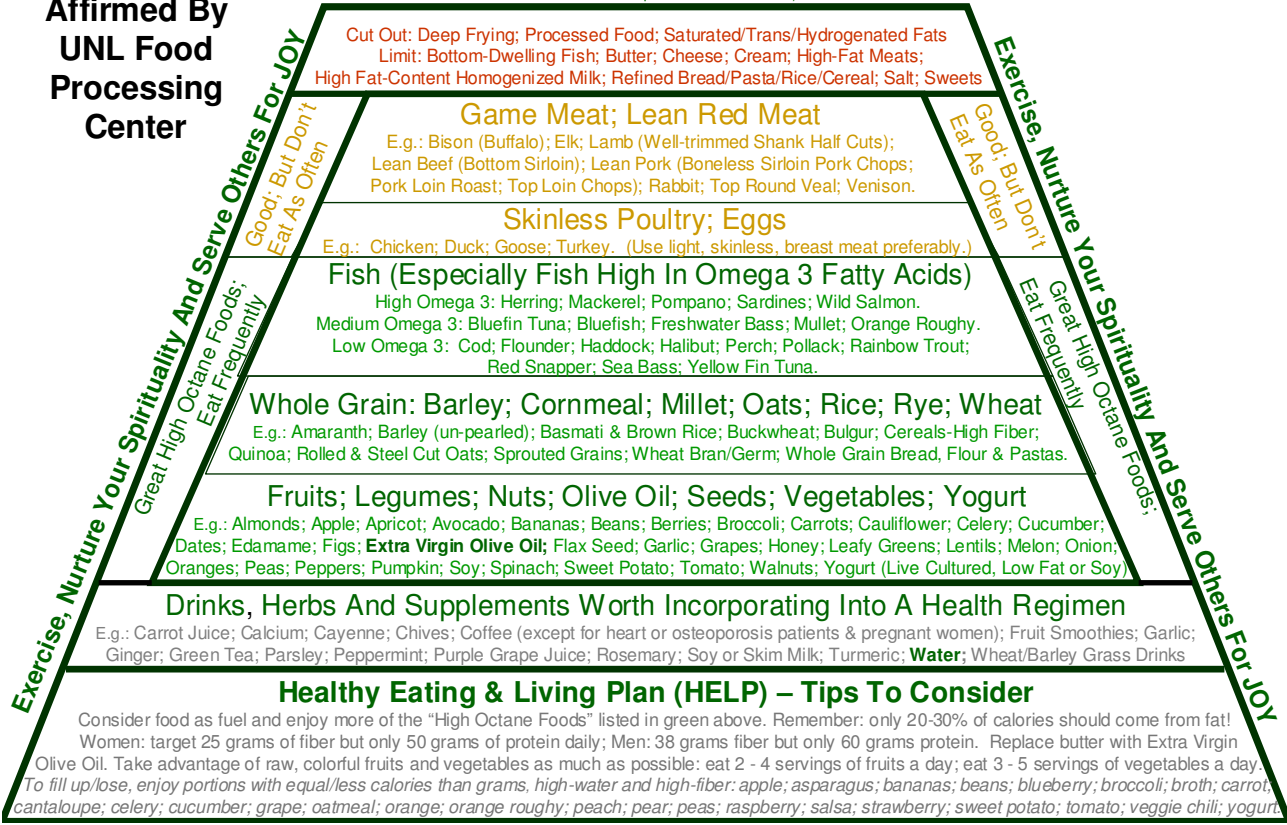
- Then congratulate yourself on enjoying a much healthier life – and Lord willing, live longer, too!

The Mediterranean Harvest For Life dietary regimen enables a lifestyle of healthy fun – it’s not a fad. So tell your buddies; grab a scale, a tape measure and a blood pressure monitor; and start watching the progress!

Components & Health Value Affirmed By UNL Food Processing Center



MHFL Trapezoid
Healthy Dietary Components
And Optimum Living Guidelines
 (Recommendations are not meant to be all inclusive – other foods can provide health benefits.)





A Service Of



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