



Aging Healthfully Newsletter

Illinois Department on Aging



November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

The number of people with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementias are on the rise. It is estimated that by 2050, the costs associated these diseases will rise to over 1 trillion dollars in the United States.

Did you know...

- 1 in 3 seniors will die due to Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia.
- This disease kills more individuals than prostate and breast cancer combined!
- Currently in the U.S., Alzheimer's disease ranks 6th as one of the leading causes of death.
- From 2000 to 2018, the number of deaths related to Alzheimer's disease increased by 146%.

As the older adult population continues to grow rapidly, it is certain that the number of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementias will continue to rise.

Researchers and scientists are working hard to better understand the disease and ways to help prevent or delay dementia caused by Alzheimer's disease.

There are a variety of studies that have been conducted on diet and its effect on brain health and functioning. Some studies suggest that certain foods may positively impact the way the brain functions and ability to retain memories, but more research is needed to strengthen and support these findings.

Mediterranean Diet and Brain Health



Brain changes can happen years before the first signs/symptoms of Alzheimer's appear. Scientists are looking at controllable factors such as lifestyle choices, diet, exercise, and cognitive training to delay or prevent Alzheimer's disease.

It is thought that eating a certain type of diet may have a protective affect on our brain health by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress. Another theory is the Mediterranean-style diet may indirectly help reduce the risk for Alzheimer's by helping to control associated risk factors such as developing diabetes, heart disease, or obesity.

The Mediterranean diet has shown promise in promoting brain health as well as delaying or preventing heart disease and diabetes, which may reduce the risk or slow down the progression of Alzheimer’s disease. However, current evidence only suggests the diet may be helpful, but does not prove that it will prevent developing this disease.

For example, some studies suggest that eating fish, as a part of the Mediterranean diet, may be the greatest factor in slowing cognitive decline and promoting higher brain functioning. The typical Western diet in America is often low in fish, fruits and vegetables, and nutrients which are found in high amounts in the Mediterranean diet.

This diet is mostly plant-based and includes high amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, dried beans, nuts, fish, and olive oil, but also includes other surprising foods/beverages like red wine!

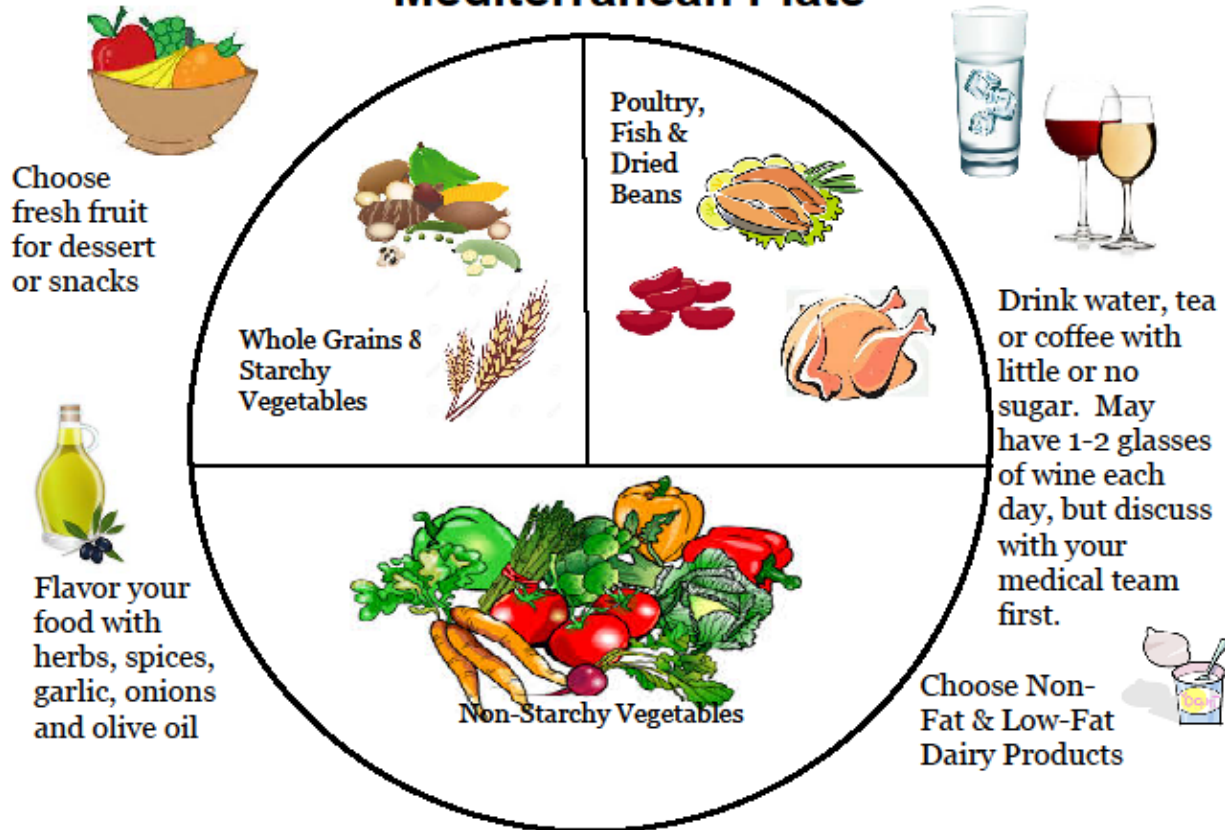


Foods That Are Included in the Mediterranean Diet:

Food	How Much to Eat Per Day or Per Week*	Examples
Fruits	2 to 2 ½ cups per day	Apples, grapes, berries, oranges, grapefruit, peaches, pears, pomegranate
Vegetables	2 ½ cups per day	Dark leafy greens, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, carrots, squash, onions, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower
Legumes	1 ½ cups per week	Lentils, black beans, chickpeas, white beans, kidney beans, peanuts, lima beans
Nuts	4oz-5oz per week	Almonds, cashews, pistachios, walnuts
Whole Grains and Cereals	6oz equivalents per day	Brown rice, popcorn, quinoa, whole wheat bread, corn tortillas, oatmeal, wild rice, bran cereal
Fish and Seafood	~ 15oz equivalents per week	Shrimp, cod, tuna, crab, clams, scallops, salmon, oysters
Oils/Fats	~3-4 tablespoons per day	Unsaturated oils such as canola oil, olive oil, sesame oil, sunflower oil, avocado, olives
Dairy	2 cup equivalents per day	Low-fat and fermented dairy products such as yogurt, cottage cheese, kefir, cheese, ricotta cheese
Meats	3-4oz per day or ~24oz per week	Chicken breast, turkey, lean pork tenderloin. Red meat on special occasions
Alcohol	Limit of 1 drink per day for Women Limit of 2 drinks per day for Men	Alcohol is typically consumed with meals and all types are included

*Recommended servings are based on 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern at 1800-2000 calorie level.

Mediterranean Plate



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Attachments:

- Alzheimer's Facts and Figures Infographic
- Difference between Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
- Mediterranean Diet Pyramid
- Mediterranean Diet Food Groups and Sample Menu
- **Recipes:** Crockpot Salsa Chicken Tacos; Baked Potato Cauliflower Soup

References:

https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-we-know-about-diet-and-prevention-alzheimers-disease?utm_source=nia-mailchimp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=healthyaging-20200608&utm_source=NIA+Main&utm_campaign=94ca48679e-healthyaging-diet%26alz-20200608&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ffe42fdac3-94ca48679e-18449047

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<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs/nutrition/Pages/nutrition.aspx>