

Healthy Dietary Styles

While current research comparing diets of differing macronutrient ratios may not point to one 'perfect' diet, there is compelling research about certain dietary styles, including the Mediterranean diet, that offers strong guidance.

Low fat diets are often ineffective. Furthermore, eating healthy fats is beneficial for health. Other approaches, including low-carbohydrate diets and Mediterranean diets can be good models upon which to base your own dietary strategy as long as they incorporate healthy, high-quality foods.

The Mediterranean diet is often recommended for patients who have forms of inflammatory arthritis, such as rheumatoid disease, psoriatic arthritis, etc. If you have gout, a different diet is recommended and this is described in a separate document.

What exactly is a 'Mediterranean' Diet?

There isn't one exact Mediterranean diet, as this eating style takes into account the different foods, eating patterns, and lifestyles in multiple countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. However, there are similarities that define a Mediterranean eating pattern.

The traditional Mediterranean diet includes:

- High intake of olive oil (preferably extra virgin), nuts, vegetables, fruits, and cereals
- Moderate intake of fish and poultry
- Limited intake of dairy products, and low intake in particular of red meat, processed meats, and sweets
- Wine in moderation, consumed with meals

Omega 3 can help to reduce inflammation and is of potential benefit particularly in inflammatory arthritis.

Here are foods that can trigger inflammation:

- Sugar
- Saturated fats
- Trans fats
- Excessive Omega 6: The body needs a balance of healthy amounts of Omega 3 and Omega 6. Too much Omega 6 can trigger inflammation. It is found in oils derived from corn, safflower, peanut, soy, sunflower, grapeseed, some mayonnaise and salad dressings.
- White flour, white rice, white potatoes, some cereals.
- MSG (found in Asian fast food, prepacked soups, salad dressings)
- Gluten
- Casein (found in dairy, whey protein products)
- Aspartame
- Alcohol

Weight

Calories matter, but quality is equally important. When making dietary decisions, regardless of whether you choose a certain dietary style such as low-carbohydrate or Mediterranean, you can also use the Healthy Eating Plate as a guide for how to fill your plate.

A healthy diet for weight loss also needs to be sustainable, and regardless of what you're eating, you need to make sure you're not eating too many calories overall. Calories do matter, but focus first on choosing high-quality, healthy foods.



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