

Mediterranean Diet

Doctors typically recommend a low fat – high carbohydrate diet for weight loss and cholesterol lowering. However, some people do not respond well to this type of diet; including diabetics, people with a combination of low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides, and people with known or suspected insulin resistance syndromes. For these individuals a Mediterranean diet (also called “Lyon” or “Monterey” diet) can sometimes be helpful.

Fats

1. Minimize saturated fat intake (meat and dairy products).
2. Substitute monounsaturated fat and omega-3 fatty acids.
 - a. Olive oil and balsamic vinegar for salad dressing or bread dip
 - b. Use approximately three tablespoons per day of olive oil.
 - c. Use canola oil for cooking and as a substitute for butter and shortening.
 - d. Take a small handful of nuts in the late afternoon.
 - e. Two or more servings of fish per week.
3. Keep polyunsaturated fats (safflower, corn and soybean oils) under 10% of the diet.
4. Avoid trans-fats (partially hydrogenated vegetable oils).

Protein

1. Occasional lean meat.
2. Poultry with the skin removed (white meat only since dark meat is higher in saturated fat).
3. Moderate amounts of low-fat dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt. Limit the use of high-fat cheese.
4. Fish and shellfish (avoid calamari since it is high in cholesterol).
5. Plant proteins like beans and lentils.

Carbohydrates

1. Avoid processed/refined carbohydrates.
2. Choose more natural whole foods such as whole grain breads, pasta and brown rice.
3. Choose carbohydrates with a low to moderate level on the glycemic index (see www.mendosa.com/gilists.htm.)
4. Read package labels. Ideally, the percentage of calories from sugar should be less than 30% of the total calories from carbohydrates.
5. Avoid simple sugars and desserts such as cakes, pies, candy, cookies, soft drinks and alcohol (not more than 2 servings per day).
6. Increase the intake of vegetables, beans and fruit (not fruit juices).