



## WHY YOU SHOULD “EAT LIKE A GREEK”

The traditional Mediterranean diet has been found to be associated with a long life span and significantly reduced disease. What is this diet and why does it work?

A typical middle aged Greek man is 90% less likely to develop heart disease, stroke or hypertension than the same man in the west.

Benefits of the Mediterranean diet:

- Lose weight safely and reduce obesity
- Reduce risk of heart disease, stroke, vascular disease, diabetes type 2 and metabolic syndrome, bad LDL cholesterol, alzheimers disease, hypertension, osteoporosis, cancer
- Reduce inflammation and its markers
- Keeps blood sugar down.
- Raise the healthy HDL cholesterol

Scientists have given the following statistics:

- Reduction of all causes of mortality by 48%
- Women showed 40% reduction of bad estrogens in urine that increase breast cancer risk.
- Replacing the Western diet with the Mediterranean diet could reduce colorectal cancer by 25%, breast cancer by 15% and prostate, pancreatic and endometrial cancer of the uterus by 10%
- Children have less allergy and asthma which returns when the diet changes or if margarine is consumed.
- This diet is better than a low fat diet at lowering LDL cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar.

What is the Mediterranean diet?

Although diets around the region vary, there is a general theme. The diet is rich in whole grains, legumes (beans, chick peas, lentils), fruits, vegetables, lean protein, fish, olive oil, tomato paste.

This gives a high fibre component from the legumes and whole grains. The olive oil has cancer preventing and vascular protecting qualities from its components (see my article on the benefits of olive oil). The fruits and vegetables provide many antioxidant compounds.

It is important to note that there is not a high amount of red meat, and that there is an abundance of plant foods in this diet.

What is the Mediterranean lifestyle?

What is important is to do the whole thing and include the other components of the lifestyle. This includes enjoying meals with friends and family in a relaxed way with plenty of time for conversation. Stress management and daily exercise are also a key component. The afternoon siesta is also part of that lifestyle.

So now you know how to eat and live like a Greek and live a longer, healthier life!

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