

Mediterranean Diet

A recognised healthy eating pattern for cardiovascular and metabolic health



What is the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean diet varies by country and region, so it has a range of definitions but is based on the eating patterns of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean sea such as France, Greece, Spain and Italy. Exactly which foods belong to the Mediterranean diet is controversial, partly because there is such variation between different countries. It is however, characterised by a high intake of plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, cereals, whole grains, and olive oil, as well as a moderate consumption of fish and poultry, and a low intake of sweets, red meat and dairy products. It is typically associated with cardiovascular health and longevity with both Greece and Italy home to two of the world's so-called Blue Zones. Some of the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet are also attributed to lifestyle factors such as regular physical activity and cultural norms of sharing meals with other people and enjoying life. The Mediterranean Diet has been recognized by UNESCO as a cultural heritage of humanity. The health benefits associated with the Mediterranean diet have since become universal and classed as a "way of living" which paradoxically risks its recognition as a dietary protocol.

Personalised nutrition and the Mediterranean diet

A growing body of scientific evidence shows that the Mediterranean Diet has a beneficial effect on obesity, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease (CVD), and type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). Implementation of the Mediterranean diet approach and / or its principals can be integrated with a personalised approach based on the needs of individuals and existing guidelines such as the BANT Wellness Solution. There is no one specific Mediterranean diet protocol but rather a food-first ethos to eating healthily and including a wide variety of macro and micro nutrients based on the patterns of the collective Mediterranean region.

Optimising diet to support a Mediterranean dietary approach

1. Rich in whole plant foods vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes and whole grains.
2. Healthy fats and vegetable oils such as olive oil.
3. Moderate consumption of fish, seafood and poultry.
4. Low intake of red meat, dairy products, processed foods, sugars.
5. Integrated lifestyle habits such as regular exercise, communal meals.

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6627690/>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6471908/>
3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6466433/>

