



# Mediterranean Diet

## DECREASE YOUR RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE

### What Is the Mediterranean Diet?

- The diet is mostly plant-based and includes fish, olive oil, and canola oil.
- It is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, low rates of chronic disease, long life expectancy and may lower the amount of cholesterol in the blood.

### Key Points of the Diet

- Eat a variety of unprocessed, home-cooked foods.
- Eat **plant-based foods every day**, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds.
- Eat five or more servings of vegetables and two to four servings of fruit every day. One serving is a small piece of fruit, ½ cup of cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw fruits or vegetables.
- **Extra virgin olive and canola oils are the recommended fats, replacing saturated, trans, and other fats and oils** (including butter and margarine). Trans-fat-free margarine is fine. Liquid margarine is better.
- **Avoid foods high in trans fats** (these foods will have the words “partially hydrogenated oils” on the ingredients list), such as store-bought crackers, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, flour tortillas, and margarine. Read the label for other foods high in trans fats.
- Avoid foods that have palm kernel oil, vegetable shortening, or fully hydrogenated fat in the ingredients list.
- **Eat at least two fish meals per week**, such as salmon, trout, halibut, or tuna (limit tuna to 6 oz. per week).
- **Replace red meat with fish or poultry.** Red meat, if eaten at all, should be limited to one or two times a month.
- Have one or two servings of fat-free and low-fat dairy products daily. One serving is 1 cup.
- Limit egg yolks to four per week (including those used in cooking and baking).
- Try fresh fruit for dessert instead of other sweets.

### Other Lifestyle Habits of the Mediterranean Population

- Regular physical activity. Aim for 30 minutes or more 5 days a week.
- Moderate amounts of red wine are consumed with meals (check with your health care professional before drinking).
- Fast food and convenience foods are not a part of the Mediterranean lifestyle.

### Sample Menu

**Breakfast:** Oatmeal with ground flaxseeds; Fat-free milk or soy milk; Fresh blueberries; Slice of whole-grain bread with “Old-fashioned” peanut butter

**Lunch:** Lentil soup; Salad with fresh carrots, tomatoes, walnuts, and extra virgin olive oil and vinegar; Whole-grain bread with trans-fat-free margarine; Cubed watermelon and cantaloupe

**Dinner:** Grilled salmon; Steamed zucchini and summer squash; Brown rice; Salad with fresh vegetables, walnuts, and extra virgin olive oil and vinegar; Strawberries and plain nonfat yogurt