

Dine and Wine Your Way to Health

The media has pushed many COVID-19 messages, but what was missing? As soon as we learned there is an increased COVID mortality associated with obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, we could have cried-out the absolute necessity of cleaning up our lifestyle to prevent a COVID demise. In fact, 2020 would have been a perfect year to emphasize the importance of an anti-inflammatory diet, along with increased movement/exercise.

The western diet, the predominant diet of our culture, is pro-inflammatory and has countless well-documented negative outcomes including our most “popular” conditions: heart attack, stroke, cancer, obesity, diabetes, acid reflux, depression, anxiety, arthritis and dementia.

Help spread the news that it’s time for a change.

The most widely studied anti-inflammatory diet is the Mediterranean Diet (MedDiet). Inspired by the eating habits of Italy, Spain and Greece in the 1960s, it centers around a high consumption of vegetables, fruits, olive oil, legumes, unrefined grains and fish along with a moderate consumption of dairy (cheese and yogurt) and wine while you dine.

The MedDiet is a well-evidenced way to reduce all-cause mortality and the risk of most chronic diseases. It’s also considered the easiest diet to sustain over time since it includes so many of the whole foods we all seem to enjoy. It de-emphasizes sugar and simple starches, cured and red meats and, as with most health-enhancing diets, it discourages processed foods.

It should come as no surprise that the base of the MedDiet pyramid is vegetables and fruits of all varieties. With rare exceptions, humans can’t survive without eating plants or the important compounds derived from plants. These “phytonutrients” are powerfully essential to health by giving your cells huge disease protection of antioxidation, immunomodulation, anti-inflammation, chemoprevention, glucose regulation and hormone modulation.

So, as you shift your family toward a MedDiet this season, here are a few tips:

- Eat a rainbow of colors in your 4-5 servings of veggies and fruit a day
- Eat 2-3 servings of veggies for every fruit
- Consider organic (search “Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen”)
- Seek in-season produce when possible
- Choose veggies rich in soluble fiber such as asparagus, berries and artichokes to provide good “prebiotics” for your healthy gut bacteria
- Make a family tradition to prep and cut your veggies one day a week to make them easier to eat and cook with all week long
- As you dine, I recommend a 5oz glass of Pinot Noir or Malbec for the highest resveratrol content — it staves off cancer and heart disease



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