

The Mediterranean Diet: 9 Principles

The Mediterranean Diet emphasizes: **DAILY** consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and healthy fats; **WEEKLY** consumption of fish, poultry, beans, and eggs; **MODERATE** portions of dairy products; and **LIMITED** intake of red meat.

Principle 1 Vegetables

- Aim for more than 2 servings of vegetables per day.
- **Serving size:** 1 cup raw leafy greens; 2 cups lettuce; 1 cup cooked or raw vegetables
- Try a new vegetable each month to add variety to your meals.

Principle 2 Fruits and Nuts

- Aim for more than 2 servings of fruit and 1 serving of nuts per day.
- **Serving size:** fresh fruit: 1 cup; dried fruit: ½ cup; nuts: ¼ cup; nut butter: 2 TBSP
- Add berries and nuts to salad or oatmeal; have fruit for dessert.

Principle 3 Legumes

- Aim for more than 2 servings per week.
- **Serving size:** ½ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils
- Switch up the variety of legumes you eat each week to add interest to meals.

Principle 4 Whole Grains

- Aim for more than 4–6 servings per day.
- **Serving size:** 1 cup cooked grains (oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, etc.) or 7 ounces (1 slice wheat bread is 1 ounce)
- Measure out pasta and cereal to keep portions in check.

Principle 5 Fish and Shellfish

- Aim for more than 2 servings of fish per week.
- **Serving size:** 4 ounces fish fillet; 3 ounces canned tuna
- Season fish with your favorite salt-free seasoning and lemon juice before baking.

Principle 6 Plant-Based Oils and Fats

- Cook with and eat plant-based fats (avocado oil, avocados, olive oil, canola oil) over animal fats (butter, lard).
- **Serving size:** 1 TBSP olive oil; ¼ avocado
- Make your own salad dressing using olive oil and vinegar; mash avocado and use it as a topping for toast, potatoes, or beans.

Principle 7 Low-Fat Dairy

- Aim for less than 1 serving per day.
- **Serving size:** ¾ cup low-fat milk; 1.5 ounces natural cheese; 6 ounces low-fat plain yogurt
- Replace mayonnaise with yogurt in recipes; weigh cheese before adding to recipes for portion control.

Principle 8 Proteins and Meats

- Aim for less than 1 serving per day (less than 3 servings per month of red meat).
- **Serving size:** 3 ounces cooked chicken breast; 3 ounces cooked pork tenderloin; 1 egg
- View meat as an accompaniment to a meal, not the main course.

Principle 9 Alcohol

- Aim for no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 drinks per day for men.
- **Serving size:** 5 ounces red wine; 12 ounces beer; 1.5 ounces spirits; 8 ounces malt liquor
- All alcohol should be consumed with meals. Ask your medical team if it is okay for you to drink alcohol.

