

Fact Sheet: The Mediterranean Diet Health Benefits

How the Mediterranean Diet can help fight the battle of the bulge

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Minimise your risk of developing chronic diseases

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What's the problem?

- As a society we are currently facing an increased prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases.
- Over the last 30 years our general consumption of high-calorie foods, low in vital nutrients has increased significantly, causing an unhealthy shift in our diets.
- A poor diet combined with an inactive/sedentary lifestyle is a major contributing factor to many of us becoming overweight or obese.
- Being overweight or obese significantly increases a person's risk of developing many chronic diseases such as, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and type-II diabetes.
- According to the World Health Organisation, these diseases are our largest killers, contributing to approximately 35million deaths/year, worldwide.
- Most of these diseases are considered preventable.
- Such health risks can be decreased by implementing lifestyle changes, including healthy eating and regular physical activity.



Health benefits of the Mediterranean Diet:

- The Mediterranean diet is the most comprehensively researched diet. Over the last 60 years scientists have proven that key aspects of the diet can aid in the prevention of chronic disease.
- The Mediterranean diet is characterised by an abundant variety of plant-based foods, such as leafy greens, fruits and vegetables, wholegrain cereals, nuts and legumes. These foods are rich in vitamins and nutrients.
- Olive oil is the main source of fat in the diet, which contains high levels of antioxidants called polyphenols. Research has shown such antioxidants contain anti-inflammatory properties, which can help lower the risk of heart disease.
- People who follow a Mediterranean diet consume lower amounts of red meat and minimal quantities of high-fat processed meats. Their diet consisting of a high fish intake, abundant in omega-3 fats, decreasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Despite its high fat content, the Mediterranean diet has been proven beneficial for weight-loss. Studies have shown that a person who follows such a diet is more likely to maintain and sustain a healthy weight in the long term, due to the balanced nature of the diet and the presence of monounsaturated (good) fats.

