

MedDiet Still Wins?

We become more different from each other over time. Diets and their impact on us change too. Back in 2008 when My Longevity began, there was compelling research supporting the view that the Mediterranean diet (MedDiet) was a reputable framework for improving the quality and length of life.

What is the MedDiet?

In the 1960's, certain regions bordering the Mediterranean (Crete, Greece and Southern Italy) had low rates of chronic diseases and relatively high longevity. Nine key elements were associated with this - vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, whole grains, seafood, mono-unsaturated oils, red wine, and meat. While each element is important, the combination of them contributes the most benefit.

- **Vegetables** like lettuce, beetroot, carrots and onions are everyday staples
- **Legumes** such as beans, peas and chickpeas are common
- **Fruits** including grapes, tomatoes, melons and cucumbers are core items with most meals
- **Nuts** are mostly low-fat, like almonds and walnuts, eaten as snacks or within meals
- **Whole grains** are the base for breads, polenta and pasta
- **Seafood** is eaten two or three times a week, including fish and shellfish
- Extra virgin **olive oil** provides unsaturated fat, plus a little of dairy products (yoghurt, cheese).
- A daily glass of **red wine** with meals is the typical alcoholic drink
- **Red meat and poultry** are rarely eaten (roughly weekly) with a few eggs, often in cooking.

Further, because extra virgin olive oil is extracted at low temperatures, if stored carefully it retains its antioxidant and taste advantages over other oils and is fine for cooking, if a little smokier.

Gut Health

The MedDiet is acknowledged for its contribution to gut health. Our gut houses over a kilo of microbes – our microbiome - which strongly influences aspects of our well-being while also extracting energy from our food and stimulating the production of many hormones. Rich in unsaturated fats and fibre, the MedDiet assists the functioning of our microbiome.

What's the Evidence?

Reflecting how many diets are pushing for attention, Harvard Health recently published an analysis of 39 popular diets. It focused on the strength of evidence that the diet itself can make difference,

and whether it was well balanced, affordable, and easy to follow. As Harvard Health points out, each of us will adopt a more personal path when we follow any diet. Getting input from your health professionals is always a good idea before making significant changes.

This is a comprehensive report from a reputable USA source. You can currently purchase a direct copy [here](#) – there is no benefit to us from this.

Summary

Some categories of diets tended to show up well.

- Regional-type diets including the MedDiet and the Nordic diet had high credibility
- Diets designed to respond to specific diseases were typically well evidenced, including dementia, cardiovascular conditions, diabetes, and immunodeficiency

Diets with a less consistent rating but with about half of them reasonably evidenced.

- Plant based diets
- Weight loss diets

The remaining types of diets were largely not well evidenced, including low-carb, paleo and intermittent-fasting diets.

Conclusion

In an era of evidence-based medical progress, the MedDiet remains on track as a yardstick for healthy eating. If you are looking to move (or stay) away from this, at least check out the evidence in support for the direction you want to take, and then consult your health professionals about it.

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