

# Eating for a Healthy Heart

Eating a balanced, nutrient-rich diet which is low in sodium and includes healthy fats is one of the most heart healthy habits you can develop.

Following the Mediterranean (or DASH) diet can help prevent heart disease and stroke by providing heart-healthy nutrients while reducing the foods that can contribute to heart disease.

## The Mediterranean/DASH Diet

### Plenty

Vegetables, fruit, unsalted nuts and seeds, whole grains, beans and legumes, fresh herbs and spices.



### Moderate

Low-fat or fat-free dairy products, eggs, fish, poultry, olive oil as the primary fat source or other non-tropical vegetable oils.



### Minimal or Limited

Saturated fats, processed or high fat meats, refined carbohydrates, added sugar, sweetened beverages, sodium, highly processed foods



Hydrogenated or trans fats should be avoided.

Limit alcohol to no more than one serving per day (4 oz. wine, 12 oz. beer, 1.5 oz. of 80 proof spirits, or 1 oz. of 100 proof spirits) for women, and no more than 1-2 servings per day for men.



### Why the Mediterranean/DASH diet:

- Low in saturated fat and cholesterol
- High in monounsaturated fatty acids
- Balanced omega-6 to omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid ratio
- Rich in polyphenols, vitamins, carotenoids, complex carbohydrates and fiber
- May lower risk of dementia, improve mood and brain health
- Helps prevent heart disease and stroke by improving risk factors (waist hip ratio, lipids, markers of inflammation, blood pressure, and insulin sensitivity)

### What to eat:

- Unrefined grains
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Olive oil as a main culinary fat
- Legumes and nuts
- Frequent intake of fish and shellfish
- Limited intake of milk and milk products, meat and animal products, and simple sugars
- Wine in moderation

Specific amounts of nutrients may vary for each person. Talk to a registered dietitian for a detailed meal plan based on your specific needs.



**Dignity Health**  
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