

Mediterranean Diet Rates Better Than Low-Fat Diet

The New England Journal Of Medicine just published a very reliable study that a diet high in fat, good fats, is better for your heart than a low-fat diet. The study looked at nearly 8,000 people for five years.

The people who followed the Mediterranean Diet had a whopping 30 percent fewer heart problems than the people who followed the low fat diet.

Many people are not at all surprised by these findings. The medical community is increasingly embracing the idea that heart disease is caused by inflammation, and that inflammation is largely brought-on by eating too many carbohydrates, a hallmark of the low-fat diet. When Americans began embracing the low-fat diet 20 years ago, we started eating carbohydrates in the place of fats.

Low fat food manufacturers often make up for the lack of fat by increasing the amount of sugar in their products. And people, instead of eating fats, opted for low-fat food items like white bread, pasta, bagels, crackers, cereals, tortillas and so on, which all turn into sugar when you eat them. In fact, eating white, refined grains is, to your body, just like eating pure table sugar. All this causes inflammation, which leads to heart disease.

On the other hand, the Mediterranean Diet is rich in fats, but they are the good kind of fats. The bad fats are trans fats, also known as hydrogenated oils. The other kind of bad fats are Omega-6 fats. Those are vegetable oil, soybean oil, corn oil, safflower oil, grapeseed oil and the like.

The American diet is loaded with trans fats and Omega-6 fats because those two types of fats are in processed foods. But

the Mediterranean Diet is very heavy in the wonderful, healthy Omega-3 fats. In fact, the cornerstone of the Mediterranean Diet is olive oil. Other good fats play a prominent role in the Mediterranean diet such as nuts, avacados and fish. The Mediterranean diet is rich with vegetables and salads.

The benefits of the Mediterranean Diet are not just observed in this most recent study. In fact, the people who live in Mediterranean countries are living proof that their diet is superior to most others. People in that region who follow that diet and who exercise and do not smoke have markedly lower cardiovascular disease than people in America.

Our country is the best in the world, to be sure, but our diet is arguable the worst! We could learn a thing or two from the Mediterraneans when it comes to eating. Topping the list: eating olive oil every single day, and a lot of it, say, four tablespoons. One thing to keep in mind about olive oil is that you don't want to heat it. Heating it causes oxidation, which is bad for you.

An easy way to incorporate olive oil into your diet without heating it is to do what the Mediterraneans do, put it on a salad! Since bottled salad dressings usually contain harmful Omega-6 fats, whipping up your own olive oil dressing at home is clearly a much better choice.

Just whisk together 3 parts olive oil to 1 part vinegar and add salt and pepper. If you'd like, you can add other spices, like garlic or herbs, a dab of dijon mustard is good, too. Another way to incorporate olive oil into your daily life without heating it is to add it to roasted vegetables after they are finished cooking, or drizzles over fish after it has finished cooking.

So when it comes to heart health, and really overall health, stay away from carbohydrates like refined grains and sugar, which cause inflammation and opt for healthy fats like olive

oil, nuts, fish and avocados instead.

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