



Mediterranean Diet



It is a diet based on the classification of food groups, namely foods and quantities which should be consumed on a daily, weekly or monthly basis for a healthy diet. The Mediterranean diet pyramid (see diagram) shows semi-quantitative dietary guidelines for adults in Greece. In 1999, the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Medical School of the University of Athens made a list of dietary guidelines for the Greek people (on behalf of the Health Ministry). The aim was to find and

document the needs of healthy adults and to answer the question:

What should we eat?



What should we eat?

Our diet may include: **daily**

Bread, cereal, pasta, rice, potatoes, fruits, legumes, nuts, vegetables, milk, cheese, yogurt, olives, and finally **oil**.

Several times a **week**:

Eggs, poultry, fish and sweets.

Few times a **month**:

Red meat may be consumed, or if consumed more often, it should be in small quantities.



Also, consumption of wine is allowed daily, but always in moderation.
Note that a small portion is about half the proportion set by the market

regulations.



Remember also:



Drink plenty of water and avoid salt. Use other herbs (oregano, basil, thyme, etc.). We must know that no food or even no food group, when taken alone is not sufficient for our proper body function. The combination of foods is essential to provide our body with all the necessary nutrients. It is however important to stress that good nutrition only does not ensure our good health. It is necessary also to exercise and actually these two factors must be in harmony with each other to get the best results. For this reason, the exercise



factor appears next to the pyramid.

The Mediterranean diet is rich in complex carbohydrates and undigested fiber, rich in protein, has low saturated fat. Consumption of olive oil Vegetables and fruits are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Fish, with fatty acids like omega-3 that they contain, prevent the occurrence of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

What remains now is an answer to the question:



Why the Mediterranean Diet is so important?



It has been suggested that the protective role of Mediterranean diet on cardiovascular disease is due to the high consumption of monounsaturated fatty acids (olive oil), moderate alcohol consumption, high consumption of vitamins B6, B12 and folic acid (fruits, vegetables) and limited consumption of protein (meat, dairy products). It leads to:

- lower blood pressure
- antioxidant and anti-inflammatory action
- limiting damages to the endothelium
- regulation of body weight

