



Mediterranean diet the best of all

By Jacqueline Fields, MD and founder of Dr. Fields' Sacred Skin | June 1, 2014

As a holistic physician, I am focused on prevention based medicine. I firmly believe that we do far too much intervention in this country and not enough prevention. When it comes to cardiology these are some of the most costly invasive procedures. To mention a few, these include stents, balloon angioplasties, and bypass surgeries. There is no evidence that putting in a stent or performing a surgical bypass prevents future heart attacks—none. As Dr. Dean Ornish has proven, it is really changing lifestyle and diet that reverts cardiovascular disease. Vascular disease-atherosclerosis is a metabolic disorder requiring a metabolic solution. If all physicians, like holistic physicians, would seriously invest the time in teaching our patients how to prevent heart disease, we could actually see a significant drop in the amount of cardiovascular mortality. Every 36 seconds, someone in America dies of an illness related to cardiovascular disease. This is clear proof it is time for a new model—and this must be based on prevention. For me the Standard American Diet stands for S.A.D. So let's learn more about what diet we know works.

Now I am Italian and you might think I must be biased but a wealth of growing research backs the benefits of the Mediterranean diet. The science has consistently revealed that this diet yields many health benefits including cardiovascular disease prevention, weight management, improved blood sugar metabolism, reduced blood pressure, decreased inflammation, and cancer prevention. A study by Ansel Keys at the University of Minnesota described his conclusions from his seven countries study. He determined that the dietary patterns of people living in the Mediterranean region were associated with better health and longer life. A middle-aged Greek man, for instance, was 90% less likely to have cardiovascular disease than a comparable man in the west.

Why does the Mediterranean Diet work? The Diet is rich in whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, lean protein, fish, and lots of olive oil. Growing up in Italy I remember a typical lunch involved three different courses that you ate slowly and with your family. Commonly we had very little meat—one U.S. steak would be pounded out to make a serving of meat for 10 people. We had at least 5-6 different vegetables for both lunch and dinner and fruit was always our desert. The diet significantly reduces saturated fat consumption and eliminates trans fat intake, thereby reducing atherosclerosis and significantly improving cardiovascular health. It also reduces inflammation by supplying significant quantities of free radical-fighting antioxidants. It is clear that any diet affectively reducing inflammation will significantly reduce ones risk for all degenerative diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke and even Alzheimer's disease. The British researchers did a decade long prospective

study on a large sample of the aging U.S. population. They concluded that “the Mediterranean diet was associated with reduced all-cause and cause specific mortality”.

It is not only the diet that gives the Mediterranean people there great health statistics but also we must not forget their lifestyle. Slow down to eat, exercise daily, enjoy life, connect to the world and do not forget to nap.

At the Healing Gardens Living Arts Center we do teach classes on healthy cooking. If people are interested we could explore classes with my mother or my grandma for they are still very much alive. My grandmother is still in Italy so we may need to do a field trip. If interested let Sandra know at the Healing Gardens Medicinal Store at 970-472-6802 or visit us on line at www.thehealinggardens.org.

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