



NEWS RELEASE

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Living the Mediterranean Diet lifestyle

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FORT LEE, Va. – During May, Mediterranean Diet Month, the health benefits of this diet are highlighted in foods such as lean meats, fish, lots of fruits and vegetables, olives, olive oil and even a little wine.

Evidence shows a good reason to follow this diet, which is part of the Mediterranean lifestyle, is that it helps keep the heart healthy and may reduce the risk of dying from heart disease by up to 30 percent. Many of the foods found in the diet are high in omega-3 fatty acids, while studies have shown that these fatty acids lower triglycerides and may help protect blood vessels. The Mediterranean Diet is also low in saturated fats and hydrogenated oils, both of which contribute to heart disease.

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables at mealtime. Try grilling or roasting your favorite vegetables and mix them with pasta, olive oil, garlic and crushed pepper.

Enjoy fish two times a week

Certain fish such as salmon, trout and albacore tuna are high in omega-3 fatty acids and protein. Grilling fish with a little olive oil, garlic, sea salt and crushed pepper makes a quick dinner. Watching your budget? Buy canned tuna or salmon and try mixing it with pasta, olive oil and seasonings.

Add olives and use olive oil

Olives and olive oil are an important part of the diet. Virgin or extra-virgin oils are the least processed oils and have more antioxidants. Olive oil is often used when making salad dressings and for cooking. Adding olives to salads and soups is a convenient way to enjoy them.

Add a few nuts or a little nut butter

Nuts are low in saturated fats and high in good fats. A handful of nuts a day makes a great snack. Or cut up an apple and eat it with nut butter, such as peanut or almond.

Enjoy red wine in moderation

A little wine may be a good thing, as red wine has antioxidants and can help reduce the blood's ability to clot due to an aspirin-like effect. However, the diet recommends no more than one 5-ounce glass of wine daily for women – or men 65 and older, and no more than two 5-ounce glasses of wine daily for men younger than 65.

Meat is OK in moderation

Go for the lean cuts of beef, such as flank steak or chicken, and enjoy smaller portions – 3 ounces or less.

Go for the whole grains

Most of the grains eaten are whole grains such as wheat, oats, barley, rice, rye and corn. Having oatmeal or muesli for breakfast is a great way to start the day with whole grains.

Eat yogurt and cheese

Enjoy Greek or plain yogurt. Even small amounts of cheese are part of the diet. Try adding goat cheese or feta to salads or soups.

Most healthy diets include lean meats, fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, whole grains and limited unhealthy fats. The Mediterranean Diet allows you to include these foods and others, along with fish and nuts, in recommended amounts to help keep your heart healthy.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA

Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*