Eating for heart health:
The Mediterranean diet

Extensive research has shown that a Mediterranean-style diet can reduce the risk of heart disease. More than a diet, the Mediterranean style of eating is a sustainable lifestyle approach to healthy eating. It's filled with a wide variety of great-tasting, healthy foods. The olive oil, nuts, fruits, veggies, whole grains and fish that characterize the Mediterranean diet are full of fiber, healthy fats and antioxidants — all things your heart loves.

The biggest difference between the Mediterranean diet and the typical American diet is the frequency at which certain foods are eaten. Plant-based foods are at the core, while foods like sweets and meats are eaten less often and in smaller amounts.

Key components of the Mediterranean diet

- Base every meal around mostly plant-based foods — vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, herbs and spices.

- At least twice a week, eat fish and seafood, the best sources of heart- and brain-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

- In moderate portions daily to weekly, add yogurt, cheese, poultry and eggs as additional protein sources.

- Limit red meat to no more than a few times a month and keep portions small.

- Olive oil is the main fat source of the Mediterranean diet, replacing other unhealthy fats and oils, including butter and margarine.

- Use herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods.

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

- If you drink alcohol, enjoy an occasional glass of red wine with your meal but in moderation (one glass per day for women, two for men).

- Avoid fast food, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages.

- Get plenty of exercise.

- Enjoy the pleasures of cooking and eating with family and friends, contributing to a heart-healthy life.
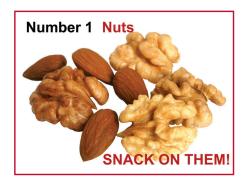
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Eating for heart health: Dr. Rama's Top 10

Certain foods, as part of a healthy diet, have been found to offer significant heart-protective benefits. These are Dr. Pamela Rama's top 10 favorites:

Number 1 Nuts

SNACK ON THEM!

Number 2 Olive Oil

USE IT!

**Number 3
Coffee
SAVOR IT!**

Number 4 Alcohol

DRINK IT…
in moderation

Number 5 Cinnamon

SPRINKLE IT!

**Number 6
Vitamin D
TAKE IT!**

**Number 7
Green Tea
DRINK IT!**

**Number 8
Chocolate
ENJOY IT!**

**Number 9
Vinegar
ADD IT!**

**Number 10
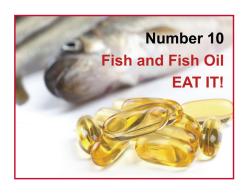Fish and Fish Oil
EAT IT!**

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