

# Medi -Diet & Brain Health

Foods at the bottom of the pyramid should be eaten more often. Foods at the top of the pyramid should be eaten less often.

## Choose everyday:

- ✓ 100% Whole grains
- ✓ Fruits
- ✓ Vegetables
- ✓ Beans, lentils, nuts
- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Low fat dairy

## Choose weekly:

- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Chicken
- ✓ Eggs

## Choose monthly:

- ✓ Red meats

## Also... Per day

Water **6-8 cups**

- ✓ **Alcohol in moderation**

Men **1-2 drink**

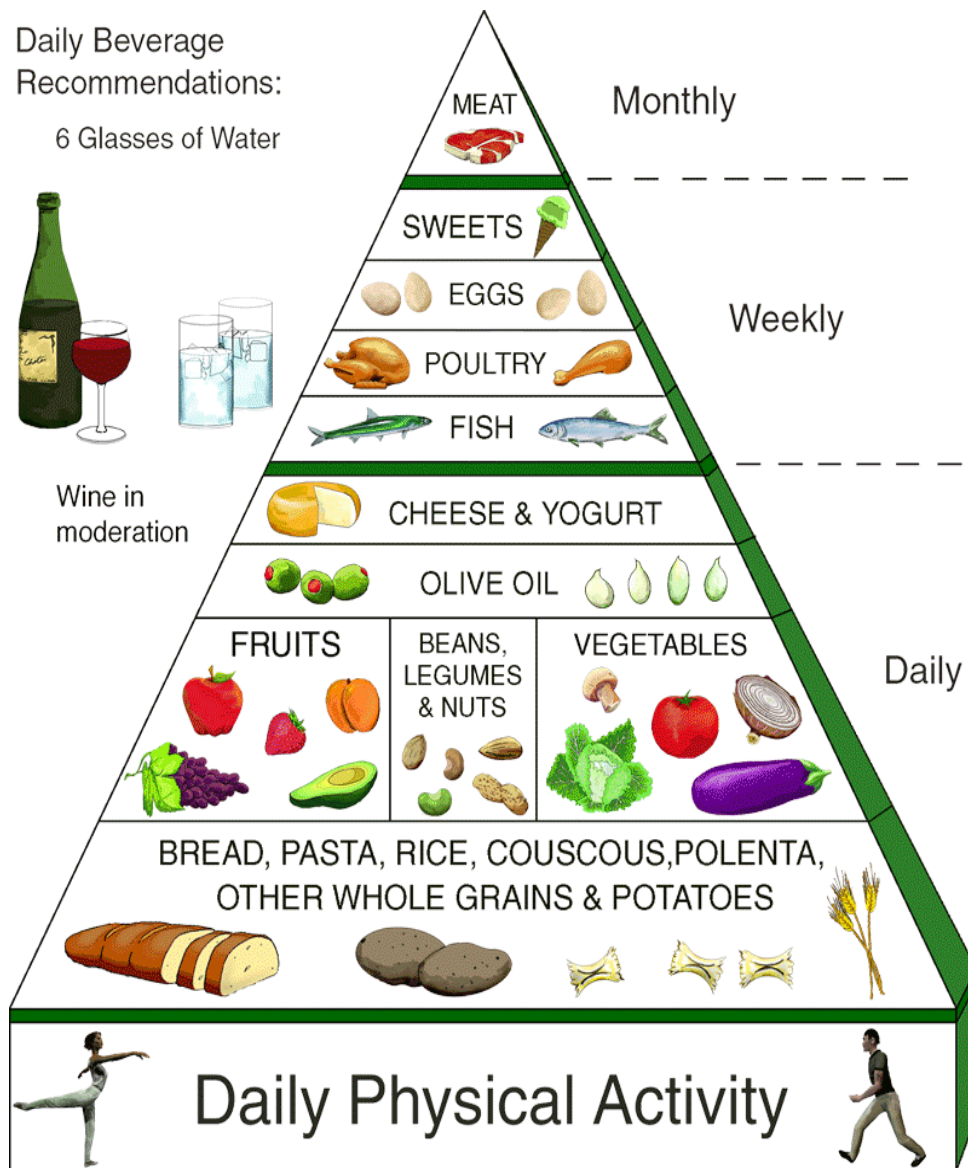
Women **0-1 drink**

12 oz beer

**1 drink** = 4 oz wine

1.5 oz spirits

## The Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



## The Research....

### **Medi Diet & Depression**

#### **SMILE STUDY**

Mediterranean diet helped 1/3 of the participants with depression. They experienced full relief of their depressive symptoms.

BMC Medicine 2017;15:23-35

#### **META-ANALYSIS**

"Adherence to a Mediterranean diet may contribute to the prevention of a series of brain diseases; this may be of special value given the aging of Western societies." The study authors found the participants who followed the Medi diet closely had lower risk of depression, stroke, and age related cognition ( thought process, memory, communication)  
Ann Neurol 2013;74:580-591

*There is a large body of research that focuses on the Mediterranean diet and the link between nutrition and health.*

*For more information, speak to your registered dietitian.*

## How does the diet work?



First, this isn't your typical *diet* it's a lifestyle! The pyramid emphasizes healthy sources of fat, a very low intake of saturated and trans fat, a high fibre intake, and a high intake of fruits and vegetables.

## Healthy Choices Everyday!

**Physical Activity** is at the base of the pyramid, which means that activity should be part of your everyday life. Regular exercise can include walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, skipping, and recreational sports and leisure activities.



**Grains** are the second largest group. Grains break down into simple sugars, which our body and brain use for fuel. You should choose *whole* grains over *white* grain products more often. Whole grains are packed with protein, fibre, B vitamins, and iron.

**Fruits & Vegetables** are packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fibre! Fresh fruits and vegetables are very desirable, but frozen and canned are also good choices during certain seasons or if you are on a budget.



**Legumes** (beans, peas, & lentils) are high in protein, folate, potassium, iron, and magnesium. They are also an excellent source of soluble fibre which helps to lower blood sugars and cholesterol.

**Nuts & Seeds** should be a part of your regular diet. They help reduce LDL (bad cholesterol) and increase HDL (good cholesterol) and are packed with nutrients, healthy fats, and energy. You need to watch your portion sizes, because nuts are high in calories. A healthy portion of nuts is 10 almonds, 5 walnuts, or 15 shelled pistachios.

**Olive Oil** is the major source of added fat rather than butter or lard, but don't worry because it's a healthy fat which helps to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and increase HDL (good cholesterol), which is essential for the prevention of cardiovascular disease.



**Cheese & Yogurt** are great dairy choices to compliment daily milk consumption. All dairy has some saturated fat (bad fats that can damage your heart), so it is important to choose low fat dairy products. The fat in dairy is called milk fat (M.F. %), try 0-2% milk, 0-3% yogurt, and less than 25% cheeses more often.



## Lentil Soup

### Ingredients:

2 cups dry lentils  
8 cups low salt veggie broth  
1 onion diced well  
2 cloves garlic minced  
¼ cup tomato paste  
1 tbsp cumin

### Instruction:

Combine all ingredients together in sauce pan. Bring to boil, & gently simmer for 30 minutes

### Nutrition Information: 1 cup

149 kcal, 10 g protein, 5 g fibre  
\*can also be done in slow cooker on low for 4 hours

## Quick Delicious Hummus

### Ingredients:

1 can chickpeas drained  
2 cloves garlic minced  
Juice of a lemon – or 3 tbsp concentrate  
Pepper to taste  
3 tbsp olive oil

### Instruction:

Blend in blender or food processor – serve with fresh veggies

### Nutrition Information:

Serving: 1 Tbsp  
25 kcal, 1.2 g protein, 1 g fibre

## Weekly vs Daily Choices

There are certain foods that you should eat regularly, but not on a daily basis. Eating foods on a weekly basis means that you should eat them on 1-3 days of the week.

**Fish & Seafood** should be eaten 2-3 times/week. Try fattier fish like salmon, mackerel, or sardines that are high in omega-3 fatty acids. White fish doesn't have the healthy fat, but it is low in calories and not as fishy tasting.



**Poultry** is an excellent protein source! It includes chicken, duck, goose, turkey, and pheasant. These white meats have less fat than red meat because they are not marbled with fat and the skin can easily be removed. Poultry fat is not healthy like fish fat is.

**Eggs** are packed with nutrients, including protein, iron, choline and B vitamins. People used to avoid eggs because they contain cholesterol, then research showed that dietary cholesterol doesn't affect blood levels of cholesterol in most people. Now we know that it is the large amount of saturated fat (found in the yolk) that increases LDL (bad cholesterol). Eggs should not be eaten daily, but a few times per week is okay.

**Sweets & treats** are a okay in moderation for most people. Although, people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, should avoid sweets and treats.

## Only on a Monthly Basis

**Red meats** include beef, pork, goat and lamb. You should only be eating these meats 1-2 a month. There is some research to show that diets high in red meat can lead to cancer. We also know that red meat is hard for our bodies to digest and it is high in saturated fat.

## Alcohol in moderation

**If you do not already drink alcohol regularly, we do not recommend that you start.** Research on alcohol consumption is controversial, while many promote the regular consumption of red wine others have found that alcohol consumption can lead to diseases of body organs and cancer. Diets that are high in fruits and vegetables provide plenty of protective antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals.

**For more information & advice contact your Registered Dietitian, RD**