

### **A Word of Caution and A Proven Healthy Diet**

A few weeks ago, a health article printed here dealt with a popular method of dieting following low-carbohydrate methodology. It was printed as a result of questions I've received and as a means of providing information. While many people endorse this form of eating, it is not always the best choice, especially for those folks with chronic health conditions. Always be cautious when considering popular diets, do your research and look for long-term studies with reliable methodologies, and seek advice from health professionals i.e. registered dietitians, physicians, etc.

#### **What is a Mediterranean diet?**

This type of diet excludes any processed foods and bad fats. It revolves around consumption of whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables, legumes, fish and even red wine. These food items are all rich in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds. This diet is essentially a heart healthy eating plan based on minimally processed foods that are plant-based and rich in monounsaturated fats.

Below are some guidelines when following a Mediterranean diet:

- Eat whole grains, vegetables and fruits served at most meals. Fruits are eaten as desserts.
- Replace butter with olive oil as the principal source of dietary fat used for baking and cooking.
- Nuts, beans, legumes and seeds are eaten for a good source of protein, healthy fats and fiber.
- Herbs and spices are used to season dishes instead of salt.
- Fish and shellfish are eaten for protein at least twice a week and lean cuts of meats are eaten in small portions.
- Red wine is consumed in moderation, if appropriate.
- Includes plenty of exercise and enjoying meals with others.

Experts say these types of foods have shown to help decrease vascular damage, inflammation and oxidative damage in the brain. They add that not only is this diet a healthy one, but it's also very sustainable.

Excerpted from Mayo Clinic online, Advocate Health eNews.

Wishing you joy and good health,  
Mary Bohlen RN  
SJParishNurse@comcast.net