



# The Mediterranean Diet

## It doesn't have to be "All-or-nothing"

Incorporating the Mediterranean diet into your lifestyle may seem overwhelming if new to you. However, it does not have to be an "all-or-nothing" deal.

You do not need to follow the diet and lifestyle completely every single day of the week to improve your health. Any part of the diet you can incorporate may begin to feel like routine.

Eventually, you may find you are following the diet more and more completely.



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## What is the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean Diet, sometimes referred to as the 'Greek Mediterranean Diet' or 'Mediterranean Diet Plan' is actually more of a dietary pattern that is characteristic of people living in regions around the Mediterranean Sea. Although it is called a diet, the Mediterranean diet is not about cutting calories and restricting foods like the popular diet trends in America today. Instead, it is a way of life and is about enjoying a wide variety of whole, nourishing foods with friends and family while practicing an active lifestyle.

### The characteristic components of this diet include:

- **Whole grains**, which includes all parts of the grain- the bran, endosperm, and germ. Each of these parts has healthful nutrients, which are lost or reduced when they are refined into products such as white flour.
- **A wide variety of vegetables and fruits**, often eaten seasonally and locally.
- **Legumes, nuts, and seeds** as the main plant-based sources of protein in the diet.
- **Olive oil** as the main source of fat, replacing less-healthy fats such as butter.
- **Seafood, poultry, and eggs** are consumed more often than other meats.
- **Moderate amounts of dairy**, mostly as yogurt and cheese, consumed a few times a week.
- **Red wine**, consumed moderately with meals.
- **Physical activity** - at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week.
- **Plenty of water** to stay hydrated.
- **Fresh herbs and spices** are added to dishes for flavor and color in place of excess salt.

## Mediterranean Food Pyramid

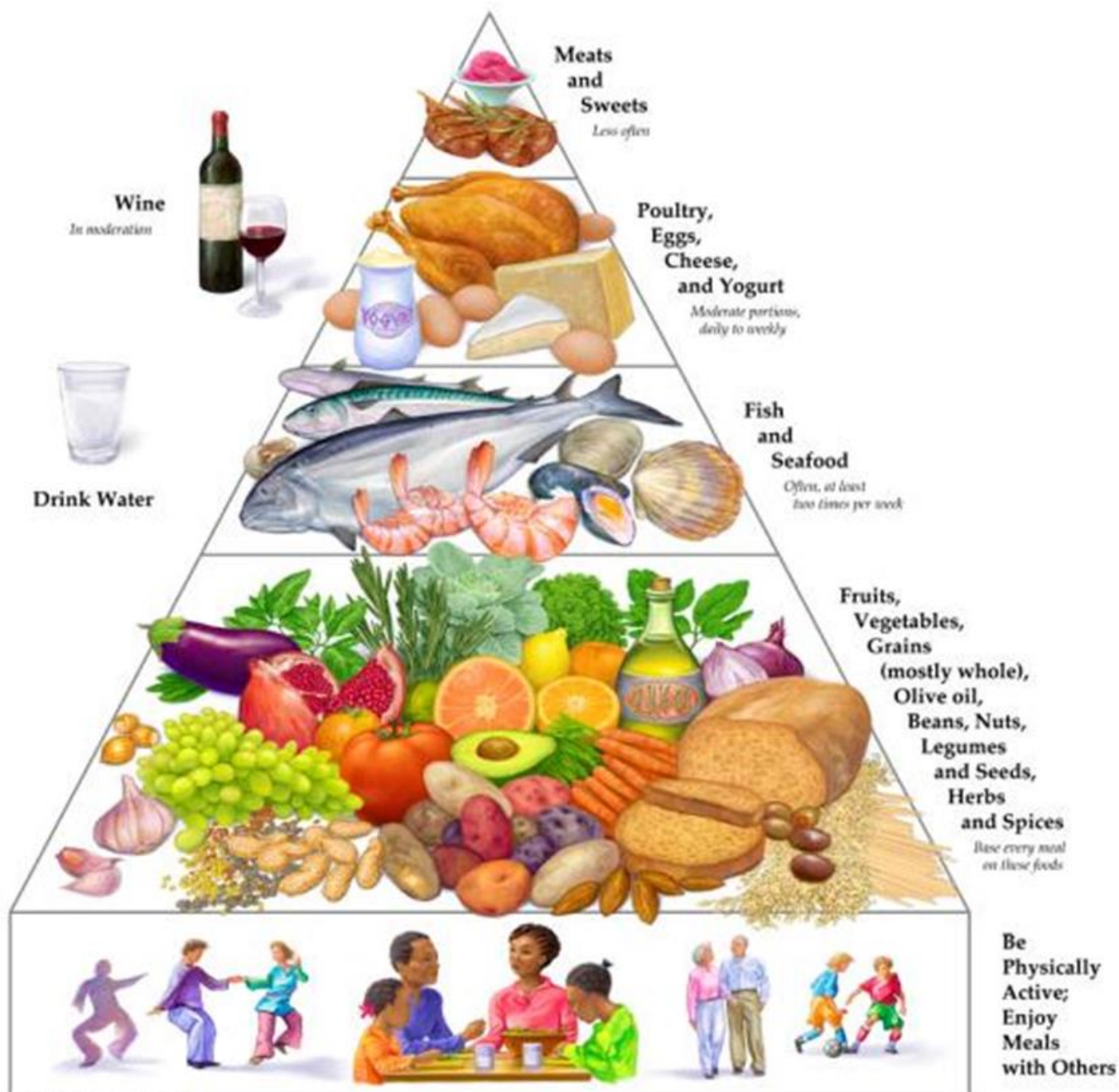


Illustration by George Middleton

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