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## [The Mediterranean Diet Helps Keep Alzheimer's at Bay](#)

*A diet rich in olive oil, low-fat cheese, fruit and vegetables is the key to a healthy long life free of the terrible Alzheimer's disease*

Some of you may already be familiar (at least to some extent) with the myth of the Mediterranean lifestyle and the many benefits it is supposed to have. For those of you who are not yet acquainted with the basics of this heart-healthy eating plan, here is a quick review, just to give you the basics and get you started. To make things clear from the beginning, we're not talking about a diet as such here, although "Mediterranean Diet" has somehow become the standard manner of referring to it, but rather about a traditional cooking style characteristic of those countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. It's more of a lifestyle choice that has to be carefully analyzed, accommodated and adapted (if possible) to your present choices regarding food, drink and exercise. Its main characteristics are listed below.

1. Eat **large amounts of fruit and vegetables**. Inhabitants in Greece for example are known to eat on average seven to eight servings of antioxidant-rich fruit and vegetables.
2. Eat healthy fats such as **olive** and **canola oil**, as well as **nuts** (particularly **walnuts**). The interesting part about this diet is that its aim is not to limit fat consumption, but rather to choose the right type of fat to eat. The "extra-virgin" or "virgin" olive oil is a precious source of antioxidants. Another important mention is that in the Mediterranean region, bread is not eaten with butter or margarines, which are an important source of "bad" cholesterol.
3. Eat small portions of **nuts**, particularly tree nuts, such as **walnuts, pecans, almonds and hazel nuts**, which are low in saturated fat. Walnuts in particular are an important source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to help stabilize the blood vessel lining.
4. Drink moderate amounts of **red wine**. Drunk moderately, red wine acts like an aspirin and reduces the blood's ability to clot and also contains antioxidants. The red wine intake should be limited to **no more than** one 5-ounce glass of wine daily for women (or men over age 65), and **no more than** two 5-ounce glasses of wine daily for men under age 65.
5. Eat **very little red meat** and **eat fish on a regular basis**. Fish is another major source of omega-3 fatty acids and is a crucial part of the Mediterranean eating plan. Other foods that Mediterraneans consume in large quantities are low-fat cheese and garlic, known as a natural booster for the immune system. Garlic contains antioxidants and neutralizes the effects of free radicals, keeping infections at bay. The Mediterranean diet was found not only to prevent heart disease and boost immunity, but according to a recent study, it also helps its followers avoid the terrible Alzheimer's disease. This miraculous side-effect is the result of the large amounts of anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory agents that can be found in the foods that make up the Mediterranean lifestyle. "Taking into account that this diet is protective for other conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, obesity and a series of cancers, it seems to make sense to follow this diet anyway, and the diet may also protect from Alzheimer's disease", said Dr. Nikolaos Scarmeas, Assistant Professor of Neurology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York.