



Healthy for Life Newsletter

Ray D. Strand, M.D.

November 2004 Vol.1 No. 10

The Mediterranean Diet

Once again, medical research affirms that we are on the right track when it comes to being "Healthy for Life!" In the September 22/29 2004 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, the lead article looked at several aspects of a healthy lifestyle, which included the Mediterranean diet, exercise, low-alcohol consumption, and non-smoking. They followed over 2,000 individuals for a 10-year period in order to document if these healthier lifestyles decreased the risk of dying from cardiovascular disease and cancer. The second study looked at the effect of a Mediterranean-style diet on inflammation of the arteries. Like so many other studies, these latest reports emphasize the importance of improving our overall lifestyle in order to create healthful aging.

Description of the Mediterranean Diet

What are the key aspects of the Mediterranean diet? Surprisingly, the Mediterranean diet contains higher levels of fat intake than even the typical western diet. However, the primary source of fat in the Mediterranean diet is made up of omega-3 essential fats and monounsaturated fats. (These fats are found primarily in our vegetables, nuts, legumes, and cold-water fish.) Both of these fats have actually been shown to lower total cholesterol along with LDL (bad cholesterol). In fact, 20% to 30% of the calories in the Mediterranean diet come from these fats, while less than 10% of the calories come from saturated fat. This group of foods contains almost no fat from trans-fats.

The Mediterranean diet is loaded with fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and nuts which contain the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber that are critical for optimal health. These carbohydrates also contain the good fat and the good protein. About 50 to 60% of the calories in the Mediterranean diet come from these types of carbohydrates. The diet contains a large intake of olives and olive oil, but is low in red meat and most dairy products, though low-fat cheese is consumed frequently.

The Metabolic Syndrome

The metabolic syndrome is characterized by an expanding waist line, increasing blood pressure, poor lipid pattern, increased risk of heart disease and diabetes. It is the underlying problem of the obesity and diabetes epidemic that modern civilization faces today. On top of that, people with metabolic syndrome have increased inflammation in their arteries along with dysfunction and damage to the very fine lining of their blood vessels, called the endothelium. Over 25% of the population in the US and Canada already have the metabolic syndrome and another 25% are well on their way to developing it.

The lead study in last month's JAMA investigated 180 patients who had the metabolic syndrome. They divided these individuals into two groups. One group was placed on the Mediterranean diet and the other ate the typical American diet. Both of these groups had similar activity levels and received similar instruction on healthy living. They followed these two groups closely over the next two years.

After 2 years, the patients on the Mediterranean diet were experiencing these results:

- *Significant decrease in body weight
- *Decreased waist circumference
- *Decreased blood pressure
- *Decreased fasting blood sugar
- *Increased HDL (good cholesterol,)
- *Decreased triglyceride level.

In fact, nearly half of this group actually reversed their insulin resistance and their metabolic syndrome. They also had a significant reduction in the inflammation of their arteries and improvement in the function of their endothelium.

Investigators obviously concluded that the Mediterranean diet is a safe strategy for treating metabolic syndrome and for reducing the incidence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes without the use of drugs and the risks that come with them. Doesn't it make sense that developing a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy and delicious diet, should be our first-line therapy for the treatment of the metabolic syndrome?

The other study investigated the effects of the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle factors on healthful aging. In the industrialized countries, about 75% of deaths in individuals over the age of 65 are due to either cardiovascular disease or cancer. Numerous studies show that diet and lifestyles are directly linked to these degenerative diseases, regardless of predisposing factors. People in this 10-year study who ate a Mediterranean-style diet, exercised moderately, limited their alcohol intake, and did not smoke or who had not smoked for at least 15 years, lived longer, healthier lives. In fact, they had over a 50% decrease in deaths from all causes of death, including cardiovascular disease and cancer. These findings were true even in elderly subjects who made these healthy lifestyle changes.

Healthy Lifestyles do Make a Difference

As the research pours in, more and more individuals are deciding to become proactive in protecting their health *before* becoming ill rather than reacting with drugs *after* the onset of serious disease. But it is so easy to get confused and overwhelmed about exactly what needs to be done to protect and improve overall health. Most physicians are of very little help, since they are so disease-oriented and drug-oriented. This forces patients to try to seek out solid, effective medical advice elsewhere.

Unfortunately, you will not be taught the Mediterranean-style diet in most hospitals or dietician's office today. And you are very unlikely to hear about nutritional supplementation, which is perhaps the most important aspect of a healthy lifestyle. When you add nutritional supplementation to the Mediterranean-style diet and exercise you can reverse the metabolic syndrome nearly 90% of the time. Even diabetics are able to control their diabetes better—and many of them are able to totally reverse their diabetes when they incorporate these healthy lifestyles. It's not difficult to do... if you have someone to show you the way.

Taking Control of Your Health at www.HealthyandLeanforLife.com

My new book, *Healthy for Life* [Real Life Press] is scheduled to be released in January of 2005. This book lays out all the key principles you need to know about developing a healthier lifestyle, but information alone is rarely enough. Staying motivated and finding friendly, but firm accountability is crucial for your success. That's why I am also creating my 15-month *Healthy for Life* Internet program. It's my "virtual office" online, where proactive health seekers can receive the education and support they need to achieve and maintain success. This web site is presently

under construction and is scheduled to be completed by December 15, 2004.

Members of this web page are educated in the Mediterranean-style diet, exercise programs, and cellular nutrition. It takes a minimum of 15 months to make these healthy lifestyles simply a way of life. When you begin to eat a healthy Mediterranean-style diet, develop a modest exercise program, and provide your body with cellular nutrition, you give yourself the absolute best chance to protect your health—or regain your health if you have already lost it. If you're serious about making positive changes that last, consider one of these two programs.

The Personally Coached Releasing Fat Program.

This plan includes the following lifestyle altering features:

- A **Health Risk Assessment** that I will do with you personally.
- Your own **Personal Lifestyle Coach** who will encourage you and help you to stay true to your commitment to develop these healthy lifestyle changes.
- Your own **Personal Lifestyle Journal** that your coach will review weekly during the first 12 weeks of the program and monthly for the last 12 months.
- Daily emails for the first 12 weeks and weekly emails during the last 12 months.
- Weekly trainings during the first 12 weeks and advanced monthly trainings during the last 12 months.
- Direct email contact with your coach and indirect contact with me for any health concerns related to the program.

This 15-month program costs \$795 or you may make three monthly payments of \$269.

The Self-Directed Releasing Fat Program.

This plan is exactly the same as the Coached Program except you are not assigned a personal lifestyle coach and I do not personally do your health risk assessment. Your **Health Risk Assessment** is automated and your **Lifestyle Journal** will be automatically monitored and graded. Because of the significant cost involved with having a personal lifestyle coach and my personal time, I am able to offer the **Self-Directed Program** for a fraction of the cost of the Coached Releasing Fat Program.

You can become a member of the **15-month Self-Directed Program** for only \$129 or three easy monthly payments of \$44.95.

Friends, when you combine the Mediterranean-style diet with exercise and cellular nutrition, you give yourself the best chance to decrease your cholesterol, decrease your blood pressure, decrease the inflammation in your arteries, reverse insulin resistance, and decrease your risk of heart disease and diabetes. As individuals reverse their underlying insulin resistance, they are able to begin to release fat and lose their excessive weight permanently. Remember, this is not a diet, but the development of overall healthy lifestyles that simply have a side effect of permanent weight loss.

Many of the participants of the Healthy for Life Program will be able to avoid taking medication that their physician feels they possibly may need for lowering your cholesterol or treating your blood pressure or even treating your diabetes. Many who were already taking medication for these problems may be able to significantly decrease or even eliminate the need for medication for these diseases because of the clinical improvements they and their physicians could witness.

The medical evidence just keeps getting stronger and stronger. The **Healthy for Life Program** is truly the answer to the diabetes and obesity epidemic. It is also the key to healthful aging. Give yourself the absolute best chance to protect or regain your health. Be sure to check out this web page after December 15th and also consider ordering my new book, *Healthy for Life after the first of the year*. Discover what it means to be "Healthy for Life."
