

Mediterranean diet and physical activity each associated with lower death rate over 5 years

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Eating a Mediterranean diet and following national recommendations for physical activity are each associated with a reduced risk of death over a five-year period, according to two reports in the December 10/24 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*, one of the JAMA/Archives journals.

Both studies use data from the National Institutes of Health-AARP Diet and Health Study, which began when questionnaires were returned from 566,407 AARP members age 50 to 71 in six states between 1995 and 1996.

In one study, Panagiota N. Mitrou, Ph.D., then of the National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Md., and now of the University of Cambridge, England, and colleagues used a nine-point scale to assess conformity with the Mediterranean diet in 380,296 of the participants (214,284 men and 166,012 women) with no history of chronic disease.

Components of the diet included vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, whole grains, fish, ratio of monounsaturated fats, alcohol and meat. During five years of follow-up, 12,105 participants died, including 5,985 from cancer and 3,451 from cardiovascular disease. Those with higher Mediterranean diet scores were less likely to die of any cause or of cancer or heart disease.

Source: JAMA and Archives Journals

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