Get to know the Mediterranean diet
17 April 2017, by Joan Mcclusky, Healthday Reporter

The Mediterranean diet followed by people who live in countries around the Mediterranean Sea has been shown to be not only delicious but also healthy. The so-called Mediterranean diet can help you limit daily calories so you can lose weight. Plus, it's a healthy long-term way of eating.

The main focus of the Mediterranean diet is on eating plant-based foods. That means including fruits and vegetables in every meal, and eating them for snacks and dessert, too.

Switch from refined to whole-grain foods, including breads, cereal, rice and pasta. Also add legumes like peas and beans. Try to eat a vegetarian dinner one or two nights a week.

People who successfully lose weight while following a Mediterranean diet generally get about a third of their calories from healthy fats, including a small handful of nuts each day.

Other tips:

• Limit red meat to just a few times a month, and have smaller amounts than you’re probably used to—just a 3-ounce serving.
• Eat more chicken and fish. In fact, have fish at least twice a week. Fatty fish like salmon and sardines are among the healthiest choices.
• Choose low- or no-fat dairy products over high-fat ones to cut out more saturated fat.

As a bonus, if you like red wine, you can say cheers to one glass a day.

More information: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a detailed portion chart to help you plan menus for the Mediterranean diet.

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