



WELLNESS EDUCATION

Montana Mediterranean

It is well known that the Mediterranean diet is considered one of the healthiest lifestyles in the world and there are many reasons to adopt this way of eating. Scientific evidence shows a Mediterranean lifestyle can help you to:

- Achieve weight loss and weight management goals
- Lower your risk of heart disease and high blood pressure
- Fight certain cancers and chronic diseases
- Reduce asthma
- Resist depression
- Nurture healthier babies
- Ward off Parkinson's disease



It's not a diet as much as it is a lifestyle choice; it's about making some simple modifications that change the way you eat today, tomorrow and for years to come. Another way to look at it – choose food as close to the way it came off the farm as possible, with the fewest people between you and the farmer.

The biggest issue that we have living in Montana is that we don't live next to the ocean, so our access to seafood and fish is limited and expensive. We also do not have access to a large variety of fresh fruits and vegetables all year long. The good news is that we do have options to make healthy choices from what is grown right here and what is brought in for us.

10 Steps to Good Health, Montana Style

1. **Eat lots of vegetables.** Choose fresh as much as possible, however availability and expense in the middle of winter is a limiting factor. Fresh, frozen or canned are all healthy choices when fresh options are not in season. In the summer and early fall, visit the local farmers markets for the best seasonal produce. Daily minimum goal is 3-4 cups of vegetables.
2. **Think about meat differently.** Choose smaller portions (3-4 oz.) of lean cuts such as round or loin of beef or pork, local grass fed beef, wild game, local game fish, and poultry. Montana grass fed beef and venison are local, and the way we want to eat.

Choosing smaller portions results in less calories and saturated fat. Recent research shows that smaller portions of protein 3-4 times a day is more efficient than one large portion so practice a balanced protein distribution throughout the day.



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- Dairy products:** Choose plain unsweetened Greek or regular yogurt and flavor with your favorite fruit to reduce the added sugar. Daily minimum recommendation of dairy is 2-3 servings.
 - Select small amounts of a variety of good quality cheese – choose the best you can afford and eat less!
 - Stick to low fat milk, 1% or less or a non-dairy alternative.
- Fish for Omega 3s.** Try to eat locally caught fish whenever it's available and affordable. Canned tuna, salmon and sardines count when fresher options are not available. Weekly minimum recommendation is 2 servings, 4-6 oz. each.
 - If fish is unavailable or too expensive, choose plant sources of Omega 3s found in walnuts, ground flax seed, chia seeds, hemp seeds and canola oil. Have one serving of any of these sources daily.
- Have one or more meatless meals per week.** Build your meal around beans and whole grains, with lots of vegetables, herbs and spices. There are websites dedicated to meatless meals as well as recipe sites for beans/lentils, whole grains and vegetables.
 - Check out the lentil varieties that are grown in Montana. We grow at least six different kinds: black beluga, red, french green, green, pardina, golden and chickpeas! You can find these at some grocery stores or at a specialty store that carries bulk food.
- Healthy fats:** Include sources of healthy fats in daily meals, especially extra-virgin olive oil, nuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, olives and avocados.
- Switch to whole grains.** Montana grown grains include wheat, oats and barley, Kamut and Farro (2 ancient specialty wheats), bulgur, quinoa, brown rice and wild rice. Daily minimum recommendation of whole grains is 3 servings.
- Choose fruit.** While we can't always get quality fresh fruit year round, choose seasonal fresh fruit as available. When fresh fruit is not an option, frozen fruit and canned fruit are acceptable if it is canned in water or 100% juice. Dried fruit can also be a great choice; choose those without added sugar such as figs, raisins and dried plums. Be sure to follow portion size on package and keep to one serving per day. Daily minimum recommendation of fruit is 2-3 cups.

Don't forget the huckleberries! Pick them yourself for a great way to get outside and enjoy nature.
- Desserts and special occasion treats:** Feel free to indulge once in a while with a favorite sweet treat. Choose a smaller portion, eat it slowly and savor every bite. Remember a treat is not a treat when you have it every day.
- Choose water as your preferred beverage to stay hydrated.** Limit beverages with added sugar such as soda, sweet tea and energy drink.

Recommend websites for more information:

- Mediterranean Lifestyle Coalition: www.oldwayspt.org
- Lentil recipes: www.lentils.org
- Bean and lentil recipes: www.pulses.org
- Whole Grains Council: www.wholegrainscouncil.org
- Eating Well: www.eatingwell.com

