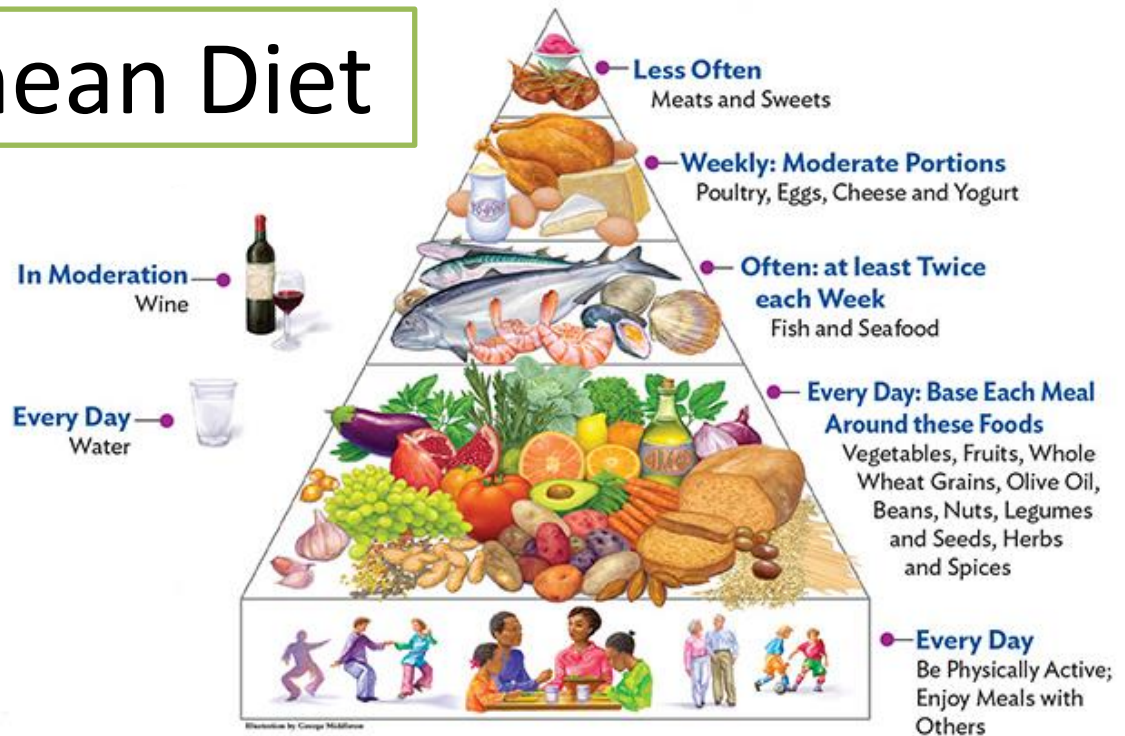


The Mediterranean Diet

In the mid-1900s it was observed that people living around the Mediterranean basin were **healthier** and **lived longer** than the average American at the time.¹ After much study, scientists concluded the disparity of health outcomes was almost entirely related to **diet** and **exercise**.^{2,3} Now, the Mediterranean diet is a highly recommended diet for **health promotion** and **disease prevention**. It's been extensively researched and found to prevent or improve outcomes for an many conditions, including **heart disease**, **cancer**, **dementia**, **type 2 diabetes**, **obesity** and **stroke**.¹⁻⁴

The **Mediterranean diet** is a broad dietary recommendation based on the consumption of **minimally processed whole foods**.^{2,3} There is no magic formula or diet plan; rather it is a general guide to healthy eating. The key foods which should be eaten every day include **vegetables**, **fruit**, **whole grains**, **legumes**, **olive oil**, and **nuts** and **seeds**. Per week people should eat two or more servings of **fish** or **seafood**, and one or two servings each of **poultry**, **eggs** and **dairy** products. **Meat** should be eaten only a few times per month, and it should be as minimally processed as possible. **Water** should be consumed every day, with **red wine** on occasion. **Exercise** and **social connections** are also important - it's recommended to be physically active every day and to eat meals in company.



Ideally, **processed foods** should be avoided – food products that are commercially made or contain multiple ingredients.^{2,3} Such foods include **sugar-sweetened beverages** (such as soda or juice), **refined grain products** (like white bread or pastry products), and **processed meats** (including bacon and luncheon meats).^{2,3} Cooking foods at home or purchasing pre-prepared whole foods is completely acceptable.

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