

## Nutrition and health

Ensuring the highest possible level of health is one of the fundamental rights of every person, regardless of race, religion, political beliefs and economic or social conditions. Dietary habits are part of a person's culture and cultural identity. It is widely known that our diet is closely linked to good health and quality of life. A properly designed and balanced diet contributes to the smooth functioning of the body and provides vitality and well-being. Proper nutrition also helps:

- prevention of diseases (e.g. cardiovascular, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, etc.)
- maintaining growth
- maintaining healthy body tissues

In order to meet all these needs of the organization, the food should contain all the ingredients and the right ones for each organism. quantities. Diversification-personalization has to do with gender, age, height, weight, physical activity and the possible existence of diseases. The importance of proper nutrition is great for normal body development and health maintenance, and that is why it is considered necessary for all people to have even elementary knowledge.

### Nutrients



Nutrients are called the useful ingredients we take from foods and are divided into macronutrients and micronutrients.

The macronutrients are:

**Carbohydrates:** They are the main source of energy for the body and are contained in fruits, vegetables, cereals and their products, milk-yoghurt and legumes. They deliver 4 calories per gram.

**Proteins:** They supply our body with amino acids that are essential for building the tissues as well as for repairing the damage to the body tissues. The amino acids are divided into animal and plant origin. They give the body 4 calories per gram. Amino acids are also divided into:

**Necessary:** they are those that can not be produced by the body during metabolism, so it is necessary to be taken through the food and

**Not essential:** These are amino acids of the same importance as the essential ones. This distinction is because the non-essential amino acids can be synthesized by our body.

**Fat:** They are used by the body to produce energy and help absorb the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K). They deliver 9 calories per gram. They are distinguished in unsaturated and saturated fatty acids.

**Unsaturated:** They are classified as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. They have beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system. Their main sources are olive oil, olives, fish, nuts and others.

**Saturated:** Increased intake of saturated fatty acids can lead to an increase in blood cholesterol levels. The main sources are meat, sausages, butter, dairy products and more. Particularly harmful effects on the body are trans fatty acids and unfortunately research by the National Food Control Authority has shown that only 1/3 of the respondents in the relevant research have even heard of them. It appears that they translate LDL and lower HDL, leading to an increased risk of coronary artery disease. At the same time, according to the World Health Organization, they have been associated with some forms of cancer. The main sources are margarines, sweets, fast food products and also manufactured goods.

### **Micronutrients**

They are vitamins and minerals (Calcium, Magnesium, Iron, etc.). They are called micronutrients because they are necessary in small quantities in the body and do not produce energy

Because there is no food containing all the ingredients, it is necessary that our diet be varied so as to cover all the needs of our organism.

A plethora of recent studies has shown that adopting a healthy diet and eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables daily reduced the risk of cardiovascular mortality and cancer mortality compared with people who did not have fruits and vegetables in their daily diet, and their greater consumption did not show that they are related With further reduction in cancer mortality. One of the largest studies at the international level (EPIC) has shown that we should prefer raw vegetables and that their consumption reduces mortality from cancer and behavioral disorders.

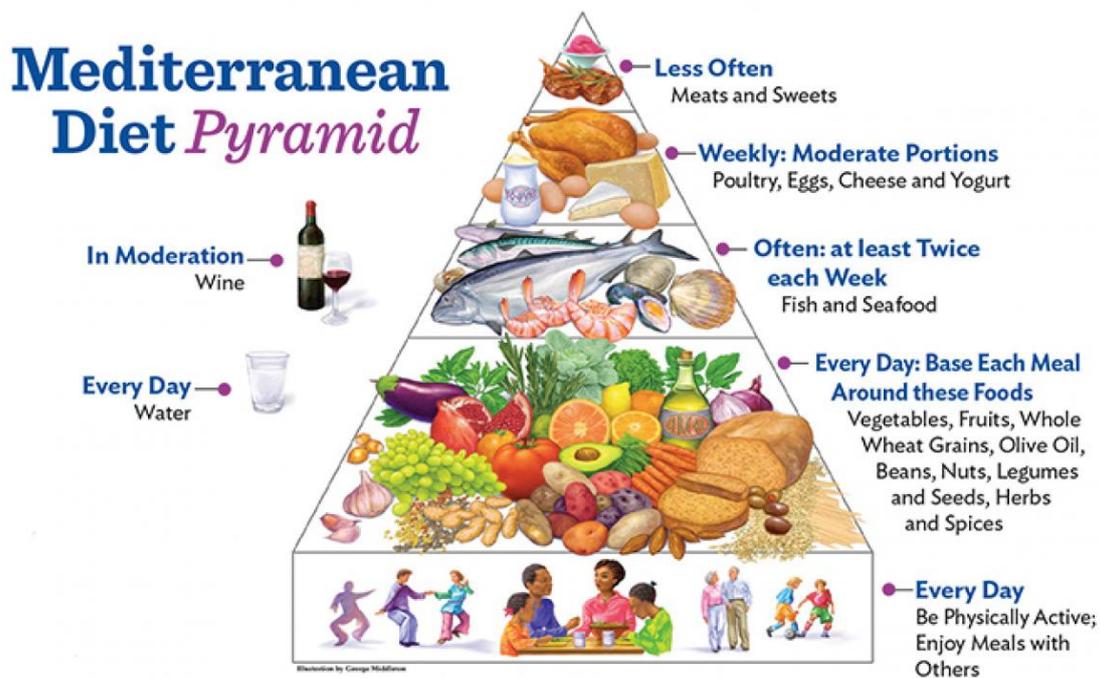
### **World Health Organization Recommendations**

The World Health Organization recommends 12 steps to achieve a healthy diet

1. Consume a variety of foods by focusing on fruits rather than on meat.
2. Consume several portions of bread, cereals, spaghetti, rice or potatoes during the day.
3. Consume a variety of vegetables and fruits, preferably fresh, several times during the day.
4. Keep your body weight in ideal settings (BMI 20-25) doing exercise, ideally every day.
5. Eat a fat measure (covering less than 30% of the daily calories) and replace the saturated fat with unsaturated vegetable oils or margarines.
6. Replace fatty meats and meat products with legumes, fish, poultry and lean meats.
7. Drink milk and dairy products (kefir, sour milk, yoghurt, cheese) low in fat and salt content.
8. Consume low-sugar foods and restrict the consumption of soft drinks and sweets.
9. Apply a low salt diet. Daily salt consumption should not exceed 1 teaspoonful (6g) per day, including the salt contained in bread and its products.
10. If you consume alcohol, limit the intake to less than 2 drinks (each serving contains 10 grams of alcohol) per day.
11. Prepare your meal in a safe and healthy way.
12. Breastfeeding is encouraged and additional feed is added after the age of 6 months while breastfeeding continues during the first year of life.

## Mediterranean diet

An easy and simple way to have a healthy diet is to operate on the basis of the Mediterranean diet pyramid, which is considered an ideal standard of nutrition since 1995 where it has been set up to date.



The Pyramid of the Mediterranean Diet shows the frequency with which food and the frequency of physical activity should be consumed.

We have a daily basis

- physical exercise
- bread and cereal group
- the fruit group
- the group of vegetables
- legumes
- olive oil and olives
- the dairy group.

On a weekly basis they are ranked

- fish and poultry
- the eggs
- the sweets

And finally per month the meat.

Alcohol consumption with an emphasis on wine consumption is recommended. Particular emphasis is placed on sufficient water consumption.

In details

**Bread and cereals:** Prefer whole grains. They supply us with energy, fiber and help us feel satiety.

**Fruits and vegetables:** Prefer seasonal and if possible organic farming. They supply us with vitamins, minerals and trace elements, antioxidants and liquids.

**Olive oil pure and extra virgin:** It gives us energy and has many beneficial properties for the body. It is considered the main source of monounsaturated fatty acids and vitamin E and has a number of antioxidant substances.

**Dairy products:** They provide us with calcium, protein, vitamins A, D and B complex vitamins, probiotics and liquids. Their daily consumption (milk-cheese-yogurt-arrian-kefir)

**Red meat:** It offers us protein, iron and saturated fat, which is why it is at the top of the pyramid, which means that consumption of good is limited to a few times a month.

**Fish and poultry:** Proteins, iron and Vitamins B offer us. Omega-3 fatty acids derived from oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines, sea bream etc.) are considered beneficial to the health of the heart.

**Alcohol:** Particular emphasis is given to the consumption of wine since it has proven cardio protective action due to its flavonoids. It is recommended to consume 1 glass in women and 2 glasses in men.

In recent decades, the Mediterranean Diet has been the subject of many studies and, as a whole, suggests that traditional Mediterranean diet is healthier than the diet of Western countries. A post-analysis in 2016 showed that the adoption of Mediterranean Diet led to a reduction in the incidence of cardiovascular events, breast cancer and diabetes mellitus. Finally, a 2016 study in children showed that the adoption of the Mediterranean diet led to a decrease in the incidence of colds and cataracts over the previous year when children did not feed on the basis of the Mediterranean diet.

## **Variety and Balanced Nutrition - the “key” to Healthy Diet**

In general, we can say that no food is forbidden. An important role is played by the amount of each food to be consumed. At this point it is necessary to personalize which depends on gender, age, physical activity, existing conditions or the predisposition for their appearance, special situations such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, puberty etc. The amount of food we consume must be as much as possible to maintain our weight at desired limits and provide us with all the necessary nutritional information.

Mediterranean diet. Is a healthy diet. Unfortunately in nowadays most of European countries follow a more Western diet.