

## WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CLASS

JANUARY 13, 2020

### MEDITERRANEAN DIET BASICS, 101!

WE'VE REFERRED TO THIS DIET PLAN MANY TIMES IN HERE. IT'S PLANT-BASED (AS OPPOSED TO ANIMAL), AND FOCUSES ON "TRADITIONAL" FOODS EATEN IN ITALY AND GREECE BACK IN THE DAY. (ACTUALLY 1960, ACCORDING TO ONE WEBSITE. WHICH WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR!) RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT THE FOLKS WHO ATE THESE FOODS HAD A LOWER INCIDENCE OF MANY CHRONIC CONDITIONS, INCLUDING HEART DISEASE, DIABETES, AND OBESITY. IF YOU LOOK ON THE INTERNET YOURSELF, YOU'LL FIND QUITE A FEW VERSIONS OF THIS DIET. THEY'RE ALL PRETTY SIMILAR. THERE IS NO ONE "RIGHT" WAY TO USE THIS MEAL PLAN. THERE ARE MANY COUNTRIES AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND THEY DIDN'T ALL EAT THE SAME THINGS! HERE ARE SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- **MAXIMIZE NATURAL, WHOLE FOODS AND MINIMIZE HIGHLY PROCESSED ONES.** WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THIS FOR A LONG TIME. STAY OUT OF THE JUNK FOOD AISLE AND THE DRIVE-THROUGH!
- **EAT JUST SMALL AMOUNTS OF RED MEAT:** THINK OF MEAT AS MORE OF A GARNISH, RATHER THAN THE CENTERPIECE OF THE MEAL. IF YOU'RE CRAVING A BURGER OR STEAK, GO AHEAD AND HAVE ONE! AS ALWAYS, THOUGH, THE PORTION SIZE IS KEY. 3 OR 4 OUNCES IS PLENTY! IT SHOULD ALSO BE LIMITED TO 2 – 3 X / WEEK.
- **EAT LESS THAN FOUR EGGS PER WEEK.** IF YOU'RE AN EGG LOVER, YOU CAN STRETCH AN OMELETTE OR SCRAMBLED EGGS BY ADDING EXTRA EGG WHITES. DON'T FORGET "BIG EATING"...ADD CHOPPED VEGGIES TO EGGS TO INCREASE THE VOLUME, WITHOUT ADDING A LOT OF CALORIES!
- **SERVE MODERATE AMOUNTS OF POULTRY AND FISH.** ONE GOOD WAY TO START IS BY HAVING FISH 2 OR MORE TIMES A WEEK. (NOT FRIED AND SMOTHERED IN TARTAR SAUCE, OF COURSE!) THIS WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO TRY THE FOIL COOKING BAGS AT THE KROGER FISH MARKET! ACTUALLY, THE RECOMMENDATION FOR FISH IS "AT LEAST" 2 X / WEEK. POULTRY (SKINLESS) AND FISH ARE LOWER IN SATURATED FAT THAN RED MEAT. TUNA AND SALMON ARE PARTICULARLY GOOD CHOICES AS THEY CONTAIN OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS, A POLYUNSATURATED FAT THAT PROMOTES HEART HEALTH.
- **INDULGE IN FRESH FRUIT EVERY DAY!** IF YOU LET IT, THIS WILL ACTUALLY TAKE CARE OF YOUR "SWEET TOOTH." PREP IT WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM THE STORE! WHEN IT'S SITTING THERE IN THE FRIDGE ALL READY TO GO, YOU'LL BE MORE LIKELY TO CHOOSE IT; ESPECIALLY IF YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE! TO MAKE IT EASIER ON YOURSELF, LEAVE THE CANDY, ICE CREAM, AND BAKED GOODS IN THE GROCERY STORE!

- **EAT CONCENTRATED SUGARS ONLY A FEW TIMES PER WEEK. I FIND THIS ONE PARTICULARLY TOUGH TO FOLLOW. BETTER SNACK IDEAS INCLUDE NUTS AND SEEDS (A HANDFUL OF ALMONDS OR SUNFLOWER SEEDS, FOR EXAMPLE), LOW FAT CHEESE, OR NONFAT PLAIN YOGURT WITH FRUIT. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE OBVIOUSLY BETTER THAN PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING YOU CAN GET IN THE “SNACK FOOD” AISLE...CHIPS, COOKIES, AND MOST CRACKERS.**

**BY THE WAY, AS PEGGYANNE POINTED OUT IN CLASS LAST NIGHT – IF YOU JUST CAN’T EAT PLAIN YOGURT, VANILLA IS AT LEAST BETTER THAN THE SWEETENED TYPES!**

- **FOR SOME FOLKS, A DAY WITHOUT WINE IS LIKE A DAY WITHOUT SUNSHINE! IF YOU DO DRINK, *WINE* (IN PARTICULAR) IN LOW TO MODERATE AMOUNTS (USUALLY TAKEN AT MEALTIME) TENDS TO “THIN” THE BLOOD AND MAKE IT LESS PRONE TO CLOTTING. BE AWARE OF THIS IF YOU’RE ALREADY ON A BLOOD THINNER. IT ALSO CONTAINS ANTIOXIDANTS THAT PREVENT YOUR ARTERIES FROM TAKING UP LDL (“BAD CHOLESTEROL”), A PROCESS THAT CAN LEAD TO PLAQUE BUILDUP. YOU CAN ACTUALLY GET MOST OF THE SAME EFFECTS FROM DRINKING GRAPE JUICE; JUST BE AWARE THAT IT’S A PRETTY CONCENTRATED SOURCE OF CALORIES. I’D RECOMMEND POURING ~3 OZ. OF GRAPE JUICE IN A GLASS AND TOPPING IT OFF THE REST OF THE WAY WITH SPARKLING WATER.**
- **USE MILK PRODUCTS – MAINLY CHEESE AND YOGURT – IN LOW TO MODERATE AMOUNTS. I HAVE A BIT OF A HARD TIME WITH THIS ONE. I FEEL LIKE WE NEED CALCIUM. OF COURSE, YOU WILL GET THAT MINERAL BY EATING CHEESE, YOGURT, AND GREEN VEGETABLES. I WOULD JUST MAKE SURE I DRANK A GLASS OF MILK EVERY DAY, EVEN IF THE FOLKS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA CIRCA 1960 DID NOT! AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN MY “RESEARCH” (COURTESY OF GOOGLE!) THIS MORNING I CAME ACROSS THE FACT THAT WHEN THEY DID EAT DAIRY, IT WAS FULL FAT. WE NOW KNOW THAT SATURATED FAT CONTAINED IN THESE PRODUCTS IS BAD FOR US. BESIDES THAT, WE PROBABLY AREN’T AS PHYSICALLY ACTIVE (IN GENERAL) AS THEY WERE, EITHER. BY THE WAY, ONE WEBSITE DID RECOMMEND TAKING A CALCIUM SUPPLEMENT DAILY, “JUST IN CASE.” YOU OF COURSE CAN ALSO GET YOUR DAILY CALCIUM BY DRINKING A NUT MILK. YOU’VE HEARD ME SAY BY NOW THAT I DRINK ALMOND MILK. IT CAN BE A VERY LOW CALORIE SOURCE OF CALCIUM (30 – 35 CALORIES PER CUP, IF YOU CHOOSE CAREFULLY) - AND SINCE IT’S MADE FROM NUTS, I GUESS IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED MEDITERRANEAN DIET FRIENDLY!**
- **USE OLIVE OIL AS THE PREDOMINANT FAT. IN OTHER WORDS, REPLACE BUTTER, MARGARINE, AND OTHER FATS WITH HEALTHIER OPTIONS – OLIVE OIL IS THE ONE MOST RECOMMENDED – AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. REMEMBER THAT OLIVE OIL IS A GOOD SOURCE OF MONOUNSATURATED FAT, WHICH HELPS TO RAISE THE “GOOD” PART OF YOUR CHOLESTEROL, OR YOUR HDL. IT’S ALSO HIGH IN OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS.**
- **GET AN ABUNDANCE OF FOODS FROM PLANTS: VEGETABLES, FRUITS, BEANS, POTATOES, NUTS, SEEDS, BREADS AND OTHER WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS. IN FACT, TRY YOUR BEST TO PLAN AHEAD AND SNACK ON VEGETABLES THROUGHOUT THE DAY. THEY’LL GIVE YOU A WIDE RANGE OF ANTIOXIDANTS AND VITAMINS. DON’T FORGET TO CHOOSE WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS WHEN YOU’RE GROCERY SHOPPING! LOOK FOR THE TERM ON THE LABEL. WE’VE TALKED ABOUT ADDING THESE TO YOUR MENU: BROWN RICE RATHER THAN WHITE, BARLEY IN SOUP, OATMEAL FOR BREAKFAST. IT’S ALL GOOD – JUST (AS USUAL!) MIND YOUR PORTION SIZE!**

**WATER SHOULD BE YOUR GO-TO BEVERAGE ON A MEDITERRANEAN DIET. ACTUALLY, IT SHOULD BE YOUR GO-TO AT ANY GIVEN TIME! COFFEE AND TEA ARE ALSO COMPLETELY ACCEPTABLE – JUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO ADD TOO MUCH SUGAR. KEEPING WITH THE “LOW CONCENTRATED SUGAR” GUIDELINE THAT WE ALREADY DISCUSSED, AVOID SWEETENED BEVERAGES AND FRUIT JUICES.**

**WE’RE CLOSED NEXT MONDAY IN HONOR OF MLK DAY! SEE YOU THE 27<sup>TH</sup>!**

**HAVE A GREAT WEEK! HOW DID YOU DO WITH “NO CHOCOLATE?”**

**OUR “NO!” FOOD: WHITE RICE AND PROCESSED AND REFINED FOODS MADE WITH WHITE FLOUR: BREAD PRODUCTS, PASTA, CEREAL, CRACKERS, ETC.**

**THAT’S FOR TWO WEEKS!!!**



