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## Mediterranean Diet Still Rocks

### Healthy Diet in More Ways Than One

The Mediterranean Diet has been linked to a variety of healthy outcomes – from weight loss to cardiovascular benefits. Now, a Spanish researcher is noting that the Mediterranean Diet, supplemented by nuts (a daily 30 g mixture of walnuts, hazelnuts and almonds) and 1 litre per week of extra-virgin olive oil, seems to protect the brain – boosting memory and improving cognition. But, it only seemed to work if started before any declines in brain function appear!

### Brain Boost?

Another study is supporting the benefits of the Mediterranean Diet for the brain. In this one, the key factors seemed to be increased fish consumption along with reduced meat intake – the result being reduced brain atrophy with aging and, presumably, preserved cognition. These outcomes were associated with long-term adherence to the Mediterranean Diet and support the growing evidence of the influence of diet on health.

### Latest Guidelines for Healthy Eating

Some changes are being recommended for healthy eating guidelines. The usual suspects are still there: vegetables/fruits, whole grains, low/non-fat dairy, fish, legumes, & nuts. And, the usual advice to limit red/processed meats, added sugars and refined grains. But, what is new is that moderate caffeine consumption is deemed safe and restrictions on dietary cholesterol were removed! The biggest demon? Added sugars should be less than 10% of calories.

### Take a Balanced Approach

Many people get caught in the trap that they can simply exercise more to overcome overweight/obesity, finding this easier than changing their diet. However, evidence strongly suggests that 40% of those exercising to “normal” weight will still suffer from high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, etc. as a result of poor diet! The so-called “skinny fat people!” Apparently, you can’t outrun a bad diet – make sure you’re taking a balanced approach to your health!

The daily headlines always offer conflicting news about what to eat or do to improve health and longevity, but carefully reading between the lines can uncover some universal truths. Your pharmacist can help you wade through the mire!