

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET:

revised 8/2013

In the Lyon trial, the Mediterranean diet (primarily the addition of a Canola oil based margarine) reduced heart attack and stroke by 68%.

In the PREDIMED trial, the Mediterranean diet (4 tablespoons of olive oil daily or 1 cup of hazelnuts/almonds/walnuts daily) reduced of stroke and heart attack by 30%.

In both of these studies of the Mediterranean Diet, people ate MORE "GOOD" fats (green & blue in the chart below) and ate LESS of the "BAD" fats (red & yellow).

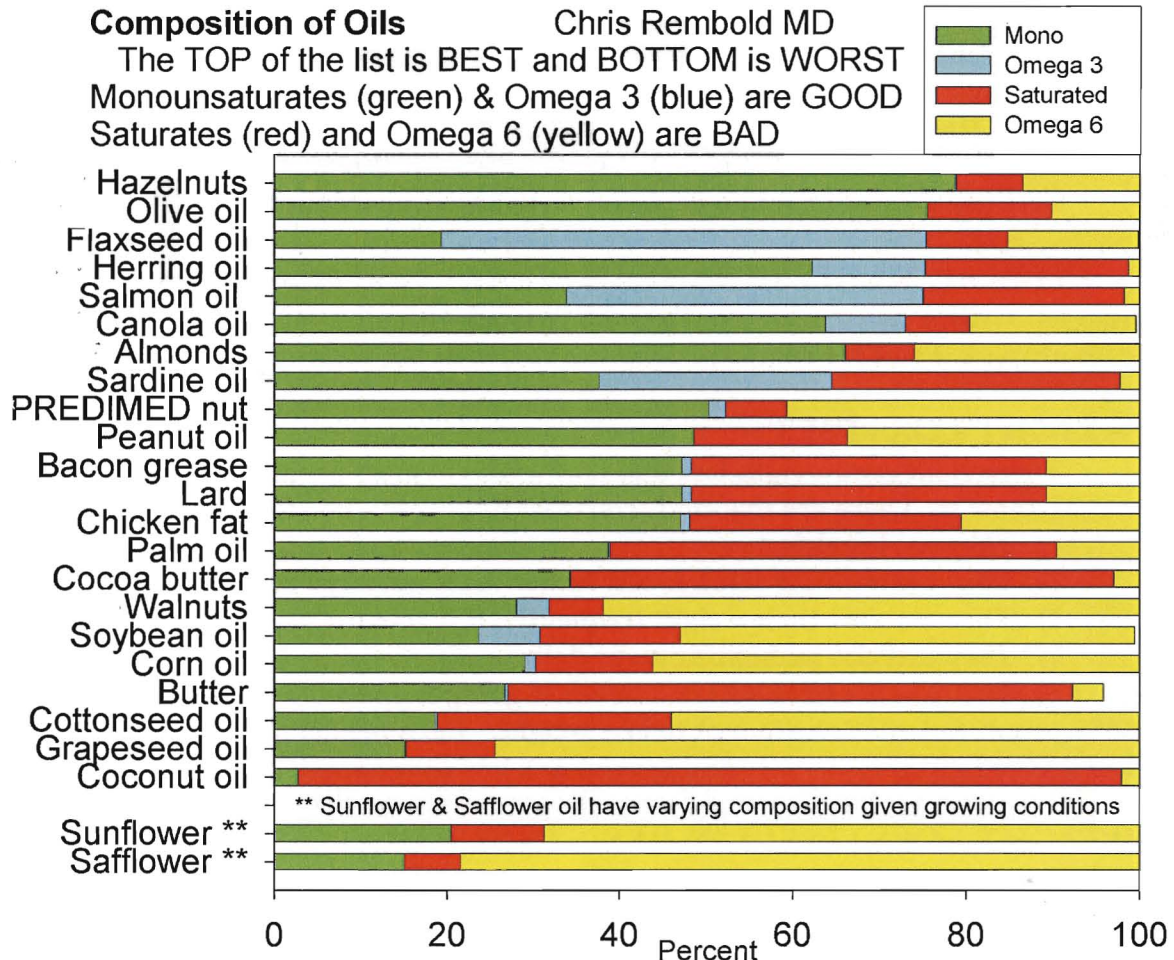
The GOOD fats are the omega 3 fat (blue in the chart below) and monounsaturated -omega 9 fat (green in the chart below)s.

The BAD fats are trans fats (partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, the worst), omega 6 fats (next to worst, yellow in the chart), and saturated fat (red, bad/moderate).

Fats, protein (beans and meats), and starches (pasta) should all be eaten in reasonable amounts. A good balance is 30-40% of calories from starches, 30% of calories from protein, and 30-40% of calories from fats.

A low TOTAL fat diet does NOT prevent heart disease – it reduces HDL.

In the 18th century, Thomas Jefferson suggested that meats should be seasoning for vegetables, rather than the other way around. This is good advice for today. In my experience, this diet will cause some weight loss, but it is primarily a healthy diet.



Examples of different fats

MONOUNSATURATED (OMEGA 9, green in the chart) fats are EXCELLENT for you and your heart. Omega 9 fats are present in Olive oil, Canola oil, Canola oil based soft margarine (e.g. soft Canoleo), nuts, and fish. Eating reasonable amounts of GOOD fat does not increase your LDL and keeps HDL high.

OMEGA 3 fats (blue in the chart) are EXCELLENT for you and your heart. Omega 3 fats are present in cold water ocean fish (salmon, tuna), over the counter fish oil (30%), flax seeds (they must be ground), Flax oils (55%), Canola oil (10%), Chia seeds, Canola oil based soft margarine (e.g. Canoleo), and leafy dark green vegetables. Meats from grass fed animals have more Omega 3 fats than corn fed meats.

SATURATED fats (red in the chart) are BAD to Moderate for you and your heart. Saturated fats are present in the fat from animal products (the fat in meat and dairy) and in tropical plant oils (coconut and non dairy creamer). Saturated fat increases your LDL by up to 15%. Cheese should be used as a seasoning, not the main course. The meat itself is not bad, it is the saturated and omega 6 fat that comes with the meat. The best approach is to eat grass fed meat which has less total fat (so it can be cooked in the good olive or canola oils), more Omega 3 fat, and less Omega 6. Avoid corn fed meat since corn has Omega 6 fats. If you eat corn fed meat, trim off the fat as much as possible (this is not possible with beef since the fat is marbled throughout).

OMEGA 6 fats (yellow in the chart) are VERY BAD for you and your heart (worse than saturated fats). Omega 6 fats are present in Corn oil, Soybean oil, Sunflower, and Sunflower oil. They increase inflammation and blood pressure.

TRANS fats are the WORST for you and your heart. Trans fats are present in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (present in hard margarine and many prepared foods). Trans fats cause 3 times more heart issues than saturated fats.

CHOLESTEROL in the diet is NOT as bad as saturated, omega 6, or trans fat since humans can only absorb about 500 mg of cholesterol daily (an amount that increases LDL by only 5% - compare this to an increase of 15% with a high saturated fat diet). Furthermore, eating more eggs is not associated with more heart attacks.

Shellfish does not contain cholesterol (it has sitosterol), so it is ok to eat.

A TYPICAL MEDITERRANEAN MEAL - Leafy green salad with olive oil and vinegar, Grilled fish or chicken, Broccoli roasted with olive oil, Bread, pasta, or potato with olive oil, Fruit for dessert, Parmesan cheese at the table for seasoning

WEIGHT LOSS DIET.

There is no good weight loss diet that works in most people. If there were, we would know it. There are five characteristics of people who effectively lose weight:

- 1) They eat breakfast**
- 2) They eat multiple small meals rather than one large meal**
- 3) They monitor their weight frequently, if it goes up, resume their diet**
- 4) They exercise an hour or more daily**
- 5) They avoid eating within 3 hours of going to sleep**

90% people fail on each attempt to lose weight. Each person needs to find their weight loss diet—weight watchers (counting calories), low carb (South Beach), high vegetable...

WEIGHT LOSS / INSULIN RESISTANCE DIET.

To prevent and treat insulin resistance (early diabetes), the key is to slow stomach emptying by only eating carbohydrates as part of a meal (with protein, fat, or vinegar). Also avoid simple sugars which are absorbed fast (sugar drinks, fruit juice, candy).