LDL Program: Mediterranean Diet, Exercise, and LDL

The Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet has been voted the best diet for the 5th consecutive year and the American Heart Association recommends it as one of the most heart-healthy dietary patterns to follow. This way of eating focuses on eating a diet rich in plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and seeds. It stresses eating fish and seafood a couple times each week, consuming poultry, eggs, cheese, and yogurt in moderation, and limiting sweets and red meat for special occasions. It also gives priority to healthy fats such as olive oil over butter and using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor food. Due to the emphasis on foods that help remove LDL cholesterol from the body and decrease saturated fats and processed foods, it is an ideal combination to help lower LDL cholesterol levels and possibly increase HDL (good) cholesterol. The Mediterranean Diet’s inclusivity makes this an easy lifestyle to adopt for many traditional foods and cultures.

Activity: Build a Mediterranean Meal

What foods are new to you and what you would like to try?

For more information, visit:

https://oldwayspt.org/traditional-diets/mediterranean-diet
Exercise and LDL

Does exercise really make any difference on cholesterol? It actually does. Exercise helps to eliminate the “bad” LDL cholesterol and increase the “good” HDL cholesterol in the body. More HDL in the body helps to eliminate LDL cholesterol. More research has found benefits with aerobic exercises such as walking, swimming, and biking vs anaerobic exercise like weight training. A few tips to start and aim for:

- **Start low and slow** walk for 10-15 minutes, then work your way up to longer walks or higher intensity exercises.
- **Stay proactive with hydration** drink before you are thirsty.
- **Stay comfortable** wear tennis shoes that have good support to minimize falls and injuries.
- **Make it consistent** spread your exercise time over most days of the week. There are more health benefits to shorter, more regular exercise sessions, plus you lower your chance of injury and doing too much too quickly.
- **Seek support** have people join you or find community activities to join.
- **Aim for the long term** the American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise each week.

Activity: Try this 5-minute Chair Exercise

Scan this QR code to complete the post-activity survey and redeem your points for your participation in the Take Charge program!