



Arthritis NZ
Mateponapona
Aotearoa

Living well with arthritis

Tips to follow the Mediterranean Diet and Lifestyle

Get 7-9 hours sleep



Eat mainly plants



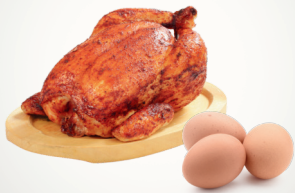
Make leafy greens a daily staple



Include whole grains with every meal



Have lean white meat and eggs



Switch to olive oil



Eat seafood



Drink plenty of fluids



Eat legumes and legume products



Limit red and processed meat



Choose low-fat milk and milk products or soy milk and soy products



Flavour food with herbs and spices



Limit sugar and sugary foods and drinks



Eat unsalted nuts, seeds, and olives



Grow, gather, and swap at least some of your food



Eat together



Spend time with friends and family



Know your purpose



Have good boundaries with work and make time to relax



If you drink alcohol, drink red wine in moderation



Tips to follow the Mediterranean Diet and Lifestyle

- **Get 7-9 hours sleep:** Adequate sleep is crucial for making healthy food choices.
- **Eat mainly plants:** Have 2 or more servings of vegetables every meal and 1-2 pieces of fruit. A serving is about a handful. Eat a variety of different coloured and textured fruits and vegetables. Diversity of fruit and veg is the key to good gut health.
- **Make leafy greens a daily staple:** The darker coloured, the better! If you are on blood thinning medication, consult your doctor before increasing leafy greens intake.
- **Include whole grains with every meal:** This includes oats, brown rice, quinoa, millet, barley, buckwheat, popcorn, and whole grain products like wholemeal bread, WeetBix, and wholemeal pasta.
- **Eat legumes and legume products:** Include lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, black beans, and tofu at least 3 times a week. These foods are high in plant protein and filling. Baked beans and chilli beans are a good start but contain added sugar and salt.
- **Eat fish and seafood:** More than 2 servings a week is recommended. Avoid deep-fried and battered fish. Oily fish, like salmon and mackerel, and shellfish like mussels are high in Omega-3 fats. If you have gout, ensure you are taking your daily medication and enjoy seafood as one part of a balanced meal. Fresh or canned fish are both good choices.
- **Switch to olive oil:** Extra virgin olive oil is rich in antioxidants and is a key fat in the Mediterranean diet. Canola oil is a good alternative, higher in Omega 3s than other budget-friendly oils.
- **Drink plenty of fluids:** Drink at least eight cups daily. Water is best, and green and herbal teas are great options.
- **Have lean white meat and eggs:** Choose skinless, non-deep-fried poultry. Limit fatty Tūī and be cautious if you have high cholesterol. The Mediterranean diet includes about 4 eggs and 2 servings of chicken per week.
- **Limit red and processed meat:** Red meat is eaten rarely, less than 2 servings (2 x 100g of cooked meat) per week. Use it to flavour meals rather than as the main component. Avoid processed meats like bacon, ham, salami, jerky, and corned beef.
- **Choose low-fat milk and milk products or soy**
- **milk and soy products:** The Mediterranean diet emphasises low-fat yoghurt, cheese, and fermented dairy products. Use low-fat animal milk or enriched soy milk if you choose plant-based options.
- **Flavour food with herbs and spices:** Experiment with herbs and spices to find flavours you love. Use iodised salt if needed and add it at the table, not during cooking.
- **Limit sugar and sugary foods and drinks:** Opt for naturally sweet and nutritious food like fruit.
- **Eat unsalted nuts, seeds, and olives:** Have a small handful (30g) of nuts or seeds as a snack. Add diced olives to salads, wraps, and burgers, and sprinkle chopped nuts or seeds over your breakfast cereal, salad, or stir-fries.
- **Grow, gather, and swap at least some of your food:** Grow and eat from at least one plant year-round. Share or swap excess food with others. Gathering food from the ocean promotes physical activity and connection to the environment. The Mediterranean Diet encourages eating seasonally and locally.
- **Eat together:** Communal eating is a big part of the Mediterranean lifestyle.
- **Spend time with friends and family:** Meaningful relationships decrease loneliness and keep your brain active and healthy.
- **Know your purpose:** Wake up with a sense of purpose. It's a key characteristic of the Mediterranean and other blue-zone lifestyles, areas where people live longer, healthier lives.
- **Have boundaries with work and make time to relax:** Healthy choices are easier with adequate downtime and relaxation. Ensure side hustles are relaxing or active if you have a sedentary job so that you aren't increasing stress.
- **Have fun and be active!** Plan activities that make you happy to reduce the likelihood of turning to comfort foods for feel-good hormones. Getting physically active releases feel-good chemicals; aim to get your heart pumping daily.
- **If you drink alcohol, drink red wine in moderation:** No alcohol is best for overall health, but if you drink, do so in moderation and social settings. The Mediterranean diet allows low to moderate red wine with meals, but The World Cancer Research Foundation states no amount of alcohol is safe.

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