

Including the
Mediterranean Diet
and it's benefits

David N. Bell MBA

7 Keys to OPTIMAL HEALTH



The Human Body is designed to be a Healing Machine
when it is fueled with the right nutrients.

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Franklin, the great American inventor and statesman, once said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The human body is truly a miraculous healing machine when fueled properly. The possible reason for the proliferation of so many diseases and chronic health problems is that most people are not getting the broad spectrum of critical nutrients to allow the body to be in an optimal healing state.

Recently, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) have stated that the Mediterranean diet is “possibly the best diet ever... to prevent serious health issues.” The Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) goes on to report that, “Hundreds of scientific studies have linked the diet, which emphasizes fish, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, olive oil, and less red meat and dairy, to reduced heart disease, Alzheimer’s, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and other serious health conditions.”¹

In this booklet, we will investigate the ways that the body is designed to heal itself, and the ways which we can, through the right nutrition, support this miraculous healing capacity.

We will explore the seven primary healing factors which are supported by the diverse ingredients and healthful compounds found in Mediterranean foods. What are these healing factors?

- 1 OXIDATIVE PROTECTION** - The goal of oxidative protection is to prevent or minimize the effects of oxidative damage to our bodies’ essential lipids, proteins, and DNA. This damage is associated with the pathogenesis of many of the most serious disease states, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancers.
- 2 CHELATED MINERALS** - Our bodies require a number of essential dietary elements, including minerals. These elements

play a vital role in the regulation and maintenance of body functions. Chelation increases the body's absorption of minerals, which improves their use and benefit.

- 3 ENZYME NUTRITION** - Enzymes are proteins that are responsible for essential biochemical processes in human metabolism. They are critical to the efficient digestion and usage of nutrients in our food sources.
- 4 DIETARY FIBER** - Dietary fibers are beneficial carbohydrates that the body cannot digest. Fibers come in two forms – soluble and insoluble – both of which are related to a range of health benefits. Soluble fibers help lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels. Insoluble fibers assist in the breakdown of foods and uptake of nutrients, and help digestive regularity.
- 5 HEALTHY FATS AND PLANT BASED OILS** - Mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids are essential nutrients for health. They are necessary for numerous normal body functions, including blood clotting and the formation of cell membranes in the brain. Our bodies do not make Omega-3s, so we rely upon food sources like Olive Oil and Fish Oil for these vital nutrients.
- 6 ANTI-MICROBIAL PROTECTION** - Microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses and parasites, wage a constant and delicate battle in our bodies. “Good” microorganisms help regulate our immune systems, digestion, and other normal functions. However, other invasive microbes can cause devastating acute and chronic illnesses. There are well-known plant based nutrients which can fight of microbial activity in the body.
- 7 COLLAGEN SUPPORT** - Collagen is a unique structural protein that acts like the framework on which our skin hangs. It is a vital connective tissue that breaks down with age, but can be stimulated by diets rich in plant-based proteins and antioxidants.

A natural, plant-sourced diet, like the Mediterranean diet can deliver antioxidant protection, superior absorption, cellular support, improved digestion, immune system defense, and skin support in a

unique formulation that reflects and celebrates the body's own natural defenses.

So let's look in more detail at how the Mediterranean diet helps protect and support your optimal health.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

A decade ago, I worked with Walter Willett, Chair of the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, on his ambitious program to promote the Mediterranean diet. It was, in Dr. Willett's mind, the best representation of a complete and balanced dietary practice that supported our health and natural healing potential.

Dr. Willett remains so committed to the benefits of the Mediterranean diet that he hosts an important global symposium about it. It is introduced this way:

“Since Hippocrates, lifestyle behaviors have been known to directly impact health and the risk of disease. In particular, the quality and quantity of food consumption and health status are intimately linked. The Mediterranean diet is a collection of similar eating habits historically followed to varying degrees in over 15 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea...Modern medicine and public health have consistently demonstrated that the Mediterranean Diet is associated with better health status, greater longevity, and positive effects on chronic diseases.

The specific benefits of a Mediterranean diet are numerous and can include achieving and maintaining a healthy weight; decreased risks for cancer, reduce the risk of heart disease, reduce cognitive decline and other chronic ailments such as diabetes and arthritis. The Mediterranean diet can provide increased energy levels and promote overall improved health/quality of life. Additionally, the diet is very attractive due to its diverse and colorful flavors; incorporation of

healthy fats and proteins such as olive oil, nuts, and fish; and its inclusion of regular wine consumption in moderation.”²

This is an impressive endorsement of the Mediterranean diet. Yet, it can be challenging to make large-scale changes to diets, purchasing, and cooking habits in different parts of the world. For this reason, it is valuable to find products that are a balanced Mediterranean-based food source.

Let us explore in greater details the specific benefits that each of the 7 Key Healing Functions of the Mediterranean Diet for fueling the body to its optimal healing state:

OXIDATIVE PROTECTION

Oxidative stress represents a systemic challenge to human health. It is caused when reactive species, commonly called “free radicals,” bind with healthy cells and damage proteins, lipids, and DNA. While oxidation is a normal and necessary metabolic process, oxidative damage occurs when there is an imbalance between the quantity of free radicals and our bodies’ capacity to process and neutralize them.

We have natural defenses against oxidative stress – endogenous antioxidants, such as glutathione, superoxide dismutase, and melatonin. However, these systems are often overwhelmed by both internal and external sources of radicals.

Plant-based compounds represent a natural pharmacy of antioxidants. The HSPH states, “There are hundreds, probably thousands, of different substances that can act as antioxidants. The most familiar ones are vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, and other related carotenoids, along with the minerals selenium and manganese. They’re joined by glutathione, coenzyme Q10, lipoic acid, flavonoids, phenols, polyphenols, phytoestrogens, and many more.”³

However, not all antioxidants are created equal. Similar to the amaz-

ing diversity of plants from which they originate, these antioxidants do not perform in exactly the same ways. Some may directly interact with radicals, while others may react with and stimulate our bodies' own enzymatic antioxidant defenses. Some antioxidants may not be well absorbed, while others may be exceptional at crossing cellular lipid membranes.

While there are many factors that contribute to the efficacy of antioxidants, one conclusion is resoundingly clear. As Ronald Prior, PhD, former head of the USDA's antioxidant research division, with whom I have worked closely, reports, "Increased dietary intake of total antioxidant capacity...has been associated with reduced risk for ischemic stroke, hypertension, gastric cancer, endometrial cancer, and pulmonary disease."⁴

Furthermore, there is strong evidence that plant-based antioxidants are more effective when left in a form close to their natural matrix. Research I have done with the renowned Linus Pauling Institute on natural forms of vitamin C supports this conclusion. It shows that other complementary constituents in the source material improve the stability and bioavailability of the ascorbic acid. A combination of oil- and water-soluble agents is also likely to contribute to this synergistic effect.

A Mediterranean diet is blessed with an abundance of natural, plant-based antioxidants from foods like pomegranate, grape, olives, nuts, and whole grains. It provides the diverse spectrum of antioxidants which deliver proven protection against oxidative damage.

CHELATED MINERALS

Minerals are essential to optimal body function and health. However, like other micronutrients, minerals often have difficulty getting where they can be most beneficial. Chelation is a process of molecular bonding which has been shown to improve the absorption and bioavailability of minerals.⁵ Science and patented technology has created an organic molecule in a form the body can assimilate. These

special organic forms of mineral elements are known as mineral amino acid chelates which can give our bodies the ultimate chance to absorb the minerals for our best biological advantage.

Our bodies have natural mechanisms for the absorption of minerals, some of which are designed to limit absorption. This may be to provide a “time release” kind of function, or simply to minimize the risk of possible toxicity. However, as with oxidation, our bodies can be out of balance, and the proper uptake of essential minerals may be compromised.

There are other factors that have led to mineral deficiency. Two of the most important relate to food production and diet. A 2012 Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy paper⁶ stated that, “Mineral scarcity poses global risk for agriculture and public health” for developed and underdeveloped countries alike.

There is a two-fold dietary risk: First, foods made from or raised on ingredients grown in depleted soils; second, diets that are increasingly processed and unbalanced. The failed “5-A-Day” program in the U.S. and obesity epidemic in many nations are testaments to dietary dysfunctions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in its continuing survey of food intake, *What We Eat In America*, calculates that the average person consumes just over 3 servings of fruits and vegetables.

The bottom line is that most people need to supplement their daily intake of essential minerals and chelated minerals can provide the most effective source of essential minerals.

ENZYMES NUTRITION

Enzymes are the primary engines of biochemical reactions necessary for life. Most are proteins, and are involved in countless operations in human metabolism, including the vital functions of digestion and energy production.

Digestive enzymes are those produced by our bodies or eaten in our foods and that aid in digestion. The proper functioning of our digestive system is critical to our health. It insures the efficient absorption and use of nutrients by our bodies. In fact, research shows that inadequate levels of digestive enzymes contribute to chronic health problems and disease states – from fatigue and vitamin deficiencies to immune disorders and diabetes.

Cellulase is a natural, plant-based enzyme. Our bodies do not produce cellulase, yet it is necessary to catalyze the cellulose found in those healthful fibrous green foods we are encouraged to eat. Cellulase breaks down cellulose to glucose, or blood glucose, which is the primary source of energy for our cells.

As described by Dr. Edward F. Group⁷, “Glucose...is the body’s key source of energy. It can be a problem, though, when we eat simple sugars that quickly elevate our blood sugar levels because the excess is converted into triglycerides and stored as body fat. Glucose from cellulose is released slowly and should not dramatically increase blood sugar but rather provide a more stable fuel for the body.”

Dr. Group adds that, along with aiding digestion and blood glucose management, natural cellulase can help mediate normal cholesterol levels, protect cell membranes, and support the immune system.

The naturally-derived digestive enzyme, cellulase, helps you optimize the nutritive and health benefits of your diet, especially if you consume the recommended amounts of leafy, green vegetables which are generally found in abundance in the Mediterranean diet.

DIETARY FIBER

Dietary fiber is a carbohydrate that cannot be digested and converted into sugar molecules. The health benefits of dietary fiber are well documented. According to the HSPH⁸, based upon the evidence of large-scale epidemiological and clinical studies, dietary fiber “appears to reduce the risk of...heart disease, diabetes, diverticular disease, and constipation.”

A Mayo Clinic article⁸ also points out the weight management benefits of a high-fiber diet. Fiber-rich foods are less calorie-dense, and stay in the intestines longer, which extends the feeling of satiety, or lack of hunger.

Dietary fiber takes the forms of soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber dissolves in water, while insoluble fiber does not. They play different but complementary roles. Soluble fiber has broader systemic effects, such as cardiovascular and diabetes management. Insoluble fiber primarily helps support a healthy digestive system.

All major public health organizations urge increased fiber intake through the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. Yet, most people do not consume 20 grams of fiber per day, the low range of the recommended daily intake.

Foods and or any nutrition product that delivers the concentrated benefits of the Mediterranean diet, including fiber, will help correct this imbalance.

HEALTHY FATS AND PLANT BASED OILS

A recent article from the HSPH entitled, “Out with the Bad, In with the Good,” can be summarized this way: “Bad fats, meaning trans and saturated fats, increase the risk for certain diseases. Good fats, meaning monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, do just the opposite. They are good for the heart and most other parts of the body.”⁹

In specific, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats play a vital role in the maintenance of blood cholesterol. Unsaturated fats are called good fats because they can improve blood cholesterol levels, ease inflammation, stabilize heart rhythms, and play a number of other beneficial roles. They are predominantly found in foods from plants, such as vegetable oils, nuts, and seeds. Many large-scale, long-term human studies have demonstrated that diets rich in good fats,

such as those found in a Mediterranean diet, increase the beneficial high-density lipoproteins (HDL) and reduce harmful low-density lipoproteins (LDL).

In healthful diets, these good fats comprise up to 30 percent of daily caloric intake. In the Mediterranean diet, olive oil is the primary source of these good fats. In fact, olive oil is one of the most beneficial, and researched, foods in the world.

Olive oil has a broad matrix of beneficial compounds. These include vitamins A, D, K, and E, carotenoids, and the phenolic compound, hydroxytyrosol - a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, with reported ORAC values more than three times greater than green tea catechins. Hydroxytyrosol is an important signature compound that is unique to the venerable olive.

Olive oil has been shown to improve the health of the skin and brain, and protect against diabetes and cardiovascular disease, among many other health benefits.

ANTI-MICROBIAL PROTECTION

Olives are at the heart of the Mediterranean diet. They provide health-supporting good fats and the powerful antioxidant, hydroxytyrosol. Olive leaves also contribute a unique and beneficial compound - oleuropein. Like hydroxytyrosol, it is known to be a potent antioxidant, with reported ORAC values significantly higher than other highly regarded antioxidants, such as green tea catechins.

Oleuropein has been shown to be a broad-spectrum antibiotic, anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal. It has proven to be efficacious against yeast and fungal infections, herpes, allergies, psoriasis, chronic fatigue, and many other pathogens.

One important study concludes that oleuropein “can be considered

a potential source of promising antimicrobial agents for treatment of....infections in [humans].”¹⁰

Antimicrobial protection is an increasingly important health function. Bacteria pose a unique threat to human health because of their ability to mutate. Traditional antibiotic drugs do not work as well as they used to against bacterial infections.

As a result, natural anti-bacterial therapies, like oleuropein, can make a vital contribution to protection against bacterial infections.

COLLAGEN SUPPORT

Collagen is a cornerstone of skin health. Collagen is found in all of our connective tissues, such as skin, bones, tendons, and ligaments, and also provides for the structural integrity of all of our internal organs. It is the most abundant protein in our bodies.

Collagen degrades as we age, and its breakdown can be accelerated by the consumption of chemicals, smoking, and environmental factors – especially the UV rays in sunlight. Collagen breakdown contributes to wrinkles in the skin, and aches and pains of the joints and bones, among other health concerns.

Vitamin C is perhaps the best known, and most effective, naturally-occurring compound for supporting and stimulating our body’s collagen production.

The Linus Pauling institute summarizes the relationship between vitamin C and collagen this way. “The antioxidant properties of vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and its role in collagen synthesis make vitamin C a vital molecule for skin health.”¹¹

However, isolated vitamin C is highly labile, or fragile. It degrades very easily in our bodies. Natural products that are rich in vitamin C, like rose hips, buffer it in other protective constituents, like vitamins A and E, to greatly improve its efficacy. In fact, it is the balanced matrix of oil-based and water-based compounds that makes rose hips so beneficial to the skin.

Consumption of foods rich in natural forms of vitamin C can contribute to the support of normal collagen production, and mitigate degradation as we age.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that a Mediterranean diet provides balanced nutrition that provides 7 key components essential to wellness. In fact, these components are not only the key to maintaining our health, but can also help us heal and return vital functions to optimal health.

However, for most of us, it is not easy to make comprehensive changes to our dietary practices. Life is busy and complicated. It is very difficult in many parts of the world to easily have access to the diverse and nutritionally dense foods common to the Mediterranean diet. An alternative to wholesale changes in menus, pantries, and shopping habits might be to find a single, concentrated food source that can easily provide many if not all of these seven key components.

What if we could find a natural, concentrated food that delivered the benefits of a Mediterranean diet and addressed the 7 keys to optimal health in a single concentrated serving? There are many natural whole food products that offer several of these key health benefits. Along with making whatever changes to our dietary regiment toward whole foods like those common to the Mediterranean diet we may also need to find concentrated whole food supplements to make up the difference to readily available in our diets.

If you can find a concentrated whole food in its natural form to add to your daily nutritional regiment which contains all or most of the 7 key healing functions of the Mediterranean diet then it is my recommendation to consume this product daily as a way to achieve optimal health and to prevent long term health issues.

Benjamin Franklin was indeed correct, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

NOTES

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David N. Bell, MBA, is a respected advisor to food and nutrition companies and institutions. He has been actively involved in the science of nutrition, product development, and consumer markets for 30 years. During this time, David has worked with the Harvard School of Public Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Brunswick Labs, and other thought leaders on important nutrition initiatives. Mr. Bell received his MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

