

THE TRUTH ABOUT **PASTA**



One food, one love

PASTA HEALTH SUMMARY

Pasta is a healthy carbohydrate-containing food and is a key ingredient in traditional eating patterns around the world like the Mediterranean Diet, Asian, Latin American and vegetarian. There is a consistent and mounting body of nutrition science for the healthfulness of pasta and the pasta meal, a delicious way to eat vegetables, legumes and other healthy foods often underconsumed.

On October 26, 2015, during the 5th World Pasta Congress organized by the non-profit Oldways, the International Pasta Organisation (IPO) and AIDEPI, 20 scientists from nine countries met in Milan to present the latest research on pasta and health. These experts agreed pasta continues to be a health-promoting and nutritious food. The outcome was the updated Healthy Pasta Meal Scientific Consensus Statement. This statement serves as an important expansion and update of an earlier Pasta Consensus Statement developed with scientists released at an Oldways Conference in Rome in 2004 and updated in Rio de Janeiro in 2010. Some of the key new topics in the updated statement include gluten-free trends, sports nutrition and sustainability.

The following studies, gathered by the International Pasta Organisation and Oldways, help us understand the role that pasta plays as a healthy carbohydrate in traditional ways of eating such as the Mediterranean Diet:

Heart Health

- **Med Diet Cuts Heart Disease Risk by Nearly Half.** Pasta is a staple of the Mediterranean Diet, and researchers have given us yet another reason to fill our plates with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, olive oil, and nuts. A European study followed more than 2,500 Greek adults for over a decade, tracking their medical records, lifestyle habits, and eating patterns. Those who most closely followed the Mediterranean Diet were 47% less likely to get heart disease, regardless of their



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

smoking habits, age, family history, or other lifestyle factors. The scientists estimate that every one-point increase on the Mediterranean Diet score (a measure of how closely participants followed the Mediterranean Diet, on a scale of 1 to 55) is associated with a 3% drop in heart disease risk, so every little bit counts. In fact, the researchers found that the Mediterranean Diet was even more protective against heart disease than physical activity. *Presentation at the American College of Cardiology's 64th Annual Scientific Session. San Diego, CA. March 15, 2015.*

- **Mediterranean Diet May Help Prevent Heart Disease.** Researchers analyzed the diets of more than 15,000 adults at risk of heart disease from 39 countries to see if their eating habits were more representative of the Mediterranean Diet or the Western diet. In those most closely following a Mediterranean Diet, each 1 point increase on the Mediterranean Diet Score was linked with a 7% lower risk of a major heart problem (heart attack, stroke, or death) over the 4 year follow up. Similarly, researchers also calculated a simplified Mediterranean Diet Score for the participants (based only on daily consumption of fruits and vegetables, and weekly consumption of fish and alcohol), and found that each 1 point increase in the simplified Mediterranean Diet Score was linked with a 10% lower risk of major heart problems. Fish and tofu/soybeans were the only individual food groups that were significantly associated with a lower risk of heart problems after adjusting for education, health, and lifestyle factors. Consumption of specific foods common to the Western diet was not significantly linked with heart disease risk in this analysis, leading the scientists to conclude that “Greater consumption of healthy foods may be more important for secondary prevention of coronary artery disease than avoidance of less healthy foods.” *European Heart Journal. 2016 April 24. [Epub ahead of print.] (Stewart RAH et al.)*
- **Cardioprotective Effect of Mediterranean Diet.** Ventricular hypertrophy, or the thickening and enlargement of heart ventricles due to the accumulation of scar tissue, is thought to be a root cause of many heart ailments. To investigate how diet relates to this condition, researchers analyzed eating patterns and left ventricular mass (the size of the left ventricle of the heart, where enlargement is most common) of over 1,700 adults without history of heart attack or stroke. The scientists found that those most closely adhering to a Mediterranean Diet had a left ventricular mass that was 4% less than the rest of the study population, a reduction greater than that observed in people with moderate-to-heavy physical activity (another factor that supports heart health). In fact, for each point increase on the Mediterranean Diet Score (0-9), left ventricular mass was 1.98g lower (average left ventricular mass was 189g). *American Journal of Cardiology. 2015 Feb 15;115(4):510-4. (Gardener H et al.)*



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

Weight Management

- **Pasta Linked with Lower BMI, Less Central Obesity.** To see how pasta relates to obesity, Italian researchers analyzed the eating habits, body mass index (BMI), and abdominal obesity of more than 23,000 adults across Italy. The researchers found that, after statistically correcting pasta intake for body weight, pasta intake was linked with significantly lower BMIs and central obesity (measured by waist to hip ratio, and waist and hip circumferences), even after adjusting for total calories and adherence to the Mediterranean diet. Pasta intake was also correlated with the intake of other healthy foods, including tomatoes, onions, garlic, olive oil, seasoned cheese, and rice. *Nutrition & Diabetes*. 2016 July 4;6:e218. (G Pounis et al.)
- **Grain Foods Linked with Higher Diet Quality than Grain Free Diets.** Grains have been at the core of human diets for millennia, but not all grain foods are created equal (for example, quinoa salad is not the same as cookies and corn chips). Using data from a large national health survey (NHANES 2005-2010), researchers identified common types of grain eating patterns, and compared diet quality and health markers between them. Adults who regularly eat cereals, pasta, cooked grains, rice and mixed grains had a significantly higher diet quality than those who avoided grains. While grain eaters tended to eat 300-400 more calories per day than those who avoided grains, grain eaters did not have higher BMIs or larger waist sizes. In fact, those who favored pasta, cooked cereals, and rice had significantly lower body weights and waist sizes than those who avoided grains. These results indicate that grain foods (especially healthier grain foods, without lots of added salt, sugar, or fat) are an important part of a balanced diet. *FASEB Journal*. 2015 April;29(1):S763.7. (Papanikolaou Y et al.)
- **Healthy Pasta Meals Linked with Higher Fiber Intake, Better Diet Quality**
Healthy pasta meals are characterized by what you pair them with, as pasta can be an ideal canvas for a number of healthy ingredients. To see how different pasta meals relate to diet quality, scientists analyzed the eating patterns and nutrient intakes of more than 10,000 adults in the U.S. They found that all pasta eaters ate significantly more fiber (about 2g per day) than pasta avoiders, and that “pasta, noodles, and cooked grains (excluding non pasta grains” was linked with significantly better diet quality. However, mixed pasta dishes and macaroni and cheese were not associated with better diet quality. The authors conclude that “Strategies to increase consumption of pasta with vegetables might help to further maximize fiber intakes, improve micronutrient intake, as well as diet quality.” *The FASEB Journal*. 2016 Apr;30(1): suppl 1b332. (Fulgoni VL et al.)



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- **Foods High In Carbohydrates May Provide Better Satiety.** In a study conducted by researchers from Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Leeds, 65 overweight and obese individuals were tested for satiety and the sensations associated with consuming foods. The study found that participants felt fuller when consuming low-fat, high-carbohydrate meals than they did when consuming high-fat, low-carbohydrate meals. In addition, consumption of the low-fat, high-carb meals reduced the desire for high-fat foods. *Mark Hopkins, Catherine Gibbons, Phillipa Caudwell, John E. Blundell and Graham Finlayson (2016). Differing effects of high-fat or high-carbohydrate meals on food hedonics in overweight and obese individuals. British Journal of Nutrition, 115, pp 1875-1884. doi:10.1017/S0007114516000775.*
- **Mediterranean Diet During Pregnancy Linked with Lower Abdominal Obesity in Young Children.** To see how diet during pregnancy affects the risk of childhood obesity, researchers analyzed data from over 1,800 mother-child pairs. They found that children were less likely to have a high waist circumference (a measure of abdominal obesity) at age 4 if their mothers were most closely following a Mediterranean Diet during pregnancy. However, the researchers found no significant relationship between the expectant mothers' diet and the subsequent BMI of their children in early childhood. *Pediatric Obesity. 2016 Jan 13. (Fernandez-Barres S) [Epub ahead of print]*

Metabolic Syndrome

- **Mediterranean Diet Can Reverse Metabolic Syndrome.** Metabolic syndrome greatly increases the risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes, but researchers found a way to reverse the condition. Scientists in Spain reviewed data collected during the PREDIMED study in which over 7,400 adults at risk of heart disease were randomly assigned to eat 1 of 3 diets: Mediterranean Diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil, Mediterranean Diet supplemented with nuts, or a control diet (patients received advice on a low-fat diet). Researchers found that while the Mediterranean Diet was not associated with the onset of metabolic syndrome, reversal of the condition (decrease in central obesity and/or high blood sugar) occurred in nearly one third of patients eating either version of the delicious and nutritious Mediterranean diet. *Canadian Medical Association Journal. 2014 Oct 14. Pii:cmaj.140764. [Epub ahead of print] (Babio N et al).*



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- **Med Diet Reduces Risk of Metabolic Syndrome.** Metabolic Syndrome is considered to be present if someone has three or more of the following: high blood pressure, high blood sugar, large waist circumference, low HDL (“good”) cholesterol, and high triglycerides. To assess the Mediterranean Diet’s effect on metabolic syndrome, scientists in Greece and Italy conducted an analysis of 50 Med Diet studies involving more than half a million people. The researchers found the Med Diet improved all five risk factors, and overall reduced the risk of Metabolic Syndrome. They concluded that this dietary pattern can be easily adopted by all population groups and various cultures, and cost-effectively prevent Metabolic Syndrome and its related ailments. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 15 March 2011; 57:1299-1313.

Diabetes

- **Mediterranean Diet Decreases Diabetes Risk.** Researchers in Vienna, Austria reviewed data from over 122,000 adults to investigate the association between the Mediterranean Diet and diabetes risk. After analyzing eight prospective cohort studies and one clinical controlled trial published between 2007 and 2014, the scientists found that greater adherence to a Mediterranean Diet is associated with a significant reduction (19%) in the risk of type 2 diabetes. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2014 Aug 22 [Epub ahead of print] (Schwingshackl L et al.)
- **Med Diet Improves Blood Sugar Control & Heart Disease Risk Factors in Type 2 Diabetes.** Chinese researchers analyzed data from nine different studies with 1,178 type 2 diabetes patients being treated with the Mediterranean Diet. Compared with those on a control diet (which ranged from their usual diet, to a low fat diet, to a high carb diet, to the American Diabetes Association Diet), those on a Mediterranean Diet had improved blood sugar control (hemoglobin A1c, fasting glucose, and fasting insulin), improved BMI and weight loss, lower total cholesterol, triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood), and blood pressure, and improved higher HDL (good) cholesterol. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2015 Nov;69:1200-1208. (R Huo et al.) [published online 2014 Nov 4]
- **Med Diet with Low Glycemic Load May Reduce Risk for Type 2 Diabetes.** Researchers analyzed data from more than 22,000 participants followed over 11 years in the Greek cohort of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) to investigate the relationship between the Mediterranean Diet, glycemic load, and occurrence of type 2 diabetes. The researchers found that people who consumed a low glycemic load diet that adheres to the principles of the Mediterranean Diet may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes by 20%. *Diabetologia*. 2013 Aug 22. [Epub ahead of print.] [Rossi, et al.]



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- **Med Diet & Diets with Whole Grains May Lower Risk of High Blood Pressure After Gestational Diabetes.** Women who have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) are at an increased risk of developing high blood pressure. To see how diet might relate to this trend, researchers monitored the eating patterns and health records of more than 3,800 women who had previously been diagnosed with gestational diabetes. After adjusting for BMI, age, and other demographic factors, the women most closely following a Mediterranean Diet had a 30% lower risk of developing high blood pressure over the 18-year study. Similarly, women following other healthy eating patterns (such as the DASH diet) that emphasized fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and were low in red and processed meats, had a 24-28% lower risk of developing high blood pressure. *Hypertension*. 2016 April 18. [Epub ahead of print.] (Li S et al.)

Gut Health

- **Med Diet Linked with Improved Gut Bacteria.** Spanish researchers randomly assigned 239 adults (half with metabolic syndrome, half without) to either a Mediterranean Diet, or a low fat, high complex carbohydrate diet (with foods like pasta and cereals) for two years. They found that the Mediterranean diet was able to “restore potentially beneficial members of the gut microbiota,” in patients both with and without metabolic syndrome. The low fat, high complex carbohydrate diet did not result in as many positive changes in gut microbiota as the Mediterranean Diet did, although some beneficial changes still occurred. *The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*. 2016 Jan;27:27-31. (Haro C et al.)
- **Mediterranean and Vegetarian Diets May Benefit Gut Microbiome.** Eating a variety of healthy plant foods is one of the best ways to nurture our friendly gut bacteria, and new research suggests that Mediterranean and vegetarian diets may be useful models. Scientists analyzed the eating patterns and gut bacteria of 153 Italian adults. They found that those most closely following a Mediterranean diet or vegetarian/vegan diet had higher levels of short chain fecal acids, a compound associated with many health benefits. On the other hand, those not following a Mediterranean diet had higher levels of urinary trimethylamine oxide, a potential risk factor for heart disease. The researchers also noted that both vegetarian/vegans and those on a Mediterranean diet scored highly on the Healthy Food Diversity Index, meaning that these eating styles could be a useful blueprint for people wanting to incorporate a variety of nutritious foods into their diet. *Gut*. 2015 Sept 28. [Epub ahead of print] (De Filippis F et al.)



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- **Diabetes-Protective Changes to Gut Bacteria after Year on Med Diet.** In a small study, Spanish researchers randomly assigned 20 obese men to either a Mediterranean diet, or a low fat, high complex carbohydrate diet (with foods like pasta and cereals) for a year. After a year on their respective diets, both groups saw increases in various gut microbes that are thought to be protective against type 2 diabetes (*Roseburia* and *Parabacteroides distasonis* for Med diet, and *Prevotella* and *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii* for low fat, high complex carb diet). The Mediterranean diet group also increased their insulin sensitivity over the year, meaning that their bodies better respond to insulin. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*. 2016 Jan;101(1):233-42. (Haro C et al.)

Healthy Aging & Longevity

- **Med Diet Slows Aging.** A large study in the *British Medical Journal* indicated that following the Mediterranean Diet could help reduce cellular ageing. Researchers found that people with the greatest adherence to the Mediterranean Diet (measured on a 0-9 scale using the Alternate Mediterranean Diet Score) had the longest telomeres, DNA sequences at the end of chromosome that tell a lot about aging and longevity. According to the study, “a three point change in the Alternate Mediterranean Diet score would correspond to on average 4.5 years of aging, which is comparable to the difference observed when comparing smokers with non smokers.” *BMJ* 2014; 349: g6674.
- **Mediterranean Diet Associated With Healthy Aging, DNA.** Telomeres, DNA sequences at the end of chromosomes, can tell us a lot about aging and longevity, as shorter telomeres are associated with many age related diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. To determine the relationship between DNA and diet, Harvard researchers analyzed food intake and telomere length from over 4,600 healthy nurses using data from the Nurses’ Health Study. Researchers found that people with the greatest adherence to the Mediterranean Diet (lots of vegetables, fruits, grains (mostly unrefined), fish, legumes, and nuts, and less meat) had the longest telomeres, a good indicator of healthy aging. Additionally, the scientists pointed out that no one specific food was pinpointed as the best, reinforcing the importance of a well-rounded, healthy diet. *British Medical Journal*. 2014 Dec 2;349. (Crous-Bou M et al.)



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- Med Diet May Reduce Alzheimer's Risk by Half.** The Mediterranean Diet, famous for its link with healthy aging, may also cut the risk for Alzheimer's. Researchers studied the relationship between eating patterns and Alzheimer's in 923 retired adults in Chicago over an average of 4.5 years. The scientists rated participants' diets based on how closely they adhered to the Mediterranean Diet, the DASH diet (a healthy diet used to treat hypertension that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy, and limited sweets and salt) and the MIND diet. The MIND diet is a hybrid Mediterranean-DASH diet that emphasizes foods associated with brain health, including whole grains, green leafy vegetables, berries, nuts, olive oil, and fish. Those most closely following the Mediterranean Diet were 54% less likely to develop Alzheimer's dementia (more than any other diet group). Comparatively, those most closely following the DASH diet were 39% less likely to develop Alzheimer's dementia. The group most closely following the MIND diet (which shares many similarities with the Med diet) was 53% less likely to develop Alzheimer's dementia than the group with the lowest MIND diet scores, and even those moderately following the MIND diet were at a 35% lower risk. *Alzheimer's and Dementia*. 2015 Feb 11. pii: S1552-5260(15)00017-5. [Epub ahead of print] (Morris MC et al.)
- Mediterranean Diet Linked with Better Brain Structure in Elderly.** The Mediterranean Diet has long been associated with healthy aging, but emerging research is shedding new light onto why this might be. Researchers analyzed the eating patterns and brain size in 674 elderly (average age 80) adults without dementia in New York City. They found that those most closely following the Mediterranean Diet had larger brains (total brain volume, grey matter, and white matter), with an effect similar to 5 years of aging. Of the specific foods studied, eating 3-5 oz fish weekly, and keeping meat intake under 3.5 oz per day, was also linked with larger brain volumes, equivalent to about 3-4 years of aging. These results suggest that a Mediterranean Diet, especially one that encourages fish consumption over meat consumption, could promote brain health, as brain atrophy (brain shrinkage) has been linked with cognitive decline. *Neurology*. 2015 Oct 21. (Gu Y et al.) [Epub ahead of print.]



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- **Med Diet Can Preserve Brain Structure, Delay Cognitive Aging.** The link between healthy aging and the Mediterranean Diet is well established, but emerging research sheds new light onto this mechanism. Scientists analyzed the eating patterns and brain scans of 146 French adults (average age 73). They found that the brain structure (white matter) of those most closely following the Mediterranean Diet was significantly more preserved 9 years later than those who didn't follow a Mediterranean Diet. To put this in perspective, the researchers concluded that "higher adherence to the [Mediterranean Diet] appeared to delay cognitive aging by up to 10 years." *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. 2015 July 16. (Pelletier A et al.) [Epub ahead of print]
- **Mediterranean Diet Reduces Risk of Cognitive Decline.** You can benefit from the Mediterranean Diet even outside that region. An Australian study followed 527 healthy older adults (average age=69 years) in 3 different dietary pattern groups (Australian-style Mediterranean, Prudent/healthy, and Western) over a 3-year period. Researchers found that in participants with genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease (APOE4 allele carriers), high adherence to the Australian-style Mediterranean Diet (high in fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, and fish) was associated with better executive function, the set of mental processes used in planning, strategizing, remembering details, and managing time and space. *Molecular Psychiatry*. 2014 July 29. [Epub ahead of print] (Gardener SL et al.)
- **Med Diet Linked With A Lower Risk for Hip Fractures.** While Mediterranean cuisine regularly includes low to moderate amounts of dairy (often from traditional cheeses and yogurts), milk is not as prominent as it is in other eating patterns. Therefore, scientists are very interested in learning more about the bone health of those who follow a Mediterranean diet. To study this relationship, researchers analyzed the diets of 90,000 older women (ages 50-79) from the Women's Health Initiative cohort for 15 years. They found that those most closely following a Mediterranean diet had a 20% lowered risk for hip fractures than those who did not eat a Mediterranean diet. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. 2016 Mar 28. [Epub ahead of print] (Haring B, et al.)
- **Mediterranean Diet May Prevent Eye Disease.** Macular degeneration, an eye condition that can lead to blindness, has no cure or restorative treatment, so prevention is especially important. To study how diet is related to this condition, scientists analyzed the eating patterns of over 2,500 adults, then monitored their eye health for thirteen years. They found that those most closely following the Mediterranean Diet were 26% less likely to progress to advanced age-related macular degeneration. Results varied by genetics, with certain gene carriers being more responsive to diet than others. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2015 Nov;102(5):1196-206. (Merle BM et al.)



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

Low Glycemic Food Benefits

- **Low Glycemic Foods Help Reduce Risk of Chronic Disease.** Scientists at the University of Toronto reviewed evidence related to glycemic index and health. They concluded that foods low on the glycemic index (GI) are associated with higher levels of HDL (“good”) cholesterol, and that they may decrease the risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Some studies have also found a link between high-glycemic foods and certain cancers. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition, August 2009; 28 Suppl:439S-445S.*
- **Benefits of Low-Glycemic Diets over Higher Protein Diets.** Although all reduced-calorie diets can achieve weight loss, the challenge is to do so without increasing the risk of chronic disease, and without regaining the weight after the diet concludes. A team of researchers at the University of Sydney reviewed and compared evidence for two types of diets: one low in overall carbs and high in protein, and one high in low-glycemic-index carbohydrates. They concluded that both types of diet result in weight loss, but that the evidence suggested that low-carb diets have the potential for increased risk of disease. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2008;17 Suppl 1:16-9. Nutrition Reviews, April 2008; 66(4):171-82.*
- **Low GI and Low GL Diets Protect Against Chronic Disease.** Look to the Index: A team at the University of Sydney found that low GI and/or low GL diets alone reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases. In diabetes and heart disease, the protection is comparable with that seen for whole grain and high fiber intakes. The findings support the general theory that high glycemic foods have a direct link to the development of certain chronic diseases. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2008; 87:627-37.*

Women’s Health

- **Whole Grains, Pasta Linked with Lower Breast Cancer Risk.** An estimated 1 in 8 women in the US will develop invasive breast cancer over her lifetime, so preventive lifestyle choices are an important area of research. To see how diet plays a role, Harvard scientists analyzed the grain food choices of 90,516 pre-menopausal women, and monitored their health outcomes for 22 years. After adjusting for known breast cancer risk factors, those eating 1.5 servings of whole grains per day were 18% less likely to get pre-menopausal breast cancer than those eating hardly any whole grains (0.2 servings/day). This relationship was no longer significant after adjusting for fiber, suggesting that the fiber in whole grains may play a protective role. When looking at individual grain foods, brown rice and pasta (white or whole grain) were associated with a lower risk of overall breast cancer risk, while white bread was linked with a higher risk of overall breast cancer. [*Breast Cancer Research and Treatment. 2016 Sep;159\(2\):335-45. \(Farvid MS et al.\)*](#)



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

- Mediterranean Diet May Lower Breast Cancer Risk by Over Half.** With incidence of breast cancer increasing in recent years, lifestyle and prevention measures are more important than ever. Using data from the PREDIMED study (where adults at risk for heart disease were assigned to either a low fat diet, a Mediterranean Diet with olive oil, or a Mediterranean Diet with nuts), scientists analyzed the eating patterns and health outcomes of over 4,200 women (ages 60-80). During the 5-year follow up period, 35 women developed breast cancer. Those in the Mediterranean Diet groups were 51% less likely to get breast cancer than those on a low-fat diet. The Mediterranean Diet with olive oil group was 62% less likely to get breast cancer, while the Mediterranean Diet group with nuts had a non-significant lower risk of breast cancer. *JAMA Internal Medicine. 2015 Sep 14:1-9. [Epub ahead of print.] (Toledo E et al.)*
- Med Diet Cuts Risk of Womb Cancer by Half.** Endometrial cancer, also known as womb cancer, is largely determined by hormone levels in the body. However, new research shows that diet can play an important role in prevention. Combining the results of three large studies, Italian researchers analyzed the eating patterns of over 5,000 women in Europe (1,411 with endometrial cancer, and 3,668 controls) for their adherence to the Mediterranean Diet. Those most closely following the Mediterranean Diet were over 50% less likely to develop endometrial cancer than those with the lowest adherence to the Mediterranean Diet. Additionally, researchers found that “the Mediterranean Diet as a whole is a stronger determinant of endometrial cancer risk than the single dietary components,” emphasizing the importance of overall diet. *British Journal of Cancer. 2015 May 26;112(11):1816-21. (Filomeno et al.)*
- Mediterranean Diet Reduces Night Sweats and Hot Flushes in Menopause.** Hot flushes and night sweats are two common yet unpleasant symptoms during menopause, but no dietary recommendations have been identified to prevent them. To better understand the relationship between food and menopause, researchers in Australia followed over 6,000 middle-aged women for over 9-years, collecting information on their diet, hot flushes, and night sweats. The scientists found that a Mediterranean style diet (characterized by garlic, peppers, mushrooms, salad greens, pasta, and red wine) and a diet high in fruit significantly decreased night sweats and hot flushes, while high-fat and high-sugar diets (characterized by sweet biscuits, cakes, jam, meat pies, and chocolate) significantly increased these symptoms. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 2013 May; 97(5):1092-9. (Herber-Gast GC et al).*



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

Kids' Nutrition

- **Med Diet—and Pasta—Recommended for Kids.** Start early: Scientists at the Hospital Virgen del Camino, in Pamplona, Spain compared the diet of high school students to the proven-healthy Mediterranean Diet and determined their scores on the “KidMed” index. They found that diet quality decreases progressively with age, and recommended that students should “increase consumption of fruit, vegetables, nuts, pasta and rice, yogurt and cheese, pulses and fish.” *Anales del Sistema Sanitario de Navarra, aJan-Apr 2010; 33(1):35-42.*
- **Mediterranean Diet May Decrease Asthma in Children.** Although environmental factors are related to asthma very little research exists on asthma and dietary patterns. Stanford researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 31 studies on asthma and diet. While the analysis found no association between diet and asthma prevalence in adults or of maternal diet with child asthma or wheeze, 7 of the 10 studies analyzing the Mediterranean Diet showed protective effects on child asthma and/or wheeze. This research suggests the Mediterranean Diet may prevent asthma or wheeze in children. *Journal of Asthma and Allergy. 2014 Aug 12;7:105-21 (Lv N et al.)*
- **Eating Fiber in Adolescence Linked with Lower Breast Cancer Risk.** Dietary fiber is an important nutrient found in plant foods (mostly in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and pulses). To study the link between fiber intake and breast cancer risk, Harvard scientists analyzed the adolescent and early adulthood diets of over 90,000 women, and noted any diagnosis of breast cancer. The researchers found that every 10g of fiber in adolescence and young adulthood was linked with a 14% and 13% lower risk of breast cancer, respectively. In fact, those eating the most fiber in adolescence and young adulthood (25g per day) were 25% less likely to get breast cancer than those eating the least fiber (12g per day). *Pediatrics. 2016 Feb 1. pii: peds.2015-1226. (Farvid MS et al).*



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707

Conclusion: Summary of Mediterranean Diet Research

- **The Experts Speak: Definitions and Potential Health Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet.** Clinicians and researchers from around the world provide views on the Mediterranean Diet based on significant research that shows the link between a Mediterranean Diet and health benefits including mortality risk and lower incidence of cardiovascular disease. The scientists describe what constitutes a Mediterranean Diet in different regions of the world and reference the many studies conducted over decades. As lead scientist Antonia Trichopoulou, Professor Emeritus at the School of Medicine, University of Athens, Greece and Vice President of the non-profit Hellenic Health Foundation, writes, “Collectively, these studies have indicated convincing inverse associations with overall mortality and with the incidence of coronary heart disease and thrombotic stroke, compelling inverse associations with incidence of cancer overall (including, possibly, incidence of breast and colorectal cancer), likely inverse association with the incidence of adult-onset diabetes mellitus and possibly with the incidence of hip fractures. There have also been randomized trials supporting a beneficial role of the Mediterranean diet on the incidence of cardiovascular events and of survival from coronary heart disease.” *BMC Medicine 2014, 12:112*



International Pasta Organisation

Contact: Kyle Potvin, kpotvin@splashllc.com, +1 603-893-1707