

MEDITERRANEAN DIET SCORE TOOL

A Mediterranean dietary pattern ('Med diet') is typically one based on whole or minimally processed foods. It's **rich in protective foods** (fruits, vegetables, legumes, wholegrains, fish and olive oil) and **low in adverse dietary factors** (fast food, sugar-sweetened beverages, refined grain products and processed or energy-dense foods) with moderate red meat and alcohol intake.

Evidence shows **overall dietary pattern** (reflected in TOTAL SCORE) as well as **individual components** reflect risk; a higher score is associated with lower risk of CVD and all-cause mortality (BMJ 2008;337:a1344). During rehabilitation patient scores should ideally rise in response to dietary advice and support.

This tool can be used by health professionals with appropriate nutritional knowledge and competencies, such as Registered Dietitians (NICE, 2007, 2013). It can be used as both an *audit tool* and *as part of a dietary assessment* at baseline, end of programme and 1 year follow-up, along with assessment and advice for weight management, salt intake and eating behaviours. For information on complete requirements for dietary assessments and advice, please refer to the latest NICE/Joint British Societies guidelines (BACPR, 2012. The BACPR Standards and Core Components for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation, 2nd Ed.).

| | Question | Yes | No | Nutritional issue to discuss in response |
|---|--|-----|----|---|
| 1. | Is olive oil the main culinary fat used? | | | Choosing Healthier Fats Olive oil is high in monounsaturated fat. Using unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats in cooking and preparing food is advisable. |
| 2. | Are ≥ 4 tablespoons of olive oil used each day? | | | Healthy fats are better than very low fat Med diet is more beneficial than a very low fat diet in prevention of CVD. So replacing saturated with unsaturated fat is better than replacing it with carbohydrates or protein. |
| 3. | Are ≥ 2 servings (of 200g each) of vegetables eaten each day? | | | Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables Eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables every day helps ensure adequate intake of many vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and fibre. Studies have shown that eating plenty of these foods is protective for CVD and cancer. |
| 4. | Are ≥ 3 servings of fruit (of 80g each) eaten each day? | | | |
| 5. | Is < 1 serving (100-150g) of red meat/ hamburgers/ other meat products eaten each day? | | | Choose lean meats and consider cooking methods Red and processed meats are high in saturated fat, can be high in salt and are best replaced with white meat or fish or vegetarian sources of protein. Grill or roast without fat, casserole or stir fry. |
| 6. | Is < 1 serving (12g) of butter, margarine or cream eaten each day? | | | Keep saturated fat low These foods are high in saturated fat which can increase your blood cholesterol level. Choose plant-based or reduced-fat alternatives. |
| 7. | Is < 1 serving (330ml) of sweet or sugar sweetened carbonated beverages consumed each day? | | | Excessive consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages can worsen many risk factors for CVD: keep consumption to < 1/day. |
| 8. | Are ≥ 3 glasses (of 125ml) of wine consumed each week? | | | Moderate alcohol intake with meals While this does have some protective effect but there is no evidence that non-drinkers should take up drinking alcohol. |
| 9. | Are ≥ 3 servings (of 150g) of legumes consumed each week? | | | Include soluble fibre These foods are high in soluble fibre and other useful nutrients. Regular consumption is advisable for raised cholesterol. |
| 10. | Are ≥ 3 servings of fish (100-150g) or seafood (200g) eaten each week? | | | Eat more oily and white fish Oily fish is an excellent source of essential omega-3 fats. White fish is very low in saturated fat. |
| 11. | Is < 3 servings of commercial sweets/pastries eaten each week? | | | Eat less processed food These foods are usually high in saturated fat, salt or sugar and often contain trans fats. Replacing these with healthy snacks such as fruit or unsalted nuts is beneficial. |
| 12. | Is ≥ 1 serving (of 30g) of nuts consumed each week? | | | Snack on modest servings of unsalted nuts Nuts are rich in unsaturated fat, phytosterols, fibre, vitamin E and iron, e.g. walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts |
| 13. | Is chicken, turkey or rabbit routinely eaten instead of veal, pork, hamburger or sausage? | | | 'White meat' choices are lower in saturated fat. Remove the skin and consider your cooking method. |
| 14. | Are pasta, vegetable or rice dishes flavoured with garlic, tomato, leek or onion eaten ≥ twice a week? | | | Using a tomato and garlic or onion or leek-based sauce regularly is a key feature of the Med diet. |
| TOTAL SCORE (total no. of 'yes' answers) | | | | |