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## Food, the Environment and Health, Ecnutrition, Paleolithic Nutrition

### **“The Mediterranean-style diet” - is it ideal for the modern world?**

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The Mediterranean diet is a non-strict vegetarian diet rich in oleic acid, omega-3 fatty acids, fibre, B-group vitamins and various antioxidants but low in saturated and polyunsaturated fats. Observational and randomized interventional studies have shown that this diet is associated with a low risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) and scientists now agree that the Mediterranean-style diet should be the preferred dietary program in the prevention of CHD.

The definition of the Mediterranean-style diet varies according to the nationality of the authors and to the particular Mediterranean area that is considered. For instance, the Greek version of the Mediterranean diet is dominated by the consumption of olive oil and by a high consumption of vegetables and fruits. Since antioxidants are common in these foods, an antioxidant action may provide a plausible explanation for the apparent benefits of that diet. According to another version, however, the Mediterranean diet is a non-strict vegetarian diet rich in oleic acid, omega-3 fatty acids, fibres, vitamins of the B group and various antioxidants but low in saturated and polyunsaturated fat. With that wider definition, the expected benefits for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases go far beyond an antioxidant effect and include lipid and blood pressure lowering effects, anti-inflammatory effects, the prevention of arterial plaque rupture and thrombosis, as well as protection against malignant ventricular arrhythmias and heart failure.