

# **“Nutrition Essentials for Seniors”**

## **by Richard B. Goldberg, PhD, Holistic Nutrition**

### **Key Notes and Scientific Journal Citations**

August 3, 2019, Monteville Community, 552 Bean Creek Road, Scotts Valley, CA

#### **Dr. Fredrick John Stare**

Dr. Fredrick John Stare (April 11, 1910 – April 4, 2002) was an American nutritionist regarded as one of the country's most influential teachers of nutrition.

As an adviser to the US government, Stare rejected the idea that 'the American diet' was harmful; stating for example that Coca-Cola was "a healthy between-meals snack" and that eating even great amounts of sugar would not cause health problems. He was also a leading campaigner for the fluoridation, which his critics suggested was part and parcel of his endorsement of sugar.

#### **Artificial Sweeteners and Toxic Side Effects**

If your goal is to reduce your caloric intake and to lose weight, artificial sweeteners are not the way to go. We see many varieties of these so called “sugar substitutes” on the grocery store shelf. Most common are sucralose (Splenda), aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal, Sugar Twin) and saccharin (Sweet 'N Low).

Many consumers report headaches, dizziness, rashes, bloating, nausea, diarrhea, and digestive problems after ingesting artificial sweeteners. These side effects could build up over time and cause serious long-term diseases with regular consumption of these processed sugars.

#### **Adelle Davis**

Adelle Davis was an American author and nutritionist, considered "the most famous nutritionist in the early to mid-20th century."

She was as an advocate for improved health through better nutrition.

Her books were aimed at educating readers. She preached the benefits of whole grains and breads, fresh vegetables, vitamin supplements, limits on sugar, and avoidance of packaged and processed foods.

Davis believed many of America's dietary problems were due to most doctors not being well informed about nutrition. She believed few medical schools offered nutrition courses and physicians had little time to read the hundreds of medical journals published to keep up with new findings.

## **The Mediterranean diet**

The Mediterranean diet is a primarily plant-based eating plan that includes daily intake of whole grains, olive oil, fruits, vegetables, beans and other legumes, nuts, herbs, and spices.

Research supports the use of the Mediterranean diet as a healthy eating pattern for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, increasing lifespan, and healthy aging.

### ***U.S. News Best Diet Rankings***

A panel of health experts evaluated 41 different diets. The results are a **Mediterranean Diet ranked:**

- #1 in Best Diets Overall
- #1 in Best Diabetes Diet
- #1 in Best Diets for Healthy Eating
- #1 in Best Heart-Healthy Diets
- #1 in Best Plant-Based Diets
- #1 in Easiest Diets to Follow

## **Mediterranean Diet Linked with Healthy Aging**

When it comes to aging healthfully, no eating pattern quite stacks up to the Mediterranean diet. In this study, researchers analyzed the eating patterns of more than 3,000 middle-aged French adults who were free of chronic disease and monitored their health over the next 15 years. Those most closely following a Mediterranean diet in middle age were significantly more likely to age healthfully, meaning that they were free of chronic disease, depression and pain, were able to live independently.

The Journals of Gerontology: Series A. 2018 Mar 2;73(3):347-354. (Assmann KE et al.)

## **Mediterranean 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. Those most closely following the Mediterranean diet were 54% less likely to develop Alzheimer's dementia (more than any other diet group).

Alzheimer's and Dementia. 2015 Feb

## **Mediterranean Diet Associated with Healthy Aging**

A 2013 study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine demonstrates that eating a Mediterranean Diet is associated with greater health and well-being in older age. Those who had adhered to a Mediterranean Diet in middle age were about 40% more likely to live past 70 and to have avoided 11 chronic diseases measured in the study including many cancers, type 2 diabetes, and Parkinson's disease. Those who most closely followed a Mediterranean Diet also were more likely to age without physical disabilities, signs of cognitive impairment, or mental health problems.

## **Women who followed a Mediterranean-type eating pattern were 46% more likely to age healthfully**

Nurses' Health Study following 10,670 women ages 57-61 observed the effect of dietary patterns on aging. Healthy aging was defined as living to 70 years or more, and having no chronic diseases (e.g., type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, lung disease, Parkinson's disease, cancer) or major declines in mental health, cognition, and physical function. The study found that the women who followed a Mediterranean-type eating pattern were 46% more likely to age healthfully.

## **High Fat Mediterranean Diet Good for Weight Loss and Waistline**

High fat Mediterranean style diets are actually a helpful tool for weight loss. The Mediterranean diet groups had significantly smaller increases in their waistline compared to the low fat control group. Similarly, the Mediterranean diet with olive oil group lost significantly more weight than the low fat group, at nearly 1 pound more.

The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology. 2019 May

## **Mediterranean Diet Linked with Lower Risk of Parkinson's Disease**

Parkinson's disease is a disorder of the nervous system that can cause stiffness and tremors, and make movement difficult. In a study of 1,731 elderly adults, those most closely following a Mediterranean Diet had a 21% lower probability of showing early signs of Parkinson's Disease (prodromal Parkinson's Disease) than those not following a Mediterranean diet.

Movement Disorders. 2019 Jan

## **Mediterranean Diet Linked with Prolonged Survival in Elderly**

The Mediterranean Diet is well known for its links with longevity, but researchers wonder if this protective effect might apply to an elderly population as well. In a study of 5,200 older adults in Italy (ages 65+), researchers found that those most closely following a Mediterranean diet were significantly less likely to die over the 8-year study period. In fact, each 1-point increase in the Mediterranean Diet Score (0-9 point scale) was linked with a 4-7% lower risk of death from all causes over the 8 years.

British Journal of Nutrition. 2018 Aug 30

## **Mediterranean Diet Linked with 51% Lower Arthritis Risk in Men**

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that can cause painful swelling of the joints.

Men who most closely followed a Mediterranean diet had a 51% lower risk of rheumatoid arthritis.

Arthritis Research & Therapy. 2018 Aug 9

## **Mediterranean Diet and Lower Risk of Peripheral Artery Disease**

Researchers reviewed data that followed about 7,500 adults aged 55 to 80 who had a high risk of developing heart disease. The participants following the Mediterranean diet experienced the least amount of peripheral artery disease (PAD- which deposits plaque in the arteries of the legs, restricting blood flow, and can cause pain during walking.)

JAMA. 2014

## **Mediterranean Diet Linked with Healthier Bones and Muscles after Menopause**

Women lose bone mass during menopause, so strategies to prevent osteoporosis in this population are of utmost importance. Most closely following a Mediterranean diet was linked with better muscle mass and greater spine bone mineral density than those not eating Mediterranean foods like olive oil, fruits, vegetables, and grains.

The Endocrine Society Annual Meeting. Chicago, Illinois. 2018 Mar 20

## **Mediterranean Diet Helps Prevent Cardiovascular Disease**

A landmark clinical trial of nearly 7,500 people reveals that the Mediterranean Diet may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by up to 30 percent and may also reduce the risk for stroke. The study's results were so clear that researchers halted the study earlier than planned because it was deemed unethical to prevent the control group from switching to a Mediterranean Diet.

The New England Journal of Medicine. 2013

## **Secrets of Healthy Aging**

Advice from one of the oldest people in history:

Jeanne Calment drank port wine and smoked cigarettes until she was 119. But she credited her longevity to laughing a lot and not getting stressed out.

## **Nuts Linked with Brain Health in Older Adults**

Nuts and seeds contain healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. In this longitudinal study conducted over a 10-year period, researchers evaluated the overall diet, nut intake, and brain function of over 4,000 Chinese people aged 55+. . This study indicates that a long-term diet rich in nuts may have a protective effect against age-related cognitive decline.

Journal of Nutrition, Health, and Aging. 2019

## **Protein from Nuts and Seeds Linked with Less Death from Heart Disease than Protein from Meat**

To see how different protein sources relate to heart disease deaths, researchers carefully analyzed the diets of 81,337 men and women. Those getting more protein from nuts and seeds were significantly less likely to die from heart disease than those not getting as much protein from nuts and seeds. On the other hand, those getting more protein from animal sources had a higher risk of dying from heart disease.

International Journal of Epidemiology. 2018 Apr 2

## **Fruits and Vegetables Linked with Healthy Brain Function Later in Life**

Fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of healthy traditional diets around the globe. In this study, researchers analyzed the fruit and vegetable intake of 27,842 men and monitored their brain health 20 years later. Not surprisingly, those eating more vegetables, fruit, and fruit juice were significantly less likely to have poor late-life subjective cognitive function, indicating healthier brain function.

Neurology. 2018 Nov 21

## **Improving Diet Could Save US Billions in Healthcare Costs**

Researchers analyzed the relationship between diet, health problems, and healthcare spending. They found that if Americans were to make their diets even 20% more Mediterranean, the US would save \$25.7 billion dollars per year.

If Americans' diets were to align an impressive 80% with the Mediterranean diet, the US could save \$135 billion or \$66.9 billion per year, respectively.

Presentation at the American Society for Nutrition Scientific Sessions and Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. June 11, 2018

## **Olive Oil May Be Protective Against Strokes**

Older people who consume plenty of olive oil may reduce their risk of stroke by as much as 41%. That's the conclusion of researchers from the University of Bordeaux, who followed more than 7,000 people over the age of 65.

Neurology. June 15, 2011

## **Olive Oil and Fruit Linked with Less Depression in Elderly**

Study after study links a healthy body with a healthy mind, especially in aging populations. To see if diet relates to depressive symptoms, researchers evaluated the eating habits and mental health of nearly 400 Italian adults in their 90s. Those consuming more olive oil and fruit were significantly less likely to have depression than those not getting much olive oil or fruit, though the relationship between higher Mediterranean diet scores and lower risks of depression was not strong enough to be statistically significant.

Journal of Nutrition, Health, & Aging. 2018 May

## **Cruciferous Veggies Linked with Less Plaque Build Up in Arteries**

In a study of more than 900 older women (ages 70+), those consuming 3 or more servings of vegetables each day had lower levels of plaque in their arteries (as measured by CCA-IMT). When looking at the different types of vegetables, cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, and bok choy) had the strongest relationship.

Journal of the American Heart Association. 2018 Apr 4

## **Walk**

Aim for 30 minutes every day. If that's too much, break it up into shorter strolls. Regular exercise -- especially if you do it briskly enough to feel a little breathless -- delivers huge health benefits. It helps keep brain cells healthy by delivering more blood and oxygen. In fact, research suggests aerobic exercise may delay or improve symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

It also helps:

- Control your weight
- Boost your mood
- Keep bones and muscles strong
- Helps you sleep better
- Makes you less likely to get heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure.

## **Whole Grains Linked with Longer Lives**

From Sardinia, Italy, to Nicoya, Costa Rica some of the longest-lived people in the world enjoy a diet filled with whole grains. To better understand this relationship, researchers analyzed data from 19 cohort studies encompassing more than one million participants. They found that each one-ounce daily serving of whole grains was associated with a 14% lower risk of death from heart disease, a 3% lower risk of death from cancer, and a 9% lower risk of total mortality.

European Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 2018 Jan

## **Leafy Greens Can Keep Your Brain Young**

It is no secret that green vegetables are some of the healthiest foods for our bodies, but new research shows that they are also good for our brains. Researchers in Chicago and Boston analyzed the eating patterns and cognitive abilities of over 950 older adults for an average of five years. The scientists found a significant decrease in the rate of cognitive decline for people who ate more green leafy vegetables (like spinach, kale, collards, and mustard greens). In fact, people who ate just one to two servings of leafy greens per day had the cognitive ability of a person 11 years younger than those who ate none.

Neurology. 2017 Dec 20

## **Study Shows Vegetarian Diet Leads to Longer Life**

A study conducted as part of the Adventist Health Study 2 found that adhering to a vegetarian diet led to lower all-cause mortality. The study conducted by scientists from Loma Linda University in California analyzed information collected from a group of Seventh Day Adventists taking part in a cohort study. They found that not only is a vegetarian diet associated with lower all-cause mortality but also lower cardiovascular, renal, and endocrine mortality.

JAMA internal Medicine. 2013

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JAMA internal Medicine. 2013

## **Vegetarian Diets May Lower Blood Pressure**

Researchers in Japan and the United States reviewed data from over 21,000 people to investigate the association between vegetarian diets and blood pressure. After analyzing 32 observational studies and 7 controlled trials published between 1900 and 2013, the scientists found that eating a vegetarian diet is associated with a significant reduction in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure compared with diets that include meat.

JAMA Internal Medicine. 2014 April



## **Vegetarian Diet and Heart Health**

A group of scientists in England conducted a study that looked at 44,000 people enrolled in a study in England and Scotland. They measured factors that are related to heart health and ischemic heart disease. After comparing vegetarians to non-vegetarians they found that vegetarians were 32% less likely to develop ischemic heart disease.

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 2013

## **Beans, Grains, and Fiber Linked with Lower Risk of Breast Cancer**

Those eating the most fiber (more than 26.5 grams per day) were 25% less likely to have breast cancer than those eating less than 15.2 grams of fiber per day. Similarly, those eating the most beans (more than 3.9 oz. per day) and grains (more than 13.8 oz. per day, of both whole and refined grains) were 19% and 18% less likely to have breast cancer, respectively, than those eating the least amount of beans and grains.

Cancer Medicine. 2018 Mar 23

## **Fiber Linked with Healthy Aging**

The researchers defined successful aging as absence of disability, depression, cognitive problems, respiratory problems, or chronic disease (like heart disease or cancer). Adults eating the most total fiber were significantly more likely to age successfully. Additionally, those eating the most cereal fiber (the type of fiber in whole grains) were 78% more likely to age successfully than those eating the least, and those eating the most fruit fiber were 64-81% more likely to age successfully.

The Journals of Gerontology: Series A, Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences. 2016 Jun