

# The benefits of the mediterranean-style diet: lowering the type 2 diabetes treatment

Alexandru BURLACU, MD,  
Emergency University Hospital, Bucharest, Romania

**I**talian researchers from Naples randomized 215 overweight patients with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes to either a Mediterranean-style diet or a low-fat diet. The two diets are recommended for weight loss in overweight and obese people with type 2 diabetes.

The main issues of Mediterranean type diet include high olive oil consumption, high consumption of legumes, high consumption of unrefined cereals, of fruits, of vegetables, moderate consumption of dairy products (mostly as cheese and yogurt), moderate to high consumption of fish, low consumption of meat and meat products, and moderate wine consumption. Total fat in this diet is 25-35% of calories, with saturated fat at 8% or less of calories; less than 50% of calories are from carbohydrates.

The other type of diet was low-fat diet – as the name implies – that consists of little fat (less than 30% of calories from fat), especially saturated fat and cholesterol, which is thought to

lead to increased blood cholesterol levels and heart disease risk.

The authors compared the effects of a Mediterranean-style diet or a low-fat diet on the need for antihyperglycemic drug therapy in patients with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes.

The main objective was the time to the beginning of antihyperglycemic drug therapy, and the secondary outcomes were: „changes in weight, glycemic control, and coronary risk factors”.

After 4 years of follow-up, 44% of patients in the Mediterranean-style diet group and 70% in the low-fat diet group required treatment ( $P < 0.001$ ). The Mediterranean diet group also had a larger increase in insulin sensitivity, greater weight loss, and reduced coronary risk factors.

In conclusion, the Mediterranean-style diet may be better than the low-fat diet for helping patients with type 2 diabetes delay treatment with antihyperglycemic drugs. □

---

*Comment on a paper:*

Esposito K, Maiorino MI, Ciotola M et al – Effects of a Mediterranean-Style Diet on the Need for Antihyperglycemic Drug Therapy in Patients With Newly Diagnosed Type 2 Diabetes. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2009; 151,5:306-314