



Build & Maintain a Healthy Gut Microbiome with the Mediterranean Diet

**A Practical Guide to Building a
Healthy & Sustainable Diet for Life**



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Hi, I'm Dr. Brown,
I'm so happy you're here!

As a gut-focused naturopathic doctor, my mission is to provide transformative, root-cause medicine that is personalized, practical, and science-backed. If you're looking to transform your gut health, eat the foods you love, and experience more comfort and ease in your body, you've come to the right place! This ebook is designed to kickstart your journey of building a healthy, sustainable (restriction-free) diet for optimal gut health and overall well-being.

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Medical Disclaimer

The information in this ebook is provided as an information resource only, and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information does not create any patient-physician relationship, and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment. Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions or for guidance for specific dietary changes.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET 101

A pattern of eating, not a diet.

As one of the most extensively studied diets on the planet, ***the Mediterranean diet provides an evidence-based framework for healthy eating that is practical, sustainable, and effective.*** My intention with this ebook is to introduce you to this diet and show you how you can integrate some of its key principles into your own life in order to build and maintain a healthy gut microbiome, improve mental health, and prevent disease.

Unlike a typical “diet,” the Mediterranean Diet doesn’t adhere to rigid dietary rules or emphasize strict eliminations or restrictions. Instead, it underscores the importance of ***patterns over perfection.***

While typical diets rely on discipline and the “all-or-nothing” mindset in order to work (which can only last for so long), the Mediterranean Diet is different. It doesn’t require perfection to produce meaningful results, ***it only requires a dedication to the process of building sustainable practices and shifting the overall pattern of your diet.***

This well-established pattern of eating is based on a few key dietary and lifestyle principles that overlap throughout the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea and have been shown to benefit health in various ways. Despite differences in cuisines throughout these countries, the Mediterranean diet universally emphasizes a plant-forward diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans and legumes. ***This rich diversity of plant foods is what makes the Mediterranean diet particularly beneficial for the gut microbiome,*** fostering a healthy and balanced microbial community.

Building and maintaining a well-balanced gut microbiome is crucial for physical and mental health. ***An optimally functioning digestive system and healthy microbiome provides the foundation for overall health,*** influencing heart health, the immune system, inflammation, metabolism, blood sugar regulation, chronic disease risk, mood and mental health, cognitive function and skin health.

Eating in alignment with the Mediterranean Diet is a powerful way to influence your gut health and transform the trajectory of your health - one meal at a time.

Let’s get started!



THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Basic Principles

In order to sustainably implement healthy eating habits, it's helpful to zoom out and understand that **no single food or meal will make or break your health**. Instead, it's the broad eating patterns we practice over time and our consistent effort to adhere to these basic principles that matter. Here is a list of these key principles that will build and maintain your health over time.

- ✔ Eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables
- ✔ Aim for 3 balanced meals per day (no skipped meals!)
- ✔ Include a protein + fat + fiber in every meal & snack
- ✔ Opt for plant-based proteins, eggs, lean meats & fish
- ✔ Replace refined grains with whole grains
- ✔ Use olive oil, herbs & spices liberally
- ✔ Eat nuts & seeds daily
- ✔ Select unsweetened, low fat & fermented dairy (if tolerated)
- ✔ Slow down while eating
- ✔ Make more meals at home

Limit refined sugar (white sugar, high-fructose corn syrup), refined carbohydrates (white flour/pasta/bread/rice/baked goods), excess salt, red meat (>3x per week), saturated fats, processed meats, soft drinks, deep fried foods & alcohol.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

The Foundations



Hydration

Drink ~2-3L of water per day +/- electrolytes.

Baseline Calculation:
weight (lbs) \times 0.5 = Oz of water per day

**factors such as exercise and caffeine intake not included in this calculation*



Fiber

Include a source of fiber in every meal & snack. Eat a minimum of 25g (females) and 38g (males) of fiber per day, and aim to include 30 *different* plants per week to support a healthy gut microbiome.



Protein

Include a source of protein in every meal & snack, including plant-based proteins. Daily target for optimization = weight (lbs)

\times 0.75-1g

**Depends on individual goals & health status*



Healthy Fats

Include a source of healthy fat in every meal.

Eat mostly plant-based fats & limit saturated fat intake.



Fermented Foods

Include a serving of fermented foods daily to provide a source of natural probiotics for the gut microbiome.



Meal Timing

Support stable blood sugar levels by eating regularly.

Avoid skipping meals & extended gaps between meals. Eat a balanced meal every ~3-4 hours



Meal composition

A balanced meal includes protein, a healthy fat, & a combination of different fiber sources (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans, legumes)



Mindful Eating

Minimize distractions while eating, chew your food thoroughly & eat slowly. Aim to take ~ 20 minutes to complete your meal. It helps to enjoy your meals with others :)



Patterns over Perfection

The goal is not 100% adherence to the "perfect diet." It's to improve the overall pattern of your diet through small, sustainable changes. No single meal can make or break your health, so focus on patterns over perfection!

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Daily Guidelines

Vegetables	5+ servings / day	<p>1 serving = ~ ½ cup (75-100g) raw vegetables or 1 cup leafy greens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim for a variety of colors & types• Frozen, fresh, roasted or raw• Seasonal & organic, when feasible• <i>Gut Tip:</i> Include at least one serving of leafy greens per day
Fruit	2-3 servings / day	<p>1 serving = 1 medium sized fruit (150g), 2 smaller sized fruits (150g total), 1.5 tbsp dried fruit (30g), or 1 cup of berries (~150g)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim for a variety of colors & types• Fresh, frozen, raw or cooked• Seasonal & organic, when feasible• <i>Gut Tip:</i> Include at least one serving of berries per day
Whole Grains	1-3 servings / day	<p>1 serving = ~ ½ cup cooked grains, 1 slice of whole grain bread, or ¼ cup granola (30g)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Gut tip:</i> Soak your whole grains overnight before cooking, buy whole grain bread (it's higher in protein too!)
Protein	3-4 servings / day	<p>1 serving = your daily target for optimization (see pg.6) ÷ by 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include 1 serving of protein in every meal• Requirements will increase if you rely on plant protein alone, have poor digestive function, are healing from an illness, are pregnant or building muscle.• <i>Gut Tip:</i> Combine animal protein with beans/legumes to increase fiber and protein.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Daily Guidelines

Fish	3 servings / week	<p>1 serving = 1 small can or 100g of cooked fish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canned, frozen, fresh• Opt for wild versus farmed. <p>Gut tip: Buy canned wild salmon and prep it like tuna!</p>
Dairy	Up to 3 servings / day, if tolerated	<p>1 serving = 1 cup milk, 100g yoghurt, 40g hard cheese/ feta, 120g ricotta</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unsweetened and low fat (to limit saturated fats)• Gut Tip: Opt for fermented dairy products like yoghurt, kefir and hard cheeses.
Nuts & Seeds	1 serving / day	<p>1 serving = ~ 1/4 cup (30g)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opt for raw and unsalted• Gut Tip: Sprinkle on your salads for added plant diversity and a source of healthy fats
Olive Oil	1-2 servings / day	<p>1 serving = 1 tbsp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select extra-virgin olive oil• Gut Tip: Replace butter with olive oil to limit saturated fats
Herbs & Spices	Use liberally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gut tip: add 1/2-1 tsp of cinnamon to your smoothie, oatmeal or yoghurt bowl, & sprinkle chopped herbs on your eggs, stews or macro bowls.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Shopping List

Use this categorized shopping list as guidance when creating your own weekly grocery list. Make sure to include at least one food from each category to help you create balanced, gut-supportive meals throughout the week, and refer to the 'Daily Guidelines' for practical tips. Remember that diversity is key, so aim to switch it up every few weeks (even if it is just the variety of apple that you're selecting!) A great way to ensure plant diversity is to aim to eat as much colour as possible - think about eating the rainbow! Select Organic produce when feasible, and use the [EWG Dirty Dozen](#) and [Clean Fifteen](#) list for more guidance. Lastly, remember that 100% adherence is not the goal! Start with small, sustainable changes and build from there.

Produce (fresh or frozen)

Leafy greens

- Spinach
- Arugula
- Kale
- Lacinato kale
- Mixed greens
- Bok choy
- Collard greens
- Swiss chard
- Mustard greens
- Watercress

Other Vegetables

Select a variety of colors each week!

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Brussel sprouts
- Bell peppers (red, yellow, green)
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Celery
- Cabbage
- Eggplant
- Endive

Starchy Vegetables

Select based on season

- Potatoes (Russet, red, white, yellow, purple, fingerling)
- Beets
- Parsnips
- Japanese sweet potatoes
- Purple sweet potato
- Yams (orange)
- Ube (purple yam)
- Squash (delica, pumpkin, acorn, spaghetti, butternut)
- Taro

- Fennel
- Green beans
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Lettuce (romaine, butter, iceberg)
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Sprouts (brocoli, pea, arugula, garlic)
- Tomatos
- Turnips
- Zucchini

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Shopping List

Produce (fresh or frozen)

Berries

Frozen is just as good!

- Acai berries
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Blackcurrants
- Huckleberries
- Haskap berries
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Saskatoon berries

Fresh or dried herbs

- Basil
- Bay leaves
- Cilantro
- Chamomile
- Chives
- Dill
- Fennel
- Lemongrass
- Lavender
- Oregano
- Peppermint
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Thyme

Other Fruits

Select based on season & try something new

- Apple (gala, honey crisp pink lady, ambrosia)
- Avocado
- Apricot
- Banana
- Cherries
- Coconut
- Cranberries
- Figs
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Kiwi
- Lemon
- Lime
- Mango
- Mandarin
- Melon
- Nectarine
- Orange
- Peach
- Pear
- Pineapple
- Plum
- Pomegranate
- Tangerine
- Watermelon

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Shopping List

Lean Protein (fresh, frozen, or canned)

Lean Meats & Eggs

- Organic nature raised or free range eggs
- Chicken or turkey breast
 - Whole, boneless and skinless
 - Ground, lean
 - Sausage (no nitrates or fillers)
- Venison
- Duck
- Lean cuts of beef or pork (up to 3x per week)

Seafood & Fish

- Wild Salmon
- Sardines
- Oysters
- Mackerel
- Mussels
- Cod
- Anchovies
- Herring
- Shrimp
- Scallops
- Haddock
- Halibut

Dairy / Non-dairy Products

- 0-2% unsweetened Greek yoghurt
- Unsweetened Skyr (like Siggi's)
- Low fat cottage cheese
- Unsweetened coconut yoghurt (like Yoggu)
- Unsweetened kefir (dairy or coconut)
- Organic, unsweetened soy milk, almond or coconut milk
- Cheese: brie, chevre, corvo, feta, haloumi, manchego, Parmigiano-Reggiano, pecorino & ricotta (grass-fed when possible)
- Organic, grass-fed and/or A2 milk & cream
- Lactose-free alternatives
- Goats feta

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Shopping List

Staples (Buy in Bulk)

Whole Grains

- Amaranth
- Brown Black or wild rice
- Brown rice or quinoa noodles
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur
- Millet
- Oats (rolled, steel cut)
- Quinoa
- Farro
- Barley
- Spelt pasta
- Whole grain bread, pasta, wraps, pita
- Sorghum
- Teff

Pantry Essentials

- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Avocado oil
- Coconut oil
- Olives
- Canned coconut milk
- Sauerkraut or kimchi
- Nutritional yeast
- Raw honey or maple syrup
- Avocado or olive oil-based mayonnaise
- Dijon or yellow mustard
- Better Than Bouillon Vegetable Base
- Soy sauce, Tamari or Coconut aminos
- Thai curry paste (red, yellow or green)
- Sriracha
- Cocoa powder
- Protein powder
- Stevia or monk fruit powder

Beans & Legumes

Canned or dry

- Black beans
- Butter beans
- Chickpeas
- Chickpea pasta
- Cannellini beans
- Edamame beans
- Great northern beans
- Lentils
- Navy Beans
- Peas
- Pinto beans
- Kidney beans
- Organic Tofu
- Organic Tempeh

Seeds

- Pumpkin seeds
- Flax seeds, ground
- Sesame seeds
- Tahini
- Poppy seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Chia seeds
- Hemp hearts

Nuts

- Almonds
- Brazil nuts
- Cashews
- Hazelnuts
- Macadamias
- Pecans
- Pine nuts
- Pistachios
- Walnuts
- Peanuts

Staple Spices

- Black peppercorns
- Sea salt
- Table salt
- Red pepper flakes
- Cumin, whole or ground
- Turmeric
- Cinnamon
- Ginger, fresh or dried
- Garlic & onion powder
- Paprika
- Italian seasoning
- Chili powder
- Curry powder

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET & GUT HEALTH

Shopping List

Beverages

- Filtered water
- Carbonated water, unsweetened
- Organic Green tea
- Ceremonial grade matcha powder
- Herbal teas (chamomile, peppermint, licorice, lavender, lemon balm, rooibos, etc.)
- Black tea (chai tea, earl grey, English breakfast, etc.)
- Organic Coffee
- Mud/WTR (coffee alternative)

Snacks & Sweet treats

- Apple with tahini & hemp hearts
- Medjool dates with tahini & sea salt
- Banana with peanut butter
- Chia seed pudding made with coconut milk & topped with berries
- Unsweetened greek yoghurt or coconut yoghurt with berries, nut butter & pumpkin seeds
- Rx Bar or Midday square
- Free-range pepperoni turkey meat sticks
- Trail mix (nuts, seeds, & dried fruit)
- Vegetables, seed crackers & hummus
- Hard boiled eggs & a peice of fruit
- Corn chips & hummus
- Dark chocolate (70% +)

Quick tips

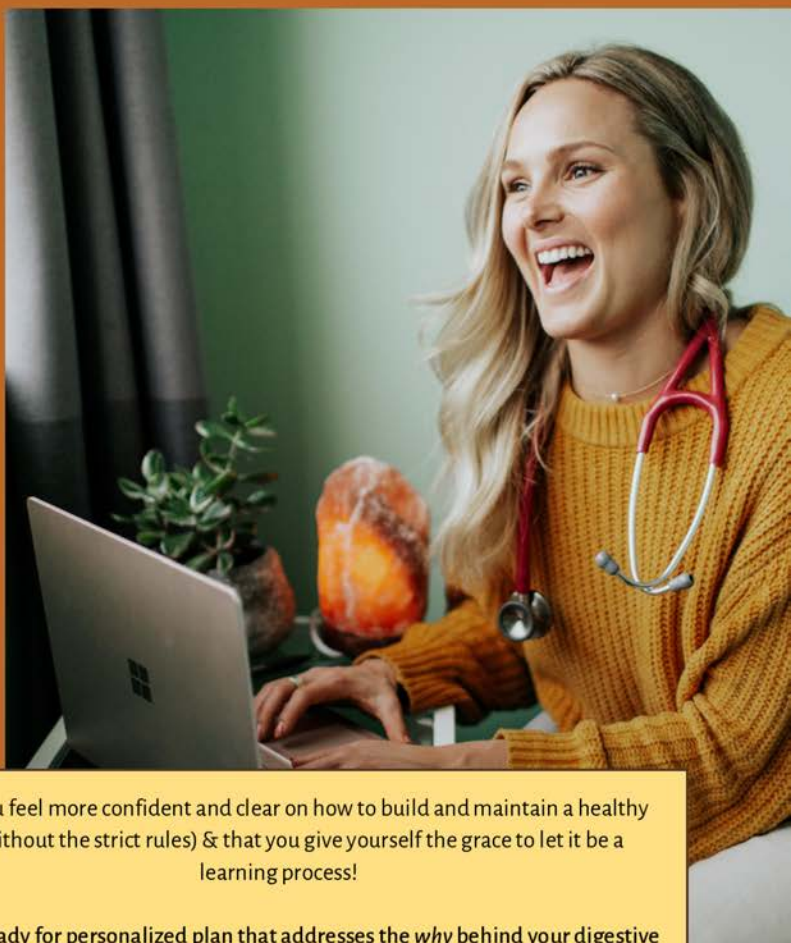
Plan the meals you want to make this week and create your grocery list based on the ingredients you need for each meal.

Choose your meals based on the Balanced Plate Method (a source of protein + a healthy fat + fiber) or by selecting a few go-to or new recipes online or in your favourite cookbook. It's helpful to find recipes with overlapping ingredients!

Batch prep some of the ingredients in advances to make meal prep efficient and easy throughout the week. Cook your proteins ahead of time, prepare a whole grain to toss in salads or add to dinner, rinse or cook beans to use throughout the week, wash your greens and roast some veggies. Your future self will thank you!



Thank you so much for being here.



I hope you feel more confident and clear on how to build and maintain a healthy diet (without the strict rules) & that you give yourself the grace to let it be a learning process!

If you're ready for personalized plan that addresses the *why* behind your digestive symptoms & gives you the practical tools to heal your gut and optimize your health, let's chat!

Book a Discovery Call

**Available to BC residents only*