



Reducing Joint Pain Through a Healthy Diet

Eating well is important for keeping your body and mind healthy. Osteoarthritis (OA) is a condition where your joints hurt, and there's no cure for it right now. Eating a healthy diet and losing weight can help manage OA symptoms like pain, tiredness, and stiffness. Healthy nutrition can also make your quality of life better and help you move around more easily. Many people with OA want to know what foods they should eat or avoid to make their symptoms better.¹

What does the research say?

The research around improving OA symptoms through specific foods and diets is weak and unclear. Yet, some research shows that following a Mediterranean diet can help make your OA symptoms better, reduce inflammation in your body, and help you manage your weight.² Regularly following this diet is important to maximize these benefits.

People with OA prefer learning about foods they should eat or avoid to make their symptoms better.¹



How does a Mediterranean diet help?

Following a Mediterranean diet can:²

- Help make your OA symptoms better
- Reduce inflammation in your body
- Help you manage your weight

Main Ingredients of a Mediterranean Diet³

INCREASED FOCUS	 <p>Vegetables</p>	 <p>Fruits</p>	 <p>Nuts</p>	 <p>Legumes</p>	 <p>Whole Grains</p>	 <p>Healthy Fats</p>
ALSO INCLUDES	 <p>Fish and Seafood</p>	 <p>Poultry</p>	 <p>Eggs</p>	 <p>Dairy</p>	 <p>Herbs and Spices</p>	 <p>Water</p>

Lifestyle Factors⁴

- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid smoking or using tobacco products.
- Prepare and enjoy meals with family and friends.
- Cook at home more often than you eat out.
- Eat locally sourced foods whenever possible.
- Change certain food items you enjoy to include ingredients of a Mediterranean diet. *Ex: Choose pizza toppings such as vegetables and no meat.*

References

1. Buck. AN, et al. American Society for Nutrition. 2022.
2. Buck. AN, et al. Nutrients. 2023; 15(3050).
3. USDA & US DHHS. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 2020.
4. Cleveland Clinic. Mediterranean Diet. 2022.

Visit oaction.unc.edu/JOINTPAIN for more resources on The Weight & Osteoarthritis Connection.

This resource was created by the OAAA Weight Management task group

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