

Arthritis | Mediterranean Diet Reduces Pain and Joint Swelling Associated with Arthritis

Arthritis

Opting for a Mediterranean diet has demonstrated to help with a number of serious health conditions, including breast cancer, stomach cancer, and heart disease. Research has demonstrated that cancers and heart disease are often contributed to by the presence of inflammation in the body. Since arthritis, and especially rheumatoid arthritis, is directly affected by the presence of inflammation, switching to the Mediterranean diet has also demonstrated to reduce inflammation and reduce pain and stiffness associated with arthritis.



How'd They Do That?

Studying active adults living with rheumatoid arthritis for at least 2 years, researchers were interested to see the effects of the Mediterranean diet over the course of three months of study.

Using a control group who followed their regular diets, researchers provided sample meals, recipes, and educational nutrition programs to the group following the Mediterranean diet. In addition, the participants in the Mediterranean diet group were also provided foods, such as olive oils and frozen vegetables, which would make it easier to follow the prescribed Mediterranean diet plan.

Measuring the effects on rheumatoid arthritis, such as pain scores, number of swollen joints, and amount of time for stiffness to subside, researchers assessed progress at three weeks, six weeks and at the end of the study. To add validity to the study, researchers also kept detailed records on each patient; specifically recording the amount of NSAIDs taken, physical strength, and blood tests to assess inflammation levels.

What Does This Mean For Me?

At the conclusion of the study, researchers found those following the Mediterranean diet experienced and reported lower levels of pain and also reported that morning stiffness subsided much quicker than before starting the diet. Patients in the control group reported a slight increase in arthritic pain levels over the course of this study.

Researchers were able to demonstrate that switching to a plant-based Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and polyphenols, significantly reduces the pain and damaging effects of diseases associated with inflammation, including arthritis.

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