

LIVE LONGER

the Mediterranean way

Adding to the long list of health benefits of the Mediterranean diet is a recent study that found that strong adherence to the diet is associated with a longer life span in disease-free, middle-aged women. Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard University examined the telomere length and dietary habits of 4,676 women from the Nurses' Health Study. While past studies have associated the Mediterranean diet with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and mortality, the new study published in the journal *BMJ* is particularly interesting because it found that participants who followed the Mediterranean diet had longer telomeres than those who didn't adhere to the diet. The Mediterranean diet consists of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes and fish – and, to a lesser extent, dairy, meat and poultry – along with a regular, moderate intake of red wine with meals. Telomeres are an important biomarker of aging – longer telomere lengths indicate a longer life span while short telomere lengths indicate a shorter life span. The findings are just another reason to load your plate up with lots of fresh produce, lean proteins and healthy fats!

BENEFIT:

Spring onions are rich in the flavonoid quercetin, which may help prevent heart attack and stroke by hindering plaque accumulation in the arteries.

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Cold-water fish, a staple of the Mediterranean diet, is an excellent source of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.