

MODULE 2: QUALITY, VARIETY AND QUANTITY: THE THREE MUSKETEERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET (Part 1)



«Quality, variety and quantity: the three musketeers of the Mediterranean Diet» (Part 1)

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To promote healthy nutrition, it is important to consolidate the foundation on which healthier, more sustainable and more conscious eating habits can be built. For this reason, our journey into nutrition continues with a brief presentation on the history of the Mediterranean Diet, the introduction of the food pyramid and the pillars of good nutrition, namely "quality, variety and quantity".



Core concept: "The Mediterranean Diet as an example of a healthy lifestyle"

The Mediterranean Diet is a dietary pattern inspired by the habits and customs of the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, developed over centuries. The term "Mediterranean Diet" was coined in the second half of the 1900's by the American physiologist Ancel Keys in his book "How to Eat Well and Stay Well-the Mediterranean Way". Within the framework of the "Seven Countries Study", the researcher examined the relationship between lifestyle and cardiovascular diseases in populations from seven different countries and cultures and showed that a diet such as the Mediterranean Diet, which is rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains and olive oil, proves to be a preventive tool against the development of such diseases.

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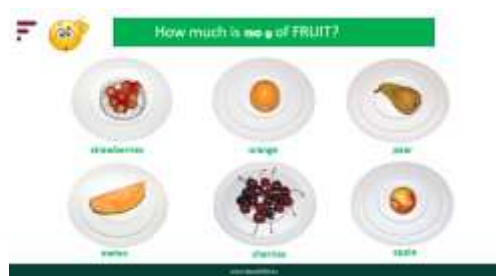
Core concept: "The Mediterranean Diet pyramid is a useful tool to show us quantities and frequencies of food consumption."

The graphic form of the pyramid expresses in a simple and immediate way the concept that all foods belonging to the 5 food groups should be present in our diet in varying amounts and frequencies. The foods at the base of the pyramid, and therefore the foundation of a healthy diet, are fruits, vegetables, and grains, and should be consumed in abundant quantities and frequencies. As we move up the pyramid, the quantity and frequency of foods decrease until we reach the top, which is represented by junk food and ultra-processed foods, whose consumptions are recommended on a sporadic basis. The Mediterranean Diet is not only a diet, but a lifestyle. It is characterized by the consumption of seasonal and high-quality foods, accompanied by the intake of water and the presence of an adequate level of physical activity.



This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding vegetables consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.

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This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding fruit consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.



This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding pasta/bread consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.



This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding olive oil/nuts consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.

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This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding milk/yogurt/cheese consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.



This slide is included to provide visual clues to the portions recommended by the CREA "Healthy Eating Guidelines" for the age groups 11-14/15-17 regarding meat/fish/legumes consumption, thus facilitating comparison with the students' regular intake. During the presentation of the slide, it is suggested to ask students if the portions are visually more or less in line with what they consume on a daily basis.



Core concept: "It is recommended to divide daily energy into 5 meals"

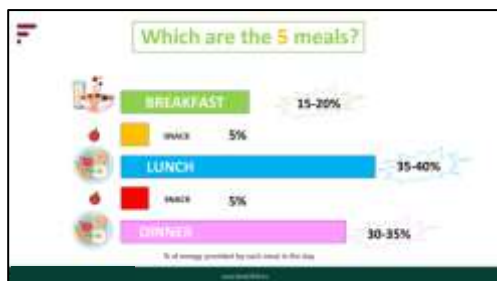
Energy from nutrients in food should be divided into 5 daily meals: breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and dinner.

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Core concept: "The 5 meals allow to meet nutritional needs, regulate hunger and promote dietary variability"

Dividing into 5 meals allows the recommended amounts and frequency of consumption of different foods to be met, thus promoting greater dietary variability and hunger regulation throughout the day. For example, having snacks throughout the day provides excellent opportunities to consume fresh fruit, dried fruit, or yogurt.



Core concept: "Daily energy needs to be balanced within the 5 meals"

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are the three main meals of the day, to which are added the small, but always essential, energy refills represented by snacks. Skipping breakfast, for example, would take away the 15 to 20% of energy that is needed to get through the day and would increase the difficulty in meeting the daily requirements of macro and micronutrients.



To facilitate the acquisition and consolidation of information, a short activity to be carried out in small groups has been included (Appendix 3). The purpose of the activity is to identify points in "Marco's Day" that could be improved. At the end of the activity, students share and discuss their answers.

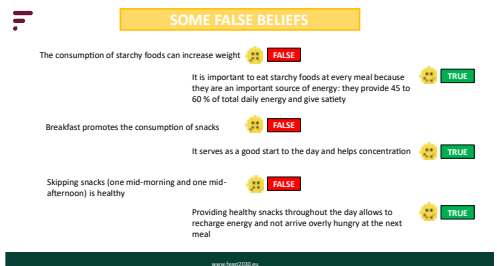
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Slide related to Appendix 3 that can be projected in class.



The slide shows in red where improvements can be made through food substitutions and integrations. It is recommended to stimulate discussion with students by asking them about possible alternatives and encourage reflection on how close this food day example is to their own.



This slide shows some of the false beliefs that emerged during the initial data collection phase associated with the explanation of the correct answer. This moment was useful for restructuring beliefs and fostering new knowledge.

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