



Quarterly Newsletter

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future: My Next Steps With VCRC

By Meghan Velasquez

It is with both excitement and nostalgia that I am announcing my transition into a new role as Executive Director of Valley Caregiver Resource Center. Serving as the OASIS Program Manager has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, and I am deeply thankful for the relationships and community we have built together over the past two and half years. We have shared countless moments of compassion, care, and community and it has been a privilege to work alongside such dedicated families and to witness the strength, resilience, and warmth of the seniors we serve.

To the caregivers, your dedication and compassion have inspired me every day. Your tireless commitment to the family members in your care is a testament to the strength of you all. To our seniors, it has been an honor to work alongside you and support your journey. I will always treasure the laughter, joy, and memories we've created together in this program. Each of you holds a special place in my heart.

This new chapter is an exciting opportunity for growth, and I look forward to continuing to support our mission in this new capacity. While my role may change, my commitment to all of you remains unwavering. You have taught me the true meaning of service, and I am deeply grateful for the trust and support you have all shown me.

Thank you for being an integral part of my journey. I look forward to working with you in new ways as we continue to create a nurturing environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

Thank you for your trust, support, and the lasting memories.

WHO WE ARE

We are an innovative day program for individuals in early to mid stages of Alzheimer's disease and/or other related dementias.

STAFF

Program Manager:

Meghan Velasquez

Site Coordinator:

Nora Munoz

Program Assistants:

Teresa Flores-Lopez, Maria Garcia, Dolores Perez

CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Manager:
Meghan Velasquez

Phone Number:
(559)224-9121

Email:
mvelasquez@valleycrc.org

A program of

valley
CAREGIVER
RESOURCE CENTER

Upcoming Education Classes

If you are interested in attending any of our classes please contact Charity Tokash to register (559) 224-9154 or ctokash@valleycrc.org

- **Help for Individuals Who Wander**
Wednesday
November 6, 2024
- **Caregiving Through the Holidays**
Friday
November 8, 2024
- **Breaking Free From the 'Yes Syndrome'**
Thursday
November 14, 2024
- **Strengthening Family Caregiver Relationships**
Thursday
December 5, 2024

**REGISTRATION
IS
REQUIRED!**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From Harvard Medical School comes their monthly eight-page newsletter “Harvard Heart Letter” with timely articles on everything from “New pacemaker options” to “More evidence links flu infection to heart attack risk.” An article which is coming is called “A new non-drug treatment for high blood pressure” which sounds exciting. Charts and photos (black and white and color) run throughout the newsletter to make understanding easier. For subscription information write to: Harvard Health Publishing, P. O. Box 9308, Big Sandy, TX 75755-9308 or look online at www.health.harvard.edu/customer-service. Subscriptions are \$48 per year.

Healthy Diets for Our Brains

By Lynne Rayner

“As we’re living longer and our population is aging, more people are concerned with protecting cognition,” says dietician Maxine Smith, RDN, LD, and although there’s “no magic pill---healthy lifestyle choices can do a lot to benefit our brain” (Cleveland Clinic, 2021). And recent research shows connections between having dementia and having a stroke, heart attack, hearing loss, etc., so would you be willing to try to minimize this risk to yourself and your loved one and do it in small easy steps? If so, read on to hear about four diets that could help you accomplish this.

Three diets that stand out are the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the DASH Diets. Another more recent one is the MIND Diet, which is a combination of the Mediterranean and DASH Diets. All have the purpose of making a person healthier and less susceptible to other diseases or better able to manage already existing health problems. So, for the sake of you, the caregiver, and your loved one, here are some helpful tips about these diets that may help you with meal planning.

Probably the most popular, or perhaps best-known diet, is the Mediterranean, a plant-focused diet that emphasizes eating vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, olive oil and seasoning with herbs and spices. Processed and red meat is limited as are foods with sugar, but seafood is encouraged (Mayo Clinic, 2023). It is based on the fresh produce available to people who live around the Mediterranean.

A second, and related diet is the Atlantic Diet, which is mainly focused on weight loss, but of course, with weight loss there are also health benefits. It is based on the fresh produce available to people who live in the northern parts of Spain and Portugal. It also limits foods with high saturated fats and added sugars and emphasizes whole grains, vegetables, especially leafy green ones, nuts, beans, berries, and lean poultry, but it does allow for moderate amounts of meat and pork as well as starchy vegetables like potatoes (Ibitoye, 2024).

A third diet that is popular is called the DASH Diet, which translates from Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. Acronyms can certainly be useful! A very important focus of this diet is limiting salt intake. The vegetables, fruit, whole grains, fish, beans and nuts are very much a part of it, along with low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and poultry. Items that are limited are fatty meats, full-fat dairy, and tropical oils like palm or coconut, and drinks with added sugar. Salt should be reduced to no more than ¾ teaspoon per day (West, 2024), but don’t forget to factor in any salt that is already baked or cooked into your other ingredients, a good reason to avoid processed foods, which tend to be very salty.

This diet has been linked to the reduced risk of several serious and debilitating conditions like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and metabolic syndrome, which is “a group of health conditions leading to increased risk of heart disease and related problems” and caused mainly by overweight, a sedentary lifestyle, and insulin-resistance (West, 2024).

The last diet is the MIND Diet (Mediterranean intervention for neurodegenerative delay). Again, it is good to have acronyms! In her book *The Mind Diet*, author Maggie Moon, MS, RDN, writes, “the MIND diet is the simplest way to get there (to a protective effect) because it is less demanding than the Mediterranean or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diets that it is based on, and effective even when moderately followed.” (p. 12).

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Upcoming Events

- **Alzheimer’s & Dementia Support Group**
1st Monday & 3rd Wednesday
10:00am- 11:30am
- **Ghostbusters Party**
Thursday October 31, 2024
2:00pm- 3:00pm
- **Sing-A-Long with Anita ’**
Every Thursday
10:0am- 11:00am

Newsletter Staff

Lynne Rayner
Editor

Meghan Velasquez
Editor & Design

Healthy Diets for Our Brains cont.

By Lynne Rayner

It should be no surprise to see that the preferred items on this list are almost identical to the other three: vegetables, especially the green leafy ones, berries, nuts, olive oil, whole grains, fish, beans, and poultry. Red wine, which has been on the list, is now a debatable item for many nutritionists (Pearson and Burford, 2023), but if you drink it drink no more than one glass per day if you are a woman or two if you are a man. And the items to avoid are almost the same too, foods such as butter and margarine, cheese, red meat, fried food, pastries, and sweets. Finding healthy food through color may help as dietician Maxine Smith (2021) says, “Aim for a colorful diet, with dark leafy greens, as well as orange and red fruits and veggies” because “colorful foods contain antioxidants that may protect the brain.”

Although these diets may seem confusing at first, the good news is that there is total agreement on what to eat and what to avoid. Here’s the list of the good stuff: green veggies, especially the leafy ones, fatty fish. berries, whole grains, reduced-fat dairy, nuts and beans. If you are going to try something for the first time, perhaps just select one or two items to add to or increase in your diet and then select one or two to delete or at least reduce. Here are a few easy “exchanges” below that you could try.

EXCHANGE –

- * white rice for brown rice and white flour pasta for whole wheat
- *white bread for multi-grain or whole grain
- *sodas for water, tea, diet sodas, unsweetened fruit juices
- *processed meats (hot dogs, salami, bologna) and red meat for grilled chicken, fish
- *butter, lard, margarine for olive or canola oil – try a spray!
- *desserts like cake and cookies with angel food cake, fresh fruit, low-fat or non-fat yogurt

ADD –

- *at least one vegetable and/or fruit to each meal

You can be creative and model it for yourself and your loved one and your style of living. Perhaps you could name your own diet - and don’t forget to make an acronym!

References

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Recipe

Name of the dish Mediterranean Shrimp Bowls

Time to prepare

20 mins

Total Time

20 mins

Ingredients

- 1 TB olive oil
- 1/2 Tsp dried oregano
- 1/4 Tsp crushed red peppers
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- 2 TB lemon juice
- 1 Tsp lemon zest
- 1/2 lb shrimp
- 2 cups cooked white rice
- 2 TB fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup tomato
- 1/4 cup cucumber
- 1/3 cup red onion

Directions

Add all ingredients except for shrimp and rice to a bowl and mix together. Heat large skillet, add shrimp and cook for 5-6 minutes. Divide cooked rice into into bowls and top with shrimp and tomato/cucumber mixture. Then serve!
 *Optional, add feta cheese crumbles on top.



Recipe

Name of the dish Mediterranean Bean Salad

Time to prepare

15 mins

Total Time

15 mins

Ingredients

- 1 can of Garbanzo beans
- 1 can of Kidney beans
- 1 can of Cannellini beans
- 1/2 Cup of Celery
- 1/2 Cup of Cucumber
- 1/3 cup red onion
- 1/3 cup Roma tomatoes
- 2 TB fresh basil
- 2 TB fresh parsley
- Italian vinaigrette

Directions

Rinse and chop all veggies and beans. Add all ingredients to a bowl and mix together. Chill for 30-60 minutes. Then serve!
 *Optional, add parmesan cheese & Kalamata olives