



# NEWSLETTER



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## Research Corner:

What is the Green Mediterranean Diet? By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD

## Editor's Note:

It is hard to believe that summer is almost complete. It is time to enjoy the late harvest squash, tomatoes, and greens and long for all of the apples, pumpkins, and winter squash coming soon.

-- Judy Doherty, MPS, PC II

# Chicken Biryani

## Ingredients

### Parboiled rice:

- 1 cup of jasmine rice
- 2 cups water to cover the rice
- bay leaf

### Marinated chicken

- 2 cups of nonfat yogurt, smooth or European style
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp each: garam masala, ground coriander, garlic powder, cinnamon, turmeric, paprika
- pinch cayenne and chili powder
- 3 skinless boneless chicken thighs, cut in half

### Browned onions

- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- Saffron topping (can also use turmeric and water)
- Saffron pinch
- warm water



*Chicken and rice are the perfect combinations and this deliciously layered dish adds in caramelized onions with the chicken cooking on the bottom. This dish is originally from India but is also becoming more popular in the US especially with Instagram Influencers.*

## Instructions

1. Bring the rice, several cups of water, and a bay leaf to a boil. Boil 5 minutes then drain in a colander and reserve. Rice is now parboiled.
2. Marinate the chicken thighs in the yogurt, water, oil, and spices for a few hours or overnight.
3. Slice the onion very thin, toss with oil, and brown in a 450-degree oven or air fryer. You can also fry it on top of a stove.
4. Place the chicken/yogurt mixture in its entirety in a large dutch oven. Add the browned onions, placing them over the top. Then place the rice over the top of all and press flat. Pour the saffron and its liquid over the top.
5. Bring all to a boil then bake covered in a 375-degree oven for 25 to 30 minutes until the chicken and rice are done.
6. Chef's Tips:
7. If you don't have saffron you can mix a teaspoon of turmeric with a few tablespoons of hot water and use this liquid to pour over the top of the rice before baking the dish.
8. When the dish is done scoop it carefully out of the pot so you don't mix the layers. That is part of the beauty of the dish. It is desirable to serve it right out of the Dutch oven pan

Serves 6. Each 1.5 cup serving: 314 calories, 13 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 58 mg cholesterol, 78 mg sodium, 29 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 18 g protein.

# Honey Mustard Roasted Chicken and Veggies



*This delicious roasted dinner is ready in less than 45 minutes. You can assemble it ahead of time.*

## Ingredients

- 6 chicken thighs boneless skinless
- 1 pound carrots peeled, sliced in half, and cut into quarters
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- Garnish: black sesame seeds and parsley (optional)

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Mix the oil, vinegar, honey, and mustard in a bowl. Toss the chicken, carrots, and onions in the bowl. Turn onto a sheetpan.
3. Bake covered at 375°F until chicken is done and potatoes are tender, about 35 minutes. Portion size is 1.5 chicken thighs and 1 cup of carrots.
4. Serve hot right from the sheet tray or place onto plates.
5. It is a good idea to serve this dish with baked potatoes or brown rice.

Serves 4. Each 1.5 cup serving: 340 calories, 12 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 161 mg cholesterol, 313 mg sodium, 23 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 25 g protein.

# Protein and Longevity

Eating a nutritious diet is not only good for reducing the risk of chronic diseases, it may also delay the onset of aging. New rodent research from Japan suggests that modifying your protein intake can have an impact on both.

Kondo believes that, “Protein requirements change through the course of life, being higher in younger reproductive mice, reducing through middle age, and rising again in older mice as protein efficiency declines. The same pattern is likely to be observed in humans. Therefore, it could be assumed that increasing daily protein intake in meals could promote metabolic health of people. Moreover, ideal dietary macronutrient balance at each life stage could also extend health span.”

The saying “garbage in, garbage out” doesn’t just apply to computer applications. Including nutrient-dense food versus calorie-dense food can help prevent metabolic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and may also increase your lifespan.

## Below are high protein quality meal ideas;

- **Breakfast burrito** with eggs, black beans, and low-fat shredded cheese
- **Cottage cheese and fruit**, whole grain toast with nut butter
- **Protein smoothie** with mixed fruit, protein powder and Greek yogurt
- **Greek yogurt** and fruit with chopped nuts or seeds
- **Quinoa and bean bowl** with mixed veggies
- **Tuna salad** on whole grain bread with fruit
- **Lentil and rice soup** with a side salad (add chick peas or kidney beans to salad)
- **Grilled chicken or fish** over greens.



# Protein Needs Change Over Lifespan

Adjusting calorie and protein intake has been associated with better health and longevity in rodents and primates. In addition, new research also suggests a link between macronutrients (carbs, fats and proteins) with cardiometabolic health and aging in mice. But the amount of protein to be eaten for better health is unknown.

A recent study published in *GeroScience* in April and led by Assistant Professor Yoshitaka Kondo from Waseda University, Japan, evaluated how much protein is necessary to improve metabolic health in mice nearing old age.

The team also included Dr. Takuya Chiba, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University, Dr. Akihito Ishigami, Molecular Regulation of Aging, Tokyo Metropolitan Institute for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Dr. Hitoshi Aoki, Research and Development Division, Nichirei Foods Inc, and Dr. Shin-Ichiro Takahashi, Department of Animal Sciences and Applied Biological Chemistry, Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Tokyo.

The research included young (6 months old) and middle-aged (16 months old) male mice. They were fed isocaloric diets with protein content varying between 5% and 45% for two months. The impact of varying protein intake was evaluated after two months based on measurements of skeletal muscle weight, liver and plasma lipid levels, and self-organizing map (SOM) cluster analysis of amino acid profiles in plasma.

Kondo believes, "The optimal balance of macronutrients for ideal health outcomes may vary across different life stages. Previous studies show the possibility of minimizing age-specific mortality throughout life by changing the ratio of dietary protein to carbohydrates during approach to old age in mice. However, the amount of protein that should be consumed to maintain metabolic health while approaching old age is still unclear."

Kondo's team noted that the intake of a low-protein diet resulted in the development of mild fatty liver with elevated levels of hepatic lipids in middle-aged mice when compared to young mice. A moderate-protein diet led to lower blood sugar and lipid levels in both liver and plasma. **These results suggest that a moderate protein diet (25% and 35%) maintained metabolic health in both young and middle-aged mice.**

**When reviewing the impact of different protein diets on plasma amino acid concentrations in both age groups of mice, the researchers observed that the plasma concentrations of single amino acids varied with age and varying protein content of the diets. This was also validated using SOM analysis of the plasma amino acids. Using SOM analysis also showed the link between different protein intake and varying amounts of hepatic triglycerides and cholesterol levels.**

Kondo believes that, "Protein requirements change through the course of life, being higher in younger reproductive mice, reducing through middle age, and rising again in older mice as protein efficiency declines. The same pattern is likely to be observed in humans. Therefore, it could be assumed that increasing daily protein intake in meals could promote metabolic health of people. Moreover, ideal dietary macronutrient balance at each life stage could also extend health span."

His team believes a balanced diet with moderate amounts of protein may be the key to longevity. References are online.



# Fasting May Help You Lose Weight Quickly, But It Can Return Just As Fast

Let's face it. Water is not a meal. While it may be tempting to fast for many days and drink nothing but water to lose weight, it's unknown how long those pounds will stay away. Research from the University of Illinois Chicago suggests that other metabolic perks including reduced blood pressure and improved cholesterol may also fade away once the fast ends.



**The good news is that serious negative side effects have not been observed in individuals doing water or other type of low-calorie fast,** according to Krista Varady, professor of kinesiology and nutrition, who led the research published in Nutrition Reviews.

She notes that people could try it though it seems arduous and metabolic benefits go away. Varady advises to **not continue these fasts for more than five days** and they should be medically supervised.

Varady is an expert on intermittent fasting and wanted to research water fasting because she was receiving frequent requests from journalists about the diet. Her recent research is a literature review of eight studies on fasting or Buchinger fasting, a popular European fast that's medically supervised. Individuals eat only a tiny amount of juice and soup each day. Varady's researchers evaluated the results of each of the papers to see what they collectively say about fasting and weight loss as well as other metabolic parameters.

**Fasting initially showed impressive short-term weight loss. Individuals who fasted for five days lost between 4 and 6% of their weight. Those who fasted for seven to ten days lost between 2 and 10%. For those that fasted for 15 to 20 days, a 7 to 10% weight loss was observed.**

In a handful of studies in the review, some tracked subjects' weight gained back after they ended their fasts. One study found that people gained all the weight that was lost in a 5-day water fast within three months. In two studies, participants were advised to restrict calories after the fasts stopped, and a minimal amount of lost weight was regained.

**The metabolic benefits of fasting were gone soon after the fasts stopped. Reductions in blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar were seen briefly but returned to baseline levels once subjects started eating again.**

Negative effects were not seen in studies that included subjects with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. These participants were watched closely and their insulin doses were tweaked during fasting.

Side effects of prolonged fasts were similar to those seen during intermittent fasting including headaches, insomnia, and hunger. Metabolic acidosis and/or death did not occur, according to Varady.

# Intermittent Fasting Vs Water and Safe Tips for Weight Control

Weight loss in the participants was two-thirds lean mass and one-third fat mass. This is counter to regular, slow weight loss where more fat is lost than lean muscle. Varady notes this makes sense because, "your body needs a constant intake of protein. If it doesn't have that, then it draws from muscles."

Her research reviewed how well intermittent fasting works for weight loss and certain questions such as if intermittent fasting impacts fertility, which it does not. She advises intermittent fasting over water fasting, "because there's a lot more data to show it can help with weight management," she said.

**Below are some safe, simple tips for weight loss:**

1. **Pass on water fasts as most of the weight loss is muscle loss.**
2. Eat **breakfast**. According to the National Weight Control Registry, successful losers eat breakfast. 2
3. Make **dinner** your last meal and skip the evening snacks.
4. Include **high-protein foods** with meals and snacks. These provide satiety and have been found to help with preventing weight regain. 3
5. **Swap low-fiber carbs for high-fiber carbs** such as rolled oats, brown rice, whole-grain pasta or bread, and quinoa.
6. **Add more vegetables** to meals for more volume without extra calories.
7. **Skip soda, sports drinks, and other high-calorie sugary beverages.**
8. **Limit fast food, fried foods, and high-calorie desserts.**
9. **Get to bed at a reasonable time and aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.** Sleep is good food and may help reduce cravings for comfort food.
10. Include **movement** in your everyday life. Walking can be done anytime, anywhere.

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# Less Sugar Means Sweeter Dreams



I like to tell my clients that “sleep is good food.” It turns out that good food could mean better sleep too, while less nutritious options may have a negative impact on sleep health.

New research out of Uppsala University has evaluated the impact of junk food on sleep. Healthy subjects ate a nutritious diet as well as a less healthy diet in randomized order. The quality of sleep declined after consuming an unhealthier diet compared to those eating healthier food. Results can be found in the journal *Obesity*. Previous epidemiological research has indicated that our diet is linked with changes in sleep. But limited studies have evaluated how diet itself impacts sleep directly. One way to prove this is to have the same subjects eat different diets in randomized order.

Jonathan Cedernaes, Physician and Associate Professor in Medical Cell Biology at Uppsala University notes, "Both poor diet and poor sleep increase the risk of several public health conditions. As what we eat is so important for our health, we thought it would be interesting to investigate whether some of the health effects of different diets could involve changes to our sleep. In this context, so-called intervention studies have so far been lacking; studies designed to allow the mechanistic effect of different diets on sleep to be isolated,".

**Past research has indicated that diets with more sugar content are associated with poor sleep. Sleep affects various physiologic states, according to Cedernaes. Deep sleep may be impacted by what we eat but past research hasn't evaluated what occurs if we eat an unhealthy diet and then compared it to the quality of sleep after the same person eats a healthy diet.**

He further notes that sleep is very dynamic. Sleep is made up of different stages with different functions including deep sleep, which modulates the release of hormones. In addition, sleep stages are recognized by various types of electrical activity in the brain. This impacts how restorative sleep is and varies depending on the brain region. Insomnia and aging can negatively impact the quality of sleep stages. Past research has not investigated if changes in sleep stages can happen due to exposure to different food consumed.

**The small study included 15 healthy, normal-weight, young men who were monitored in a sleep lab. Subjects were initially screened for sleep habits, which had to be normal and within the advised range of an average of seven to nine hours of sleep each night.**



# Junk Food Impacts Sleep Quality

Subjects were given both a healthier diet and one with more junk food in random order. Calories were the same in each diet but adjusted to the individual's daily needs. The unhealthy diet was higher in sugar and saturated fat and contained more processed foods. The meals of the varying diets had to be eaten at individually adjusted times that were correlated across the two dietary conditions. The different diets were eaten for a week while the subjects' sleep, activity, and meal times were measured at an individual level.

Subjects were evaluated in a sleep lab after each diet. In the lab, they were initially allowed to sleep a normal night, while their brain activity was checked to monitor their sleep. Subjects were then kept awake in the sleep lab before being allowed to make up sleep. Sleep was recorded in this stage as well.

The researchers observed that the subjects slept for the same amount of time when they ate the two diets. This occurred while they were adhering to the diets in addition to after they had switched to another, identical diet.

Subjects also spent the same amount of time in the different stages of sleep. The researchers were most keenly interested in evaluating the properties of the subjects' deep sleep. **Slow wave activity which measures how restorative deep sleep is, was impacted by junk food consumed. This effect continued into a second night once the participant's diets were switched to an identical diet. In short, the unhealthy diet resulted in poorer deep sleep.**

**Similar changes in sleep are seen with aging and insomnia. A healthy diet should be encouraged for better sleep. The study did not show how long an unhealthy diet could affect sleep and didn't investigate whether poorer sleep could change functions that are usually regulated by deep sleep.**

Cedernaes.notes, "It would also be interesting to conduct functional tests, for example, to see whether memory function can be affected. This is regulated to a large extent by sleep. And it would be equally interesting to understand how long-lasting the observed effects may be. Currently, we do not know which substances in the unhealthier diet worsened the depth of deep sleep."



# How to Improve Sleep With Diet Tips

Poor-quality diets contain more saturated fat and sugar and less dietary fiber. Cedernaes thinks studying other dietary components and their role in sleep quality would be interesting. His diet intervention was also short and the sugar and fat content was moderate. He notes that an even healthier diet could have a more deleterious effect on sleep quality.



**Want to improve your sleep? Below are some tips:**

- **Skip the coffee**, caffeinated tea, energy drinks, and other sources of caffeine after 2:00 PM.
- **Go to bed and wake up at around the same time each night and day.**
- **Turn off the screens!** This includes the TV, your tablet, phone, or any other light-emitting electronics.
- **Don't eat heavy meals**, especially close to bedtime. Limit fried food, fast food, and sugary treats throughout the day.
- **Limit alcohol consumption.** It may put you to sleep initially but is known to interrupt sleep overall and increase hot flashes in women.
- **Eat lima beans!** One study of medical students found that sleep was improved with the consumption of this starchy bean. 2
- **Do regular exercise most days** of the week. Walking is one of the best ones, especially in older adults. 3
- **Don't drink water too close to bedtime.** Space it out throughout the day.
- **See a sleep specialist** if you're chronically tired. Sleep apnea impacts 5 to 10% of the population worldwide. 4

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# Go for the Green Mediterranean Diet - Part 1



The Mediterranean Diet has been named US Best Diet several years in a row and with good reason. Research shows that this sustainable diet plan is not only good for your heart and waistline, but it's also delicious. More recent research out of Israel suggests an even better Mediterranean Diet for heart health. Meet the “Green” Mediterranean/ high polyphenols Diet. According to a new study, experts say it's “twice as good” with promises of unstiffening the aorta- the biggest artery in the body. Lettuce look at what's on the plate!

## **The Power of Polyphenols**

Polyphenols are natural compounds found primarily in fruits including apples, berries, cherries, grapes, and pears as well as vegetables, cereals, and some beverages such as coffee and green tea. Several fruits may have up to 200 to 300 mg of polyphenols per 100 grams of fresh fruit.

Polyphenols act to protect the body's tissues against oxidative stress (think of this as internal rusting in the body). They work in conjunction with other antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and carotenoids. Polyphenols help prevent coronary artery disease, cancer, and inflammation.

## **Food over Pills**

It may be tempting to just pop a few antioxidants and call it a day but experts caution against this. Animal studies have shown that high-dose polyphenol supplements could cause an imbalance in thyroid levels, damage kidneys, and increase tumor growth. In humans, they may increase the risk of stroke and premature death. No, thank you.

The concept of the green-Mediterranean, high polyphenols diet was first suggested by the DIRECT-PLUS trial researchers. The green-Mediterranean diet differs from the original Mediterranean diet because it's higher in dietary polyphenols and contains fewer red or processed meat servings.

In addition, walnuts are suggested daily as are three or four cups of green tea and one cup of Wolffia-globosa mankai- a plant-based green shake containing duckweed. This is advised to be consumed for 18 months. The water-based green plant mankai is a good meat substitute as it contains bioavailable iron, vitamin B12, protein, and over 200 types of polyphenols.

# Go for the Green

## Mediterranean Diet - Part 2

### **Heart Health Benefits**

Large-scale clinical research in the DIRECT-PLUS found that the green-Mediterranean-high polyphenols diet drastically reverses proximal aortic stiffness (PAS), a key to reducing vascular aging and cardiovascular risk. When compared to the Mediterranean diet, the green-Mediterranean diet regressed proximal aortic stiffness by 15%. The Mediterranean diet regressed PAS by 7.3% and the healthy dietary guidelines regressed it by 4.8%.

The DIRECT PLUS study was one of the first to find a significant impact of diet on age-related proximal aortic stiffness. The study, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology had 300 subjects and was done over 18 months. Aortic stiffness was evaluated using MRIs, the most accurate, noninvasive measure of blood vessel wall elasticity.

Aortic stiffness happens when elastin (elastic fibers in the arterial wall) starts to fray from mechanical stress. PAS is a key marker in vascular aging and a solo cardiovascular risk factor that predicts morbidity and mortality.

### **Diet Modifications for Better Health**

One of the first strategies in treating obesity and metabolic complications is diet modification. Intense exercise itself reduces PAS but the impact of weight loss is unknown. The research team believes the Mediterranean diet is one of the best-researched interventions to lower cardiometabolic risk.

The hypo-caloric, green Mediterranean diet supplemented with plant-based polyphenols, less meat, and fewer simple sugars may provide benefits over the hypocaloric-Mediterranean diet and healthy dietary guidelines to reduce cardiometabolic risk.

Professor and adjunct professor from the Harvard School of Public Health and an honorary professor at the University of Leipzig, Germany Iris Shai of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel led the research. Doctoral student Dr. Gal Tsaban, a cardiologist from Soroka-University Medical Center – and colleagues from Harvard and Leipzig Universities also participated in the study.

Previous research by this team on the Green Mediterranean/high polyphenols diet showed other beneficial effects including reshaping the microbiome, stopping brain atrophy, reversing fatty liver, and visceral adiposity (fat stored deep inside the abdomen and wrapped around organs including the liver and intestines).

# Go for the Green

## Mediterranean Diet - Part 3

Dr. Shai notes, “A healthy lifestyle is a strong basis for improving cardiometabolic health. We learned from the results of our experiment that the quality of the diet is crucial for mobilizing atherogenic adipose tissues (involving chronic inflammation and repair of the vessel wall endothelium and smooth muscle cells that result in thickened vessel walls with a narrowed opening), lowering cardiometabolic risk and improving one’s fat profile. Dietary polyphenols – consumed while substituting red meat with equivalent plant-based protein – can significantly improve human health.”

Her study is the first to indicate that PAS could be reversed through a healthy lifestyle beyond weight loss. The Green-Mediterranean diet may have a better impact on reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease compared to the original Mediterranean diet. Clearly, not all diets are the same.

### How can you help your clients adopt the Green Mediterranean Diet?

- **Reduce overall red meat and processed meat** to once/week
- Include more **meatless meals** with beans, lentils, and soy to reduce cardiovascular risk.
- Start your day with **green tea**- spread out to three to four cups per day.
- **Cut back on refined carbohydrates** like candy, cake, and other pastries.
- Add **walnuts** to your daily diet. Include them in rolled oats, salads, yogurt, or by themselves.
- Include **apples, berries, grapes, and green leafy vegetables** in your diet regularly for polyphenols.
- **Reduce saturated and trans-fat** for better arterial health. Cut back on butter, beef fat, full-fat dairy products, poultry skin, fried, and fast food.
- Go for **soluble fiber** from rolled oats, barley, beans and lentils, and seasonal fruit.
- Do regular **exercise** to manage weight and cardiovascular health.
- Look for **green mankai** online: Our Story – Mankai USA (eatmankai.com)

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**Food and Health Communications Premium Newsletter**

© Food and Health Communications, Inc.  
ISSN 1070-1613  
10582 King Street, Westminster, CO 80031  
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