

Dieting Without Calorie Counting

Dieting is often synonymous with counting calories or chugging protein drinks. They can be difficult to maintain and may feel like more work than they're worth. But the Mediterranean diet offers something new. Inspired by the traditional foods of the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea, the Mediterranean diet **does not have calorie intake restrictions**. It **emphasizes eating plant-based foods** without being vegan or vegetarian. Fish, poultry, and eggs are a regular part of most Mediterranean diet plans. In general, the Mediterranean diet **includes**:

- Eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, lentils, and nuts
- **Swapping unhealthy fats** for extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Replacing red meat with fish, poultry, or beans
- Removing candy or foods with added sugar

The Mediterranean diet has been shown to **help you maintain a healthy body weight** and **keep weight off once you lose it**. EVOO and fish are good sources of unsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids, which **decrease** cholesterol levels, support brain health, and help **prevent** heart disease. EVOO may **also remove excess cholesterol from your arteries**.

For these reasons, both the **American Heart Association (AHA)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** recommend the Mediterranean diet as a good way to maintain good health and wellbeing as you age.



The Mediterranean diet was recognized by UNESCO as being an **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** for its role in bringing together community.

Chronic Illness and Health Issues Faced by U.S. Veterans

The battles that military personnel face do not stop once they return home from deployment. United States veterans experience **significant long-term health issues and chronic diseases** in numbers much higher than in non-veterans. This includes physical injuries, mental health struggles, and conditions that develop after retirement.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers healthcare to veterans. **Those who served in active military, naval, or air service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge may be eligible to sign up for VA healthcare**. VA healthcare covers the Affordable Care Act's **10 essential health benefits**, which includes doctor's visits, preventative care, rehabilitation services, and mental health support.

Many nonprofit organizations support veterans and connect them to benefits and social groups.

- **America's Warrior Partnership (AWP)** helps prevent veteran suicide by connecting veterans and their families to organizations in their local areas.
- **Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)** offers veterans and their families a variety of free programs, events, and assistance to help veterans return to civilian life.
- **Hiring Our Heroes** provides hiring events, workshops, and seminars for military spouses and active service members seeking employment.

BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT Generic Medication

Generic drugs are versions of brand-name medications that share active ingredients, strength, quality, safety, and intended use as their name-brand counterparts, but which are **up to 85% cheaper**.

Following the creation of a new drug, the manufacturer is allowed, under the FDA, to be the sole producer and seller for a period. But once the patent expires, other drug companies are allowed to create generic versions of that medication. These secondary producers are not required to test the medication's effects on animals or humans, since this was undertaken by the original drug manufacturer, so the process is much cheaper.

The main difference between generic and name-brand medications is the inactive ingredients. **Inactive ingredients** are fillers, coatings, or preservatives that help your body absorb the medication. While these ingredients are referred to as "inactive," they, like any other ingredient in medication, **can cause adverse reactions**. But other than personal allergies, there is **no significant** difference between generic or name-brand medications.

Generic drugs are a great way to save money on the medications you need. Most states allow pharmacists to substitute name-brand medications for cheaper generic alternatives, unless your doctor has specified otherwise.

