



## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS



### **The Mediterranean Style: For Life, For Health!**

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Last month Putnam County employees heard from a local cardiologist about the benefits of a Mediterranean style of eating. It was such a positive, well-attended event for our employees that its lesson is worth repeating for a broader audience.

Typical diet advice usually focuses on weight reduction. The Mediterranean diet, however is not so much a diet, as a style of eating that stresses plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts. It is not primarily for losing weight, but rather highlights a flavorful and healthful approach to enjoying food.

The Mediterranean diet is not new. Indeed it has been practiced for centuries in those sunny warm countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. But it has been getting a lot more attention lately after research showing that it produces great health benefits— from lowering blood pressure and improving general heart health, to reducing the risk of colon cancer and age-related brain deterioration.

Essentially, the eating style focuses on plant-based foods, those above-mentioned fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts; using olive oil instead of butter; limiting red meat; increasing fish and poultry; opting for herbs and spices instead of salt, and finally, red wine in moderation. The American diet, with its great emphasis on butter, often overlooks legumes, such as beans, peas and lentils, that are be a good source of protein, fiber and vitamins.

If you are interested in a long and healthy life, modify your diet to eat more like you live in the Mediterranean region. This by itself will promote good health. Add walking or other aerobic exercise, and stay away from tobacco products and you've hit the trifecta for good health!

I often have a glass of red wine with some whole grain bread dipped in seasoned olive oil in the evening while my wife and I are preparing dinner. It's been working well for us. Especially this frigid winter...imagining I'm in the sunny Mediterranean. Good Luck!