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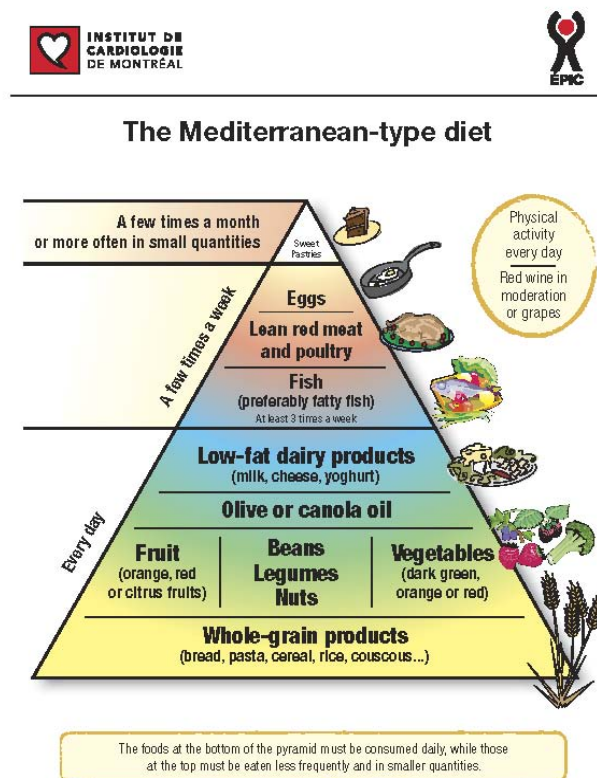
**NUTRITION MONTH**

**The Montreal Heart Institute recommends a Mediterranean-type diet to prevent specific risk factors related to cardiovascular disease**

**Montreal, March 1, 2007** – Recognizing the key role of nutrition in preventing specific risk factors related to cardiovascular disease, the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) recently opted to recommend the Mediterranean-type diet, a shift meant to benefit hospitalized patients and MHI cafeteria clients. Thus, dietitians and nutritionists at the MHI and the ÉPIC Centre have created a food pyramid based on the Mediterranean diet. To mark nutrition month, the MHI is intent on sharing these recommendations with the population at large.

**A pyramid that's good for the heart**

The foods featured at the bottom of the pyramid must be consumed daily, while those at the top must be eaten less frequently and in smaller quantities. Thus, the recommendations from top to bottom are as follows:



The MHI also recommends daily exercise and moderate consumption of red wine or grapes.

## **Proven advantages**

The Mediterranean diet offers numerous advantages: it is high in dietary fibre, and some of these fibres help to lower bad cholesterol (LDL) when consumed on a regular basis; it provides high levels of antioxidants, which play a role in the prevention of heart disease, protect the artery walls and prevent atherosclerosis; it is also an excellent source of dietary fats, with the emphasis on quality fats and the consumption of monounsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids; it contains limited amounts of saturated fats, dietary cholesterol and trans fats; and finally, the Mediterranean diet recommends moderate salt consumption, as too much salt can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

To sum up, the Mediterranean diet emphasizes specific key foods such as whole grain cereals, fruit and dark vegetables, legumes, soy and its derivatives (tofu, soy beverages, roasted soybeans, etc.), olive or canola oil, fish, nuts, flaxseed as well as homecooked meals.

“Several studies clearly show that Mediterranean foods provide a number of advantages and have a positive impact on all risk factors related to cardiovascular disease, including hypertension, dyslipidemia, obesity and diabetes,” says Dr. Martin Juneau, Director of Prevention at the Montreal Heart Institute. “It is important that the MHI sets a good example by introducing this type of diet at the establishment itself and adapting it to the tastes of Quebecers. We intend to disseminate this information to the population as a whole and to invite people to switch to the Mediterranean diet so that they can enjoy all of its benefits.”

## **About the Montreal Heart Institute**

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute constantly aims for the highest standards of excellence in the cardiovascular field through its leadership in prevention, ultra-specialized care, training of professionals, clinical and fundamental research, and assessment of new technologies. It is affiliated with the Université de Montréal, and its clinical outcomes are among the best in the world. To learn more about the Institute, please visit our website at [www.icm-mhi.org](http://www.icm-mhi.org).

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