

# Diets can have long-lasting benefits

By ACSH Staff — October 5, 2012



Restricted-calorie diets of various types are known to be

effective for accomplishing weight loss. Unfortunately, these results are often not maintained, as participants adherence tends to diminish over time. Thus, a recent [Israeli study](#) <sup>[1]</sup> published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* provides some hope for those wanting to lose weight.

In their workplace study, 322 moderately obese men were assigned one of 3 weight-loss plans: A low-fat, restricted calorie diet; a Mediterranean (low red meat and dairy, olive oil and fish), restricted calorie plan, or a low carbohydrate, non-restricted plan. After 2 years on their respective plans, weight loss was greatest in the low-carbohydrate group (4.7 kg), followed by the Mediterranean plan participants (4.4 kg), and the low-fat diet (1.7 kg).

After an additional 4 years, participants had maintained some of the lost weight with the best results achieved by those in the Mediterranean plan group (3.1 kg), than in either the low-fat (0.6 kg), or the low-carbohydrate (1.7 kg) groups. Compared to their initial weights, the 6-year weight loss was significant in the Mediterranean and the low-carbohydrate groups, but not in the low-fat group. Further, participants total blood cholesterol levels also decreased significantly, with the greatest reduction in the Mediterranean group.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava notes, These results are encouraging: This study seems to show that people can maintain an effective diet plan, if the dietary regimen is palatable rather than typical diet program fare. If so designed and attractively prepared, long-term benefits can also be maintained, with attendant health benefits.

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[1] <http://www.ajc.com/news/lifestyles/health/mediterranean-diet-tops-list-livable-diets/nSSwH/>