

# PASTA NUTRITION & HEALTH BENEFITS

Pasta is a perfect foundation for healthy, nutritious and satisfying meals: pasta is generally eaten with nutrient-dense food partners, such as fiber-filled vegetables and beans, heart healthy fish and monounsaturated oils, antioxidant-rich tomato sauce, and protein-packed cheeses, poultry and lean meats.

Pasta makes the perfect delivery system for the healthy foods you should have each day. Pair pasta with a variety of nutrient-dense foods and create meals that you can feel good about.

**Nutritious and delicious “pasta partners” include:**



**Pasta offers:**

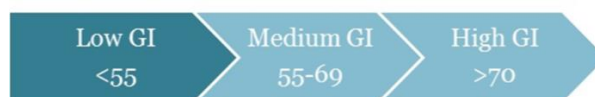
**SUSTAINED ENERGY:** Carbohydrates like pasta provide glucose, the crucial fuel for your brain and muscles. Pasta is an excellent source of complex carbohydrates, which provide a slow release of energy. Unlike simple sugars that offer a quick, yet fleeting boost of energy, pasta helps sustain energy.

**LOW SODIUM & CHOLESTEROL-FREE:** Pasta is very low in sodium and cholesterol-free. Per cup, enriched varieties provide a good source of several essential nutrients, including iron and several B vitamins. Whole wheat pasta can provide up to 25% of daily fiber requirements in every one cup portion.

**FOLIC ACID:** Enriched pasta is fortified with folic acid – essential for women of child-bearing age. FDA regulations require enriched grain products to contain this important vitamin. A serving of pasta supplies the equivalent of roughly 100 micrograms of folic acid, or 25% of the recommended daily intake.

**BALANCED DIET:** Pasta is part of a well-balanced diet. Current dietary guidance calls for up to 65% of daily calories to come from carbohydrates, such as pasta.

**LOW GI:** Pasta has a low Glycemic Index (GI) averaging at 45, so it does not cause blood glucose levels to rise quickly. Blood glucose is sometimes referred to as blood “sugar”.



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## Pasta: Get Your Grains



Eating a balance of both whole and enriched grains is recommended by nutrition experts in order to ensure a diet rich in the essential vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients that promote health and help reduce the risk of chronic disease. Both whole and enriched varieties of pasta provide a perfect foundation for healthy, nutritious, and satisfying meals.

## PASTA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Mediterranean Diet is characterized by an abundant variety of plant foods including fruits, vegetables, breads, pasta, cereals, whole grains, potatoes, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds. Olive oil is the principal source of fat and fish, especially fatty fish, is a mainstay in the diet. Dairy products (mostly cheese and yogurt) and poultry are eaten in low to moderate amounts, and eggs often appear on the weekly menu. Red meat is eaten only on occasion — a few times a month and wine, although consumed regularly, is normally eaten with food and in modest amounts (no more than a small glass or two). Pasta meals are central to the Mediterranean Diet, not only because they are a tasty, inexpensive and easy meal to prepare but also because they are the perfect way to highlight and complement many of the other healthy foods in this diet. The New England Journal of Medicine reported that the Mediterranean Diet may reduce the risk of death from heart disease and stroke.\*



\*Ref.: Estruch R. et. al. "Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease with a Mediterranean Diet." *N Engl J Med* April 2013; 368:1279-1290.

