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LIVE LONGER WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

BALTIMORE, MD – MARCH 2008 – During this year’s National Nutrition Month in March, Americans have some good news to focus on: The largest study evaluating the impact of greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet on U.S. population longevity indicates a significant 20% reduction in death from all causes.

The findings, reported in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (December 10/24, 2007), are based on a study of approximately 380,000 men and women over a ten-year period. It is the **first major U.S. study** to demonstrate the reduced mortality that European studies had previously found.

The researchers from the U.S. National Institutes of Health, headed by Dr. Panagiota N. Mitrou, looked at conformity with the Mediterranean diet – which includes fruits, nuts, legumes grains, vegetables (excluding potatoes), fish, and moderate alcohol consumption. Another key aspect of the diet is the ratio of monounsaturated-fat/saturated fat that can be enhanced by use of products such as olive oil instead of butter. The researchers found a 20% reduction in mortality, on average, from any cause including cancer and cardiovascular disease. The benefits were even greater among smokers, which may be due to the diet’s level of antioxidants. Antioxidants are believed to fight free radicals, which damage the body and may cause accelerated aging.

According to Riska Platt, MS, RD, a Registered Dietitian, Director of Nutrition, OccuHealth, and a consultant to Pompeian, olive oil has long been recognized as a major component of the Mediterranean diet, which has been demonstrated to improve multiple cardiovascular risk factors and markers of inflammation. The Mediterranean diet is associated with improved levels of C-reactive protein, interleukin-6, homocysteine, and fibrinogen. Other benefits include reduced concentrations of white blood cells and oxidized low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, as well as improved endothelial function.

“Americans are beginning to see enhancements to the Mediterranean diet,” Platt stated. “For example, because antioxidants may play a key role in the success of the diet, Pompeian has recently introduced pomegranate infused vinegars. The intent is to encourage consumers to eat more anti-oxidant rich salads with delicious and healthier salad dressings, such as those made with extra-virgin olive oil and Pomegranate Infused Red Wine Vinegar.

Preliminary research suggests that pomegranate juice is associated with such advantages as: Improvement of blood pressure; decreased thickness of the carotid artery lining; lowered LDL oxidation; reduced cholesterol and plaque buildup in the blood vessels; lowered risk of certain cancers; and slowing of prostate cancer growth.

For further information about nutrition and Pompeian products, please visit www.pompeian.com

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