



Mediterranean diet and consumption of extra virgin olive oil are a good choice for pregnant women

A Mediterranean-style diet during pregnancy does not reduce the overall risk of complications for the mother and fetus but can reduce weight gain and the risk of gestational diabetes, according to a clinical study conducted by Queen Mary University of London and the University of Warwick.

The study was conducted on a sample of 1,252 pregnant women of different ethnicities and living in urban contexts with metabolic risk factors, including obesity and chronic hypertension.

In addition to receiving the integration of folic acid and vitamin D, women were induced to follow a Mediterranean-style diet that included a daily consumption of a portion of nuts (30 g / day; 15 g of walnuts, 7.5 g of almonds, 7.5 g of hazelnuts) and use extra virgin olive oil (0.5 l / week) as the main source of cooking fat.

Furthermore, the diet emphasized the consumption of unrefined fruit, vegetables, cereals and legumes; moderate to high consumption of fish; small to moderate intake of poultry and dairy products; low consumption of red meat and processed meat; and to avoid sugary drinks, fast foods and foods rich in animal fats.

Participants received dietary advice at 18, 20 and 28 weeks of gestation, and were urged to monitor their compliance with the suggested diet.

The results show that those who had followed a Mediterranean-style diet had a 35 percent lower risk of developing gestational diabetes and were on average 1.25 kg lighter than those who received routine prenatal care.

With an increase in the age of the first pregnancy and with increasingly stressful living conditions, it is necessary that the nutritional guidelines for pregnant women include the key components of the Mediterranean diet.

Future studies will observe the benefits of exposure to the Mediterranean diet of children in utero, throughout the gestation period, in order to identify the effects on obesity, asthma and allergies after birth, as well as the development of type 2 diabetes in mothers after childbirth.

The international TAICHI project is spreading information about the health benefits of using extra virgin olive oil for cooking to Mainland China and Taiwan.

Co-funded by the EU and promoted by the two main consortia of Italian olive growers, Italia Olivicola and UNAPOL, the TAICHI project offers consumers all the information they need to understand olive oil through its website, various social media platforms and OurOliveOil APP – available in the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

Sources:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002857>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6319492/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28531829>

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