

## Culinary Medicine Toolkit

Noted author, Michael Pollan, wrote: “Cooking is the key to changing our health and the environment”. David L. Katz MD, MPH recently reviewed compelling evidence that “Diet Is the Single Most Important Predictor of Health<sup>2</sup>. We could not agree more with both authors!

Over the last 20 years, our nation has seen a significant paradigm shift about the foods we eat and how we prepare them. We eat more ultra-processed foods and cook less. Those changes have been associated with having poor nutritional status and an increased risk of non-communicable, chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease- (heart attack and stroke), obesity, diabetes, cancers of breast, prostate and colon, as well as many other conditions. Much of the available information about what to eat could be confusing for many. To minimize the confusion, we are adhering to the evidence-based recommendations of the leading professional medical organizations, such as: the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, American College of Cardiology, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Institute for Cancer Research.

Culinary medicine is a new, rapidly evolving,<sup>3,4</sup> evidence-based field of medicine that blends the art of food and cooking with the science of medicine. Culinary medicine’s focus is to help-people achieve optimal self-care via accessing, preparing and eating, high-quality meals to help prevent and treat a spectrum of common chronic, non-communicable, lifestyle-related, diseases and restore well-being.

A practical discipline, culinary medicine is concerned with the patient in immediate need, who asks, “How do I prepare foods that will support my health?”“ As foods eaten could be condition-specific, the same diet may not work for everyone and at all times. Different clinical conditions, in different people, at different stages of their lifespan, may require different foods and ways of meal preparation.

Culinary medicine aims to improve a patients’ condition(s) via education, by addressing what they eat and drink regularly. It emphasizes culinary techniques and how to efficiently and confidently prepare health-promoting foods that taste great. The objective of culinary medicine is to empower patients by providing accurate information, effective self-care skills, and tools to safely improve their nutritional wellbeing, overall quality of life and reduce risks of common lifestyle-related chronic conditions.

This Cleveland Clinic’s Centers for Integrative and Lifestyle Medicine Culinary Medicine Toolkit is a guide to help patients achieve those goals.

1. Pollan M: Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation, Penguin Books, 2014
2. Katz D. Diet Is the Single Most Important Predictor of Health. *Alter Complement Ther*, 25(6), 280-284, December 2019.
3. Teaching Kitchen Collaborative at <https://www.tkcollaborative.org/>
4. Eisenberg DM. Teaching Kitchen Collaborative Research Day February 7, 2018. *J. Altern Complement Med*. 2018 Jul;24(7):615-618. Doi: 10.1089/acm.2018.29052.dme.

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