A recent study published by the *New England Journal of Medicine* has found that switching to a Mediterranean diet can reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and heart disease. A Mediterranean diet, which is heavy in olive oil, nuts, fresh fruit, fish, vegetables, beans, and drinking red wine with meals, prevented 30% of these heart related issues even in people with high risk of death from heart disease. The results of the study were so great, in fact, that it was concluded 5 years early, according to an article published in *The New York Times*, because continuing the study was considered to be unethical. (You can read the full article by clicking here.)

According to the *Times*, this study was set apart from others because of the rigorous nature of their testing and the soundness of their data. That is, they measured the number of heart attacks, stroke, and heart disease related deaths that occurred in a population that included people who were overweight, smokers, had diabetes, or other risks for heart disease. Subjects were divided into three groups. One received a low-fat diet while the other two were told to follow a Mediterranean diet. The study found that participants had a very difficult time sticking to a low-fat diet compared to those staying with the Mediterranean diet.

Ultimately the study found significant decreases in the likelihood of heart attack, stroke, and heart disease related death in participants with high risk factors. However, more research is needed to determine the health benefits of the diet on people with low risk factors. And some health experts reject the findings, preferring diets that follow a vegan philosophy. One thing is sure: the researchers involved in the study have changed their eating habits and are now following the Mediterranean diet. I’ll raise a glass of wine to that.