

# Healthy Pasta Meal Scientific Consensus Statement

## *Scientists Confirm Pasta's Healthy Place In the Diet*

Pasta made headlines around the world in February 2004 when nutrition scientists from three continents met in Rome to discuss pasta and health. Their conclusion? Pasta is a healthy carbohydrate-containing food, and is a key ingredient of healthy traditional diets.

To learn WHY pasta is healthy, 1) take a look at the conclusions of the Healthy Pasta Meal Scientific Consensus Statement written by 34 prestigious scientists, and 2) also refer to the summary of just a few of scientific studies supporting the healthfulness of pasta.

## *Pasta's Place in a Balanced Diet and the Points of the Scientific Consensus Statement*



### **Consensus Statement #1 Carbohydrate-containing foods are an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet.**

Dietary carbohydrate is the primary source of glucose for the body, which is the main fuel (or energy source) for the brain, red blood cells, muscle and organs. Without carbohydrates, a diet is not balanced or complete. There is worldwide consensus among high-level nutrition scientists that carbohydrates are a key ingredient in an eating

pattern that promotes healthy longevity. Around the world, scientists and government agencies recommend that people divide their calories in this way: 45–60 % carbohydrates, 25–30 % fat, and 15–20 % protein.

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## ***Consensus Statement #2***

### **Pasta has a low glycemic index.**

The glycemic index (GI) measures how rapidly a carbohydrate-containing food triggers a rise in one's blood glucose level — the higher the GI number, the greater the blood glucose response (which makes the body digest the food more quickly, and not receive the full benefits of eating that food). Pasta, a low GI food, does not cause blood glucose levels to rise quickly. Slow-release carbohydrates/low glycemic index foods, like pasta, may have benefits for healthy longevity and physical and cognitive performance, and may play a key role in preventing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and certain cancers.

## ***Consensus Statement #3***

### **Pasta is a “good” carbohydrate.**

The overall structure of pasta causes it to be digested more slowly than most other carbohydrate-containing foods.



## ***Consensus Statement #4***

### **Pasta meals are very efficient “delivery systems” for healthy foods.**

Pasta is not eaten by itself, but joined by “partners” in a mixed meal, including vegetables, olive oil, tomato sauce, beans, nuts, and lean cuts of poultry, meat, fish and shellfish. By combining these multiple healthy ingredients, it becomes a pasta meal, slowing digestion and absorption of blood glucose while providing essential nutrients such as fiber, protein and vitamins. Although pasta has a low GI on its own, the GI of a mixed meal containing pasta may be even lower.

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## ***Consensus Statement #5***

**Pasta, when eaten in healthy portions, does not promote weight gain.**



Weight gain cannot be attributed to one food in particular. It is caused by consuming more total calories than are burned off. When eaten in the proper portions and in combination with healthy foods, pasta does not cause weight gain. A healthy portion of pasta is 80 to 100 grams of uncooked pasta.

## ***Consensus Statement #6***

**High-fat/low-carb diets are dangerous.**

High-fat/low-carb diets may pose health risks, and may increase the risk of serious chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and some forms of cancer.

## ***Consensus Statement #7***

**Traditional diets are strongly recommended.**

Traditional diet patterns, like the Mediterranean, Latin American, and other heart-healthy diets offer greater health benefits than the typical Western diet. These patterns are characterized by an abundant variety of plant foods (fruits, vegetables, breads, pasta, other forms of cereals, potatoes, beans, nuts, and seeds), healthy fats like olive oil, dairy products (mostly cheese and yogurt), fish and poultry consumed in low to moderate amounts, and wine consumed in low to moderate amounts.