Once again, your mother was right. You really do need to eat your vegetables. And while you’re at it, throw down the bacon and pick up the olive oil, because new research shows that the contention that switching to a Mediterranean diet significantly decreases the risk of heart disease.

According to a study published recently in the Journal of the American Heart Association, people who followed this type of diet had 25 percent less risk of developing cardiovascular disease over the course of 12 years.

The diet’s components make sense to anyone who follows nutrition news. Avoid red meat in favor of “good” fats like fish and poultry. Swap out salt for herbs and spices. Ditch butter and margarine and opt for olive oil instead. Most important, eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Nuts are good, so are whole grains. And, every once in a while, have a glass of red wine.

Since the 1950s, researchers have pointed out this diet’s possible cardiovascular benefits. More recently, it has been credited with addressing any number of ill health conditions, from Alzheimer’s disease, asthma and helping pregnant women deliver healthy babies and contribute to obesity risk factors as kids grow.

Until the new study, though, randomized trials had been in the laboratory. They were aimed at testing this diet’s long-term effects. Researchers followed participants’ diets and health was then tracked for 12 years.

The authors pointed out that these findings do have limitations. For instance, the study relied on self-reported data, which isn’t always accurate — especially when it comes to diet choices. The participants, all of whom were female health professionals, also might lean toward healthier behaviors than the rest of the population.

The results of the study weren’t a shock to Dr. Andrew Freeman, the director of cardiovascular prevention and wellness at National Jewish Health hospital in Denver. He wasn’t involved in the study but has been promoting a Mediterranean diet, or a similar version of it, for many years. He now recom- mends it to patients who are already on a similar regimen.

“Nutrition and lifestyle have clear information, difficult regimen for many patients, too. He said he has clear information, difficult regimen for many patients, too. Freeman said.

He also acknowledged there’s a lot of noise out there, but the signal that’s there is clear: “A plant-based diet is the best.”

He added that there are many competing nutritional information swirling around the airwaves and the internet, which amounts to “a whole lot of hype” that makes healthy eating a difficult regimen for many consumers.

There are many people who don’t have clear information, either. “The vast majority of nutrition professionals in general have very little nutrition training,” Freeman said.

He switched to a mostly plant-based diet after his residency, and lost 35 pounds. He now recommends this approach to his patients, too. He said his patients who have seen his patients’ conditions — heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes — improve.

“Nutrition and lifestyle matter a lot when there’s a chance of a cure,” Freeman said.