

Plant-based Diets

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A significant convergence of evidence suggests that plant-based diets can help prevent and even reverse some of the top killer diseases in the Western world and can be more effective than medication and surgery. See the following topics for research findings relevant to the most prevalent chronic conditions.

- **Alzheimer's disease**
- **Cancer**
- **Diabetes**
- **Heart disease**
- **High cholesterol**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Parkinson's disease**

Additionally, plant-based eating may have a positive effect on

- **Abdominal fat**
- **Acne**
- **Aging**
- **Allergies**
- **Asthma**
- **Body-odor**
- **Cellulite**
- **Childhood IQ**
- **Cognition**
- **Dysmenorrhea**
- **Eczema**
- **Gut flora**
- **Fibromyalgia**
- **Kidney stones**
- **Metabolic syndrome**
- **Menstrual breast pain**
- **Mood**
- **Multiple sclerosis**
- **Oral health**
- **Rheumatoid arthritis**
- **Stools**
- **Waist circumference**
- **Weight Control (better than diet pills)**

Plant-based eating also appears to help prevent:

- **Abdominal aortic aneurysm**
- **Age-related macular degeneration**
- **Cataracts**
- **Crohn's disease**
- **Diverticulosis**
- **Gallstones**
- **Hiatal hernia**
- **Kidney stones**
- **Rheumatoid arthritis**
- **Ulcerative colitis**
- **Vaginal infections**

Eating meat and other animal products may be associated with weight gain (even after controlling for calories), a shortened lifespan, and other negative effects. Meat also contains a high amount of saturated fat, trans fats, sulfur dioxide, arachidonic acid, and heme iron. Meat, fish, dairy, and eggs may also increase our exposure to dietary antibiotics, industrial toxins, mercury and other toxic heavy metals, advanced glycation end-products (AGEs), cadmium, xenoestrogens in fish, and estrogenic meat carcinogens.

A plant-based diet can detoxify the body of these pollutants. Even just a step towards eating more plant-based might lengthen lifespan.

Contrary to popular myth, vegans have healthy bones and higher blood protein levels than omnivores. Most vegans get more than enough protein. In one study, within a matter of weeks, participants placed on the plant-based diet experienced improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol and insulin levels, insulin resistance, and C-reactive protein levels.

Vegans may have fewer nutrient deficiencies than average omnivores while maintaining a lower body weight without losing muscle mass. Those eating plant-based diets appear to experience enhanced athletic recovery without affecting the benefits of exercise. The arteries of vegans appear healthier than even long-distance endurance athletes and those on low-carb diets. In fact, the Paleo Diet may increase the risk of toxin contamination, DNA damage, and cancer.

There are two vitamins not available in plants: vitamins D and B12. There is a serious risk of B12 deficiency if no supplements or B12-fortified foods are consumed. Two other nutrients to monitor are iodine and zinc. Yeast- or algae-based long chain omega 3 fatty acids may also be beneficial.

Medical training continues to underemphasize nutrition education, meaning patients often do not receive information about all of the options for treatment. Doctors report they don't practice preventative cardiology because they fear their patients won't change their diet. Kaiser Permanente has begun more aggressive efforts to apprise patients about the advantages of plant-based diets.

If significantly more people moved to plant-based diets, medicare costs could go down by billions of dollars. Plant-based diets may also help lessen greenhouse gas emissions and have a smaller impact on the environment.