



Eat More Plant-Based Foods

CHALLENGE

Choose fresh & whole foods daily

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Eat More Plant-Based Foods.”
2. Create a plan to eat more plant-based foods for meals and snacks.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



“Eat your vegetables.” It’s a mantra North Carolina parents Penn and Kim Holderness use on their two kids. But it doesn’t always work.

A side of broccoli. A scoop of peas. Even something as simple as a carrot can trigger a dinner-table incident. Sometimes there’s whining,

crying, backtalk, and pure spin-your-head-in-a-circle evil... all because of vegetables.

Picky-eating isn’t just a kid phase. Take a closer look at your own eating habits. Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables? What about other whole foods like whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, eggs and low-fat dairy?

While you think about it, chew on this. Only 10 percent of adults eat enough vegetables.¹ And fruit isn’t much better. Only 12 percent of adults eat enough fruit.

So what’s the big deal with eating fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods? After all, they’re good for you, right? Research shows people who eat more plant-based foods are healthier and live up to 10 years longer than those who don’t.²

Want to tap into the health benefits of eating more fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods? Take the month-long health challenge to Eat More Plant-Based Foods.

Quiz: Take the Fresh-Food Challenge

How much do you know about the health benefits of eating plant-based foods? Take the quiz to find out.



T F

1. Poor nutrition is a leading cause of chronic disease and early death.
2. The average adult should eat 1-1/2 to 2 cups of fruit per day, and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables.
3. A plant-based diet can help lower the risk for cancer, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
4. Eating a little red meat doesn’t really have an impact on heart disease risk.
5. Legumes (beans) are a good source of protein – even better than red meat.

If you want to live longer, feel better and lower your risk for chronic disease, eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Eating even a little red meat raises the risk for heart disease and other health problems.³

Answers: 1. True, 2. True, 3. True, 4. False, 5. True.

Rate your food choices: Happy or SAD?

It’s no secret that 74 percent of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese.⁴ And the leading cause of death? It’s not a mystery either. It’s heart disease.⁵

A primary reason for both of these is SAD (Standard American Diet). You know...pizza, burgers, fries, desserts, sugary drinks, alcohol, and processed food from a can or box.

However, research points to one factor above all others as the key to a long, healthy and happier life. Want to know what it is? It’s your food choices.

5 benefits of a plant-based diet
<https://tinyurl.com/4bf2why3>



10 Ways to Eat More Plant-Based Foods

If you already eat plenty of whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, eggs, low-fat dairy, and legumes, keep up the good work. If you're ready to admit your diet isn't perfect, now is always a good time to start eating more plant-based foods. Here's how:

1. Start with salad. Going out to eat? Skip the main entrees and go with a salad: romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, sunflower seeds, and an olive-oil dressing. Try fruit salad. Or make your own at home.



2. Plan a whole-foods-only day. You don't have to be a vegan or vegetarian to be healthy. But try it for a day. Plan all your meals based on eating more fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, eggs, and low-fat dairy.

3. Fire up the grill. But instead of slapping a steak over the flames, slice up some bell peppers, squash, pineapple, and zucchini. Put some ears of corn or asparagus spears on the grill. Baste your vegetables of choice with olive oil and season with lemon herb. Then grill for 10 minutes until they soften.

4. Make your own soup. You can easily make your own soup loaded with vegetables in a slow-cooker. Just chop up your favorite veggies like carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and onions. Mix in a vegetable-based broth and some water, and let it simmer for a few hours.

5. Go nuts. Eat a handful of nuts as a snack. Or add nuts and seeds to a salad. Try walnuts, almonds, cashews, or pistachios.



6. Put it in the blender. You can add pureed fruits and vegetables to sauces, dips, and smoothies. Blend up some mushrooms and spinach and add to marinara or pasta sauce. And if you like fruit smoothies, add your favorite greens to the mix. You'll get the health benefits and nutrients, but you probably won't even notice.

Eating more plant-based foods can help:⁶



- Prevent heart disease and stroke
- Control blood sugar levels
- Prevent certain types of cancer
- Improve bone health
- Prevent depression
- Control blood pressure
- Improve cholesterol levels
- Support weight management
- Increase longevity

Video:
Do you want
to have some
broccoli?
<https://tinyurl.com/2v62rws5>

Hungry to improve your health, feel better and live longer? Eat more plant-based foods.

7. Eat chips. No, not the kind of chips deep fried in oil from the snack food aisle. Make your own kale chips. Tear up kale leaves into bite-sized pieces. Place on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt. Then bake in the oven for about 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

8. Use the microwave. But not to heat up dinner from a box. Stock up on frozen vegetables like corn, carrots, snap peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and legumes. When you're ready to eat, you can pour some in a bowl, pop them in the microwave and enjoy steamed vegetables in just a few minutes.



9. Go for fresh. Pick your favorite fruits and vegetables to eat fresh. Celery, cauliflower, bell peppers, carrots, and snap peas are common favorites. So are bananas, grapes, apples, and oranges. Eat fruit and vegetables in place of foods like candy bars and donuts.

10. Try a new recipe. Look up a recipe made with healthy ingredients, and give it a try. The options are endless, even for vegetables that sometimes get a bad rap like eggplant, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, or broccoli.

Infographic:
Eat plants to feel
whole
<https://tinyurl.com/3696endb>

References

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5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Leading causes of death. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yckjn8vj>
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Eat More Plant-Based Foods

CHALLENGE
Choose fresh & whole foods daily

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Eat more plant-based foods daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to eat more plant-based foods and make it a regular part of your life.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
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_____ Number of days this month I ate fruits, vegetables, and whole foods.
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

 Name _____ Date _____