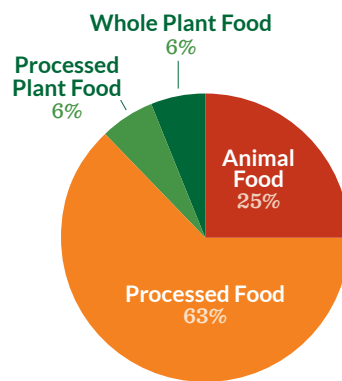


The Truth About Nutrition

Most of us don't realize that the foods we eat — three meals a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks each year — often have more of an impact on our health than anything else in our lives. While physical activity, managing stress, adequate sleep, avoiding tobacco products and social connectedness all play a role, food trumps all: Each bite we consume is either one step toward health, or one step toward disease. Learning the truth about nutrition is empowering! It enables us to make wise choices for ourselves and our families, positively impacting health right now and for the rest of our lives.

- 70% of Americans are overweight or obese.
- 37% of our children who are not considered overweight have one or more cardiovascular risk factors.
- 70 million Americans have hypertension (high blood pressure), with elevated risk for stroke and heart attack.
- 100 million Americans have diabetes or pre-diabetes, with increased risk of amputation, heart disease, and blindness.

Standard American Diet



The Solution: A Whole Food, Plant-Based Diet

What is a Whole Food, Plant-Based Diet?

It's a dietary lifestyle that maximizes the intake of whole, plant-foods and minimizes the intake of processed and animal-derived foods. It's a diet based on foods-as-grown: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, chickpeas, split peas, lentils, mushrooms, herbs, spices and small amounts of seeds and nuts. Consumption of meat (including chicken and fish), dairy products, and eggs, as well as highly refined foods like bleached flour, refined sugar, and oil are minimized or eliminated.

Foods and Nutrients to Increase

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Fiber
- Beans, Peas and Lentils
- Whole Grains
- Nuts and Seeds
- Water
- Antioxidants and Phytonutrients

Foods and Nutrients to Limit

- Meat, Poultry and Fish
- Eggs
- Dairy Products
- Cholesterol
- Refined Grains and Sugar
- Processed Oils
- Saturated Fat

Plant-Based Myths and Facts

Protein

Protein is an essential nutrient. However, the obsession with eating enough protein is unwarranted; in the case of protein, more is not better. Excess protein is either stored as fat or it is excreted along with vital minerals such as calcium.

All vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds contain protein — there is no such thing as an incomplete plant protein! As long as you are eating enough calories from a variety of plant foods, getting adequate protein on a plant-based diet is easy!

Calcium

Plant-based foods are excellent vehicles for delivering calcium to our bodies. Beans and greens are rich in calcium and, unlike dairy, come packaged with countless other vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that benefit health and improve calcium absorption and utilization.

Iron

Plant foods can actually be considered better sources of iron than animal foods because they come packaged with countless beneficial nutrients, as well as iron enhancers like vitamin C. Calorie for calorie, many plant foods contain higher amounts of iron than animal foods. Plant-based foods that are rich in iron include kidney beans, black beans, soybeans, spinach, raisins, cashews, oatmeal, cabbage, and tomato juice.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Some fats, called "essential fatty acids," are necessary in our diet. These fats are important for brain health, immune function, blood clotting, anti-inflammatory responses and many other bodily functions. There are many excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids in a plant-based diet, including flaxseed meal, chia seeds, walnuts, soy foods and leafy greens.

Vitamin B12

B12 is the only nutrient that cannot be adequately obtained from a whole food, plant-based diet. Therefore, the healthiest and most reliable way to ensure adequate B12 consumption is to take a B12 supplement.

Hydration

While you may require less when eating an abundance of water-rich plant-based foods, aim to drink at least eight cups of water per day, starting your day with two cups of water as soon as you rise in the morning. You may have thought that other beverages, like coffee and tea, counted toward your hydration status, but many have a dehydrating affect. Water is by far the best hydrator! Don't wait until you are thirsty — drink early and often!



Transitioning to a Plant-Based Diet

Incorporating Plant-Based Foods into Your Daily Routine

The best results will come from fully adopting a whole food, plant-based diet!

- Start where you are today
- Focus on progress
- It's about what you eat, not what you avoid
- Set goals
- Never believe what's printed on the front of a package.
- Take your journey to a healthy lifestyle one step and one bite at a time.

Meal Planning and Grocery Shopping Tips

- Take inventory what you already have
- Map out your weekly menu
- Make your list
- Stick to the staples
- Buy in bulk and shop online
- Schedule prep time
- Buy in-season produce to maximize freshness

When is Buying Organic Most Important?

Check out the Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen from EWG—www.ewg.org/foodnews/

Incorporating Into Daily Life

Making Plant-Based Family-Friendly

Here are a few ideas to encourage your family to embrace a whole food, plant-based lifestyle.

- Involve the entire family
- Give family favorites a makeover
- Lead by example

Dining Out on a Plant-Based Diet

- Plan ahead
- Don't be afraid to ask!
- Beware of oil and salt!
- Beware of refined grains!
- Get creative: Make a meal out of side dishes

Plant-Based on a Budget

- Plan meals
- Stick to the staples
- Buy in bulk
- Shop smart for produce
- Get cookin'

Navigating Travel on a Plant-Based Diet

- Plan ahead: Search online or ask for recommendations for healthy dining options
- Pack your own meals
- Avoid fast food
- Plan to eat in for at least one meal each day
- Drink plenty of water

Looking at the Bigger Picture

The Bigger Picture: Healthcare

- It's estimated that as much as 80% of all healthcare dollars are spent on treatment of chronic conditions that are preventable.
- According to Medicare: Healthcare expenditures in the United States were nearly \$2.6 trillion in 2010, an average of \$8,402 per person.
- Fidelity Investments estimates that retirees without employer sponsored plans will need \$160,000 in savings to cover medical bills, and someone in their forties today will need \$500,000 by the time they retire.
- Seniors spend on average \$2,810 dollars on prescription drugs annually, a cost projected to grow to \$5,382 dollars per year.
- The U.S. spends substantially more on health care than other developed countries. As of 2009, health spending in the U.S. was about 90% higher than in many other industrialized countries, yet it ranks near the bottom in health outcomes.
- 70% of all Americans consume prescription medications, with Americans spending more on pharmaceuticals than all of the rest of the world combined.

The Bigger Picture: Environment

The #1 cause of virtually all chronic disease and the #1 cause of many of our most pressing environmental sustainability issues are one and the same: our toxic western diet.

