



Health & Healing with the Power of Nutrition

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Plant based nutrition: what is it, and how is it beneficial?

When whole food, plant based, 90% or more of the diet is unrefined and minimally processed plant foods. This includes whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and beans and legumes. The remaining 10% or less is animal-based foods, including meat, dairy, fish, seafood and eggs.

The macro makeup is different from the standard American diet. When plant-based, 70-80% of calories come from carbohydrates, 10-15% come from protein, and 10-15% come from fat.

A plant-based diet and lifestyle is at the top of the charts for cancer and disease prevention, and management. A plant based diet is even capable of reversing some of the most common chronic diseases in many, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

In those who are unable to achieve reversal, it helps significantly in managing and reducing symptoms. It is also an integral part of fighting cancer. Plants pack a heavy punch against disease.

It also plays a powerful role in immune health, including managing autoimmune diseases and cancers. As an added bonus, when switching to a plant-based diet people tend to find many of their chronic "annoyances" significantly improve.

This includes migraines, joint pain, brittle hair and nails, acne-prone skin, inflammation, menstrual cramps and hot flashes, constipation and digestive issues, insomnia and chronic fatigue, even improvement in symptoms of depression.

What does the plant based plate look like?

Carbohydrates:

On the Aggregate Nutrient Density Index (ANDI), carbohydrates rank the highest for the amount of nutrients to calories. Every cell in the body relies on glucose as its primary fuel source, and glucose comes from carbohydrates.

The quality of the carbohydrate is key. Whole, unrefined carbohydrates deliver an excellent supply of fiber, while being harder to break down and therefore delivering a steady and manageable stream of glucose into the bloodstream. These include brown rice, quinoa, oats, Ezekiel bread, barley, and more.

Refined carbohydrates, such as sweets, white breads and pastas, and processed foods, have been stripped of their nutrients and fiber. They are digested quickly, causing a spike in glucose levels and requiring the pancreas to crank out excess insulin. The result is the proverbial "carb-crash", which does not come with whole grains. This overload of glucose is stored as glycogen first, then the excess as fat.

Proteins & Fats:

Protein is key for cell repair in every part of the body from bones, all the way out to skin and nails. Protein is present in every single living thing, and we don't need much of it - only about 10-15% of our diet. Americans are typically getting 20-25% at minimum, which creates a risk for heart disease and cancer.

The healthiest and most abundant source of protein is beans and legumes, which are rich in protein without the saturated fat and cholesterol present in animal foods.

Fats are also important in the diet. We need a small amount of saturated fat, about 20-30 grams. Any more than that causes cholesterol levels to rise and increases the risk for heart disease. The best way to limit saturated fat while getting the important healthy fats is to limit animal foods and increase plant foods. Nuts, seeds and avocados are the best sources of fat; but in small quantities as it doesn't take much to satisfy the body's needs.

Fruits & Vegetables:

All of the remaining micronutrients are present in fruits and vegetables. These are abundant in vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants. Vitamin C aids in the absorption of iron. Cruciferous vegetables (the cabbage family) contain sulforaphane, a powerful cancer-fighter. Berries, citrus fruits and dark leafy greens contain antioxidants which help reduce inflammation in the body. A serving of dark leafy greens is crucial in the daily diet.

The diagram below shows how to build a healthy plate.

