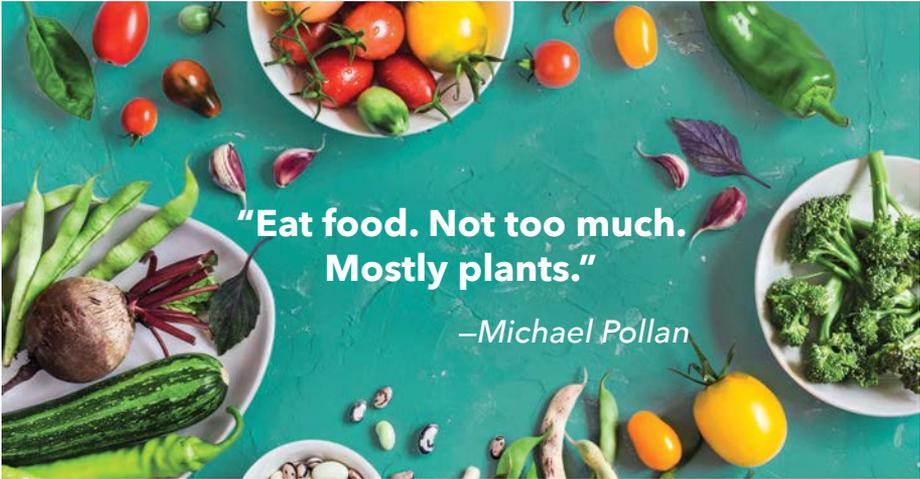


Plant-Based Eating

Using the Healthy Plate to Eat Well





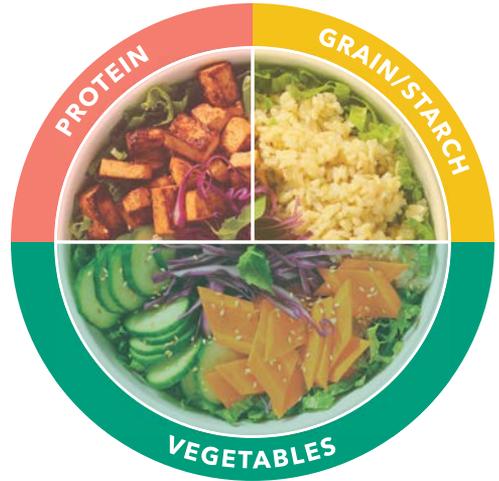
**"Eat food. Not too much.
Mostly plants."**

—Michael Pollan

What is plant-based eating?

Plant-based eating is eating plant foods in their whole, unprocessed forms. This includes vegetables, fruits, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and small amounts of healthy fats. It can help you limit animal products (meat, poultry, fish, dairy, eggs), processed foods, and sweets.

You can eat healthier without having to give up the foods you love! Small changes to the foods you eat can have a huge impact on your health. A good way to start is by eating more plant foods and fewer animal products, processed foods, and sweets. This plan will help you increase the amount of plant foods you eat by using the healthy plate.



What are the benefits of eating more plants?

- Lowers cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar
- Reduces the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, weight gain, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Less inflammation in the body
- Reducing meat and dairy products is better for the environment

Best of all, plant-based eating can be a tasty and enjoyable way to eat!

Your New Food Groups

Following are the food groups to include in your daily meals. The suggested serving sizes give you an idea of the amount to eat. Use the healthy plate on page 7 to help estimate portion sizes.

Tips

- **If you are trying to lose weight, it's important to remember that some foods have more calories.** Be mindful of portion size when you eat nuts, seeds, and other plant-based fats like avocados and olive oil. Talk to your registered dietitian or doctor for more information.
- **Choose unprocessed, whole foods instead of processed foods most of the time.**
 - Choose beans more often than vegetarian patties or links.
 - Choose whole grains (barley, quinoa, or brown rice) more often than processed grains (bread or pasta).

Nonstarchy Vegetables

Artichoke hearts, asparagus, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, collard greens, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, green beans, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, onions, peppers, spinach, sugar snap peas, summer squash, swiss chard, tomatoes

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
Unlimited, but eat at least 6 servings a day. Include at least 1 serving of leafy green vegetables a day.	1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked	2 grams

Starchy Vegetables

Corn, cassava (yuca), green peas, plantains, potatoes, winter squash, yams

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
2-4 servings	½ cup	2 grams

Fruits

Apples, apricots, bananas, berries, grapes, kiwi, mango, melon, oranges, papaya, pineapple

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
3-4 servings	1 small piece 1 cup berries or melon	½-1 gram

Beans, Peas, Lentils, or Meat Alternatives

Beans (kidney, black, garbanzo, pinto, great northern, adzuki), edamame (green soybeans), green and black-eyed peas, lentils, soy or other protein patties or links (choose very rarely), tempeh, tofu

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
2-5 servings	½ cup cooked beans	7-10 grams

Whole Grains

Amaranth, barley, brown or wild rice, buckwheat, bulgur, farro, millet, oats, quinoa, rye, sorghum, whole-grain bread, whole-grain unsweetened cereal, whole-wheat pasta, whole-wheat tortillas

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
5-8 servings	½ cup cooked grain ¾ cup dry cereal 1 slice bread 1 small tortilla (6 inches)	4-8 grams

Nuts and Seeds

Almonds, cashews, chia seeds, flaxseeds, nut butter, pistachios, sunflower seeds, walnuts

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
1-4 servings	1 ounce (¼ cup) nuts 2 tablespoons nut butter	4-8 grams

Fats and Oils (limit if you have heart disease)

Whole foods: Avocados, olives

Oils: Canola, extra virgin olive, flaxseed

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
0-2 servings	¼ avocado (2 tablespoons) 8 large olives 1 teaspoon oil	0 grams

Dairy Alternatives

Unsweetened milk alternatives, such as soy, almond, rice, and hemp (look for brands fortified with vitamin B12); soy, rice, and almond milk cheeses

Daily Servings	Serving Size	Protein
0-2 servings	1 cup milk 1 ounce cheese	1-9 grams



= good health!

Tips to Get Started

- Think about the meatless meals you already cook at home: whole-wheat pasta with marinara sauce; black beans and rice; lentil soup and salad.
- Change a favorite recipe to be plant-based.
 - Make burritos or tacos with beans, rice, and vegetables without the meat and cheese.
 - Prepare chili with beans and no meat.
 - Replace burgers with veggie burgers or grilled portobello mushrooms.
 - Make kebabs with vegetables such as onions, bell peppers, summer squash, and mushrooms.
 - Make lentil or split pea soup without meat, and don't use chicken or beef broth.
- Try some new recipes. Check the end of this booklet for resources. You can also get cookbooks from your local library or Kaiser Permanente Healthy Living Store.
- Use frozen fruits and vegetables for an easy, low-cost way to eat more plants.
- When you cook beans from scratch, the quick-soak method can help remove some of the indigestible sugars that cause gas.
 - Put the beans in a large pot and cover with 2 inches of water.
 - Bring to a boil for 3 minutes.
 - Cover and set aside for 1 to 4 hours.
 - Rinse and drain well.
- Drink plenty of water. It's best to avoid fruit juice and other sugary drinks, and to avoid or cut down on regular and sugar-free soda.
- Check out a farmers market for good deals on produce.
- Use spices, fresh herbs, and nutritional yeast to add flavor.
- Try adding more hearty, savory flavors with mushrooms, miso or other fermented foods, tomatoes, and potatoes.

- Cooking plant-based meals can sometimes take more time. To save time:
 - Make a larger pot of beans or lentils and freeze some for later.
 - Buy precut fresh or frozen vegetables.
 - Buy precooked grains, such as barley, farro, quinoa, or brown and wild rice.
 - When baking yams or potatoes, make a few extra to use in the next meal.
 - Use canned beans with reduced, low, or no sodium (including nonfat refried beans). Rinse whole beans with water before using.
 - Try firm tofu cut into slices and seasoned with spices and green onions.
- If your family is not eating plant-based meals with you:
 - Cook meat separately and add it to the other plant-based foods.
 - Encourage your family to try more meatless meals.
 - Try new recipes they may enjoy, such as five-bean chili without meat or portobello mushroom “burgers.”
- You may need to add a few items to your kitchen:
 - A good chef’s knife to cut vegetables, fruits, and other plant-based foods
 - A blender or food processor
 - A large pot, pressure cooker, or crockpot to cook beans
 - A nonstick pan

Tips to Use Less Oil

- Sauté vegetables with a small amount of water or vegetable broth instead of oil.
- Roast or bake vegetables without oil.
- Replace oil in baked goods with bananas, apples, applesauce, soaked raisins or prunes, dates, or tofu.
- Make oil-free salad dressing with vinegar or lemon juice and garlic, spices, and fresh herbs. You can also blend a small amount of hummus with vinegar or lemon juice and mustard.

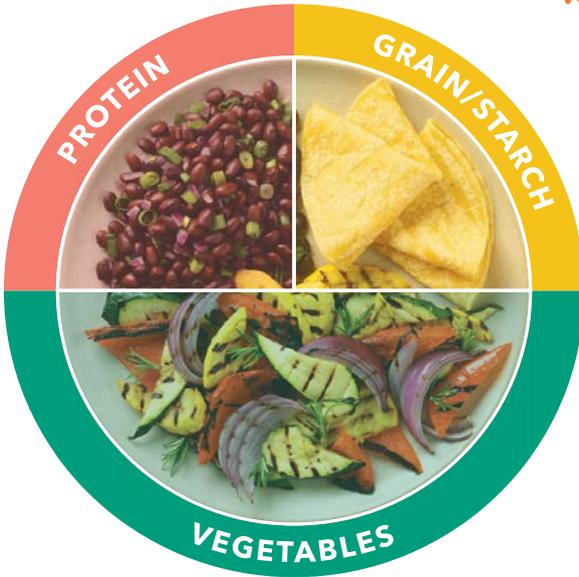
Creating Plant-Based Meals

The Healthy Plate

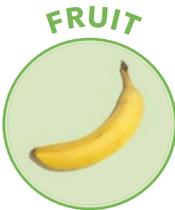
Use the healthy plate method to portion your food in an easy and healthy way for each meal.

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with a **plant-based protein**.

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with a **healthy grain or starchy vegetable**.



Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with **nonstarchy vegetables**.



Add a **fruit**, a **salad**, and **1 ounce of nuts** to at least one meal or as part of a healthy snack.

Healthy Plate Examples



Black beans with corn tortillas and grilled vegetables



Black-eyed peas with yams and greens

Meal Ideas

Breakfast

Have oatmeal, quinoa, or barley with nuts, fruit, and unsweetened almond, rice, hemp, or soy milk alternative. An ounce or two of nuts and a piece of fruit is a quick and easy option. Make a smoothie with a tablespoon of almond butter, a banana, unsweetened almond milk, and a handful of kale or other green leafy vegetable. Try a tofu scramble with vegetables.

Lunch and Dinner

Have a large salad or a large serving of cooked nonstarchy vegetables with beans and potatoes or a whole grain.

Sample Menus

- Breakfast**
- Breakfast burrito with beans and vegetables
 - Small piece of fruit
 - Tea or coffee
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- Lunch**
- Whole-wheat pita with hummus, tomatoes, red onions, and cucumber
 - Kale sautéed with vegetable broth
 - Salad with vegetables and balsamic vinegar
 - Banana
 - Unsweetened tea
-

- Dinner**
- Grilled portobello mushroom “burger” with caramelized onions
 - Quinoa and bean salad
 - Broccoli
 - Kale salad
 - Strawberries
 - Unsweetened tea

- Breakfast**
- Oatmeal or barley with blueberries, walnuts, and soy milk
 - Tea or coffee
-

- Lunch**
- Split pea, carrot, and barley soup
 - Salad with spring mix, vegetables, kidney beans, and balsamic vinegar and mustard
 - Orange
 - Sparkling mineral water
-

- Dinner**
- Tacos with whole-grain tortillas, grilled vegetables, potatoes, avocado, and salsa
 - Pinto beans
 - Salad with vegetables and balsamic vinegar and mustard
 - Mango
 - Sparkling mineral water

Tips for Eating Out

Many restaurants offer some meatless options or side dishes. Restaurants are often willing to make changes to menu items by switching to meatless sauces, removing meat from stir-fries, adding vegetables or pasta in place of meat, and using less or no oil.

Restaurants that make food to order may be more willing to make these changes. Many ethnic restaurants, such as Indian, Chinese, and Thai, offer a variety of plant-based dishes and sides. Check the website happycow.net to find a meatless restaurant near you.

Special Nutrients to Consider

If you have questions about any of these nutrients, especially about whether you should take a supplement, **talk with your doctor or registered dietitian.**

Protein

Protein builds and repairs muscles, bones, skin, and the immune system. You also need it to make hormones and enzymes. Proteins are made up of amino acids. Your body can make some amino acids. The ones your body cannot make are called *essential*.

You can easily meet your protein needs each day from plant foods such as beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, soy products, whole grains, and vegetables. Quinoa, a seed that acts like a grain, is a great source of protein and all the essential amino acids.

Adults need about 0.36 grams of protein per pound of body weight a day. Multiply your weight by 0.36 to find out how much protein you need. For example, if you weigh 160 pounds: $160 \times 0.36 =$ about 58 grams of protein a day.

B12

Your body needs vitamin B12 to make red blood cells and for nerve function. If you don't get enough B12, you can develop anemia or nerve damage. Most B12 comes from animal foods. **B12 is found in some fortified foods, such as cereal, rice or hemp milk, meat substitutes, and nutritional yeast.** Read labels for these products to make sure B12 has been added.

Because it may not be easy to get enough B12 from fortified foods, it may be best to take a supplement. As you get older, your body is less able to absorb B12. Your doctor may suggest a supplement or shot to help prevent a deficiency.

Iron

Iron is a mineral in the blood that carries oxygen. Getting enough iron is important for everyone, especially pregnant women, women of childbearing age, children, and infants. **Iron-rich plant foods include whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas, dark green leafy vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, and seeds.** Some foods, such as breakfast cereals, are fortified with iron.



The type of iron found in plant foods is not absorbed as easily as the iron in animal products. However, **eating iron-rich foods along with vitamin C** can help your body better use the iron. Some foods with vitamin C are oranges, mangos, kiwis, strawberries, red peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, and bok choy. Eat several servings of iron-rich foods a day. Some people may need to take a supplement.

Calcium

Calcium helps build bones and teeth. It's also important for the function of the heart, muscles, and nerves. **Good sources are Chinese cabbage, bok choy, kale, calcium-set tofu, and broccoli.** There are also many **calcium-fortified foods, such as soy or almond milk or yogurt and cereal.** Eat several servings of foods high in calcium each day. You can also take a supplement.



Zinc

Zinc is important for the immune system, wound healing, and blood sugar control. **Good sources are whole grains, tofu, tempeh, beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and cereals or other foods fortified with zinc.**

Compounds in plant foods keep zinc from being absorbed. This can be improved by **soaking beans, grains, and seeds** in water for several hours before cooking. Eating **sprouted grains and beans, and choosing leavened grains** (such as bread) instead of crackers also helps. Eat several servings of foods high in zinc. You can also take a supplement.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is needed for strong bones and for muscles, nerves, and the immune system to work properly. Very few foods have vitamin D. We get most of our vitamin D when the **skin is exposed to the sun**, but many people do not make enough this way. **Some foods, such as soy or almond milk and cereal have added vitamin D.** You may need to take a supplement.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, such as EPA and DHA, may lower the risk of heart disease and help the immune system and brain. **Good sources include ground flaxseeds and flaxseed oil, walnuts, chia seeds, and canola oil.** Plant-based omega-3s don't easily convert to EPA and DHA in the body. For some people, including pregnant women or people with chronic health conditions, taking a micro-algae supplement may be helpful.

Tell Your Doctor About Your Plant-Based Eating

Making a lot of healthy changes can lower your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Plant-based eating can also affect thyroid or blood-thinning medications [warfarin (Coumadin)]. If you are taking medications, make sure to tell your doctor that you are plant-based eating. He or she may need to change some or all your medications. Your health condition may need to be monitored more often for a short time.

My Personal Action Plan

Action plans are short-term plans that help you reach your goal to eat more plant foods. They can greatly improve your chances for success. The plan must include a specific action or behavior that you want to do and know that you will be able to accomplish.

- **What** are you going to do?
- **How much** are you going to do?
- **When** are you going to do it?
- **How many** days of the week are you going to do it?

Example:

This week I will eat a salad (*what*) made with 3 cups (*how much*) of sun-dried tomatoes, carrots, artichoke hearts, kidney beans, and cucumber with dinner (*when*) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (*how many*).



This week I will:

	(what)
	(how much)
	(when)
	(how many)

How confident are you that you will succeed with your plan?



0 = not confident at all

10 = totally confident

I will make a commitment to _____ to
(friend or family member)
follow my action plan and report back on how I did.

Did you complete your action plan?

Yes	No

Name	
Date	

Congratulations on taking this important step to improve your health and wellness!

If you find you can't do plant-based eating 100% of the time, that's OK. Any movement toward more plants and fewer animal products, processed foods, and sweets can improve your health!



Resources

Websites with Recipes and More

- choosemyplate.gov/recipes-cookbooks-and-menus
- foodforhealth.kaiserpermanente.org
- eatright.org/food
- navs-online.org/food-recipes/recipes

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