



BEGINNERS GUIDE

TO PLANT BASED EATING

INTRODUCTION

Your health is affected by every bite you take. So, make sure it's a good one.

The world is shaped and developed by every food choice we make. Be it in a restaurant or at the supermarket, our choices big or small collectively make up a difference for better and or worse.

A plant-based diet is a lifestyle that maximises the consumption of whole plant-foods rich in vitamins and minerals and minimises the consumption of processed animal derived foods. It's a diet based on eating whole foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, herbs, spices, nuts and seeds. Consumption of meat including fish, dairy, and eggs along with highly refined foods, bleached flours, refined sugar and oil are minimised or eliminated.

Adopting this diet and using a "food is medicine" approach really does have the power to transform and enhance your health and effect the way you feel and look inside and out.

We want you to focus on having a balanced whole foods diet with no emphasise or obsession on individual nutrients, which has spawned a billion-pound supplement industry. Instead we will keep it simple by shifting our focus on to a varied balanced diet, which has all the nutrients, carbohydrates, fats and protein we need to live optimally. We may need to supplement vitamin D and B12 for the healthiest ratio for our bodies to be at optimal health.



WHY IS EATING A MORE PLANT-BASED DIET GOOD FOR YOU?

It helps prevent, arrest, and even reverse chronic conditions and illnesses such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Slows progression of certain cancers



Lowers cholesterol



Lowers blood pressure



Enables healthy weight loss and weight maintenance



Improves immune function



Decreases stress on the body



Increases energy



Improves mood and mental clarity



Environmentally friendly

FOOD GROUPS TO INCREASE



VEGETABLES: The ultimate food, nutrient dense and full of health promoting vitamins and minerals such as calcium, iron and fibre to name a few.



FRUITS: Packed full of antioxidants especially berries and are a great and tasty way to get them into you. Avoid juices as they don't have the fibre and always eat a variety of colours to get a larger array of nutrients.



FIBRE: Fibre is only found in plant-based foods and having enough fibre in the diet is associated with lower rates of cancer and other chronic diseases. Helps with weight loss and maintenance.



LEGUMES: Rich in protein, fibre, calcium, iron, and B vitamins. Essential in any plant-based diet.



WHOLE GRAINS: Such as quinoa, oats and rice. Again, full of protein, fibre and essential minerals such as zinc, calcium and magnesium. Whole grains can also be eaten as whole grain breads, tortillas and pastas but are not as nutritious due to the processing process.



NUTS AND SEEDS: Great sources of healthy fats such as omega 3 in flax and chia. They are also rich in protein and calcium. They help to feed the good bacteria in your guts, known as a prebiotic.

WATER: Plant foods are full of water and help to keep you hydrated. Water is essential for every process to be carried out in the body. So, keep hydrated.

FOOD GROUPS TO AVOID AND LIMIT



MEAT AND FISH: High in unhealthy saturated fat which clogs up your arteries “which we don’t want” including fish, which is also high in sticky cholesterol and industrial pollutants pumped into the sea.



EGGS: Yes, our favourite breakfast treat! Eggs are considered to be nature's perfect protein yet contain more cholesterol than a quarter pounder and cheese.



DAIRY: Again, high in unhealthy fats and cholesterol. And no matter if it is full fat or semi-skimmed milk, they all have casein, the protein found in cow's milk and products made from cow's milk. Some research has shown that this protein has hidden dangers to health.



CHOLESTEROL: Dietary cholesterol is only found in animal foods and products and associated with high blood pressure and heart disease.



REFINED GRAINS AND ADDED SUGAR: Refined grains like white flour, quick cook oats and sugary desserts are comparatively void of fibre. Found in processed food, they are the culprit of inflammation and cell damage, leading to chronic disease and often linked to obesity.




PROCESSED OILS: Unlike whole food full of fats, like avocado or nuts. Processed oils are lower in nutrients and higher in calories. Despite what you've been told olive oil is not a health food - it's 100% fat and should be used sparingly. Eat the fibre filled olive instead.

SATURATED FAT: Is plentiful in animal foods and raises your cholesterol and leads to heart disease. Enough said.

PLANT POWERED KIDS

IS A PLANT BASED DIET HEALTHY FOR
ALL THE FAMILY?





Yes, yes and yes!

Eating habits are formed at an early stage. So, introducing whole plant-based foods to children at an early age sets the foundation for them to become healthy eaters for life.

Children eating a more whole food plant-based diet experience normal growth and development, and their risk of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease is much lower than children on a standard western diet. Also, children on a plant-based diet have lower rates of acne, allergies and digestive issues.

For growing children, adolescents and teens adequate caloric intake is essential. They need to consume more fats than adults to meet their needs. Adding avocado, nuts, seeds and nut butters into their meals is a good idea. Like adults you may need to supplement B12. But in some cases where children are outside in nature playing around in dirt and eating organic foods their B12 levels have been better than normal.

THE PROTEIN MYTH

Yes, protein is an essential nutrient and our bodies need it to build new cells, organs and muscles. However, there is an obsession with eating enough protein and we don't often see protein deficiencies in the western world. And in the case of protein more is not better. Excess protein is either stored as fat or is excreted along with other vital minerals such as calcium. This excretion of excess protein can also be taxing on the kidneys.

Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Of the 20 amino acids we need for our body to function optimally, 9 of them are essential, meaning our body cannot manufacture them, so they must be consumed instead. It is thought that a plant-based diet is deficient in protein and you can't get enough through eating plants alone. This quite simply isn't true! All vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds etc all contain the essential amino acids our bodies need. There is no such thing as an incomplete plant-based protein. The issue is that some have relatively low counts of amino acids, so you would have to consume a lot, like spinach for example. As long as you are eating a wide variety and enough food your body will be provided with all the protein it needs.

Studies have also shown that vegans and vegetarians are not only meeting recommendations, but they are exceeding them too.

WHAT ABOUT SOY?

MYTH: *Soy causes feminisation in men.*

Phytoestrogen, an estrogen like plant chemical found in soy was shown to impair male rats' reproductive abilities in some studies. However, phytoestrogen does not have the same effect on humans. Rats metabolise soy differently to us so the findings from rat soy studies cannot be applied to humans. In fact, soy is shown to help protect against cancers and suppress abdominal fat storage and help lower cholesterol.

If you're still not sure, check out plant-based soy eating body builder Robert Cheeke, mixed martial arts champion Mac Danzig and triathlete Brendan Brazier. Their work and physiques will reassure you.

MYTH: *Soy protein causes breast cancer*

Soy due to its high levels of isoflavone and antioxidant content are actually protective against cancers including breast and ovarian cancer as well as other diseases.

BOTTOM LINE: *Soy foods are part of a healthy plant-based diet.*

Always choose organic and minimally processed soy foods and eat it either whole as edamame beans, tempeh, miso, tofu and soy milk. Avoid in protein powders and processed meat substitute foods like sausages and chicken nuggets.

If you only make one change...



TRUTH ABOUT DAIRY

If you only make one change to your diet, choose to give up dairy or make it a rare exception to your dietary rule.



MYTH: *You need dairy to increase your calcium and make strong bones.*

Many people believe that dairy is a necessary part of a healthy diet and will give you strong bones. This is due to marketing and governmental recommendations sponsored by the industry in question. And is quite simply not true. Countries where dairy is rarely or never consumed, osteoporosis rates are a lot lower when compared to countries consuming lots of dairy. Dairy can also be high in unhealthy saturated fats and cholesterol. Furthermore, it contains a protein called casein which had been linked to switching on cancer cells and causing diseases such as prostate and breast cancer.

Milk is designed to nourish and fatten up calves and transform them from a 45kg baby to a 700kg plus animal in less than 2 years! We are the only species to drink the milk of another mammal, which is not something that happens in a natural habitat. Also, the fact that 85% of the world's population is lactose intolerant suggests that it is not the best substance for us to consume.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DAIRY

- Populations consuming more dairy suffer from higher fracture rates.
- Consuming more than 2 servings of dairy a day is linked with increasing chances of prostate cancer in men.
- Dairy stimulates insulin like growth factor which accelerates cancer cell growth.
- Most dairy contains contaminants like growth hormones and antibiotics. These are given to cows to promote even more growth and fight the infection that occurs from constant milking.

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO GIVE UP DAIRY?

Giving up dairy can be tricky because it is addictive, literally! Dairy contains casomorphins, substances that trigger the same feel good sensations as opiates. Nature's way to ensure that the baby will keep coming back for more milk thus keeping baby nourished.

It might feel daunting to give up, as it is such a large part of everyday life but there are lots of alternatives out there which taste better in my opinion, for example oat milk. I will cover more swaps and alternatives later.

IRON

Iron is the mineral responsible for carrying oxygen around the body. There are two types of iron, blood based “heme iron” found in animal-based foods and “non heme iron” found in plant-based foods. Heme iron is more easily absorbed and readily absorbable! Great huh? Well not always as our bodies do not have a mechanism for excreting it, so excess iron will be left to float around potentially hindering the absorption of other minerals. Non heme iron is considered safer because it will be packed full of countless beneficial nutrients and iron enhancers like vitamin C and many other minerals too. It will also be missing the saturated fats that come with animal-based sources.

Good sources of iron are kidney beans, black beans, soy beans, raisins, cashews, oats, cabbage, lentils, tomato juice and cooked spinach. Cooked spinach because it has a plant chemical that holds onto iron when eaten raw, so you don't absorb as much as when cooked. Therefore, it's important to break this chemical down through cooking or wilting with lemon juice.

OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

These fats are important for the brain, immune function, blood clotting and anti-inflammatory responses to name a few. There are 2 types of essential fatty acids, omega 3 and 6 and although a precise ratio to consume is yet to be determined, it is thought that 2:1 or 3:1 is a good starting point. So that's more 3 than 6. Unfortunately, the standard western diet is quite the opposite with even bigger deficits. A higher 6 to 3 ratio also hinders the absorption of 3, which is caused by eating too many processed and animal-based foods. By minimising these foods, you can get back to a healthier more optimal 3 to 6 omega fatty acid ratio.

Excellent sources are Flax seeds, chia seeds, walnuts, soy foods, leafy greens and algae which is where fish get theirs from.

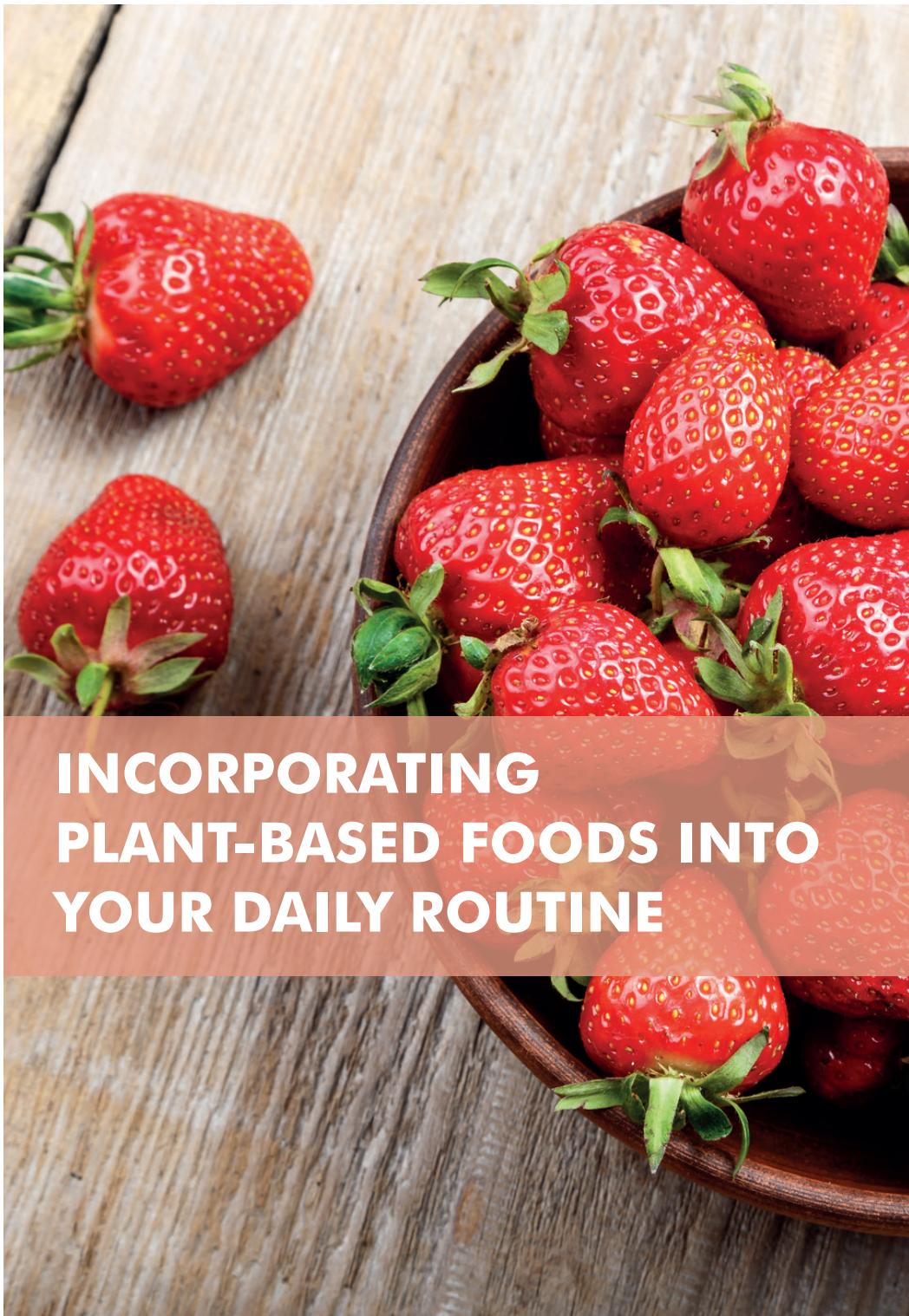
VITAMIN B12

Important for the development and protection of nerve cells and red blood cells and aids in DNA production. Deficiencies can lead to weakness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, increased irritability, anaemia and more. This nutrient is hands down the hardest to obtain through a plant-based diet due to the sterilisation of the world we live in. It is made by bacteria not animals. The animals obtain this nutrient through the water they drink and the dirt they eat whilst grazing and this then builds up in the tissue and we consume it by eating the flesh. But nowadays so many antibiotics are used in the farming industry killing off the bacteria, that not even this is a reliable source anymore. So, your best bet for getting enough B12 is either drinking from ponds, eating non-treated dirt or what I would recommend doing is take a good B12 supplement.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN BUYING B12

- Buy a supplement not a fortified processed food.
- Choose a vegan one as they are often made with organic and non-GMO ingredients.
- Check the ingredients and look for methylcobalamin. This is the most easily absorbed form of B12, so choose this over all others.
- Choose a sublingual, sprays or in liquid form as these absorb straight into the blood stream.
- And choose the right dosage for you. Always check with your health care practitioner.





**INCORPORATING
PLANT-BASED FOODS INTO
YOUR DAILY ROUTINE**

Start where you are today. You are unique and your journey to eating a mainly plant-based diet is yours and yours alone. Start to think of a normal western diet at one end of the spectrum and a whole food diet at the other end. Our aim is to slowly transition along the spectrum to a more plant-based whole food diet becoming the rule of thumb and that processed, packaged, animal-based foods are the exception to the rule.

Don't be hard on yourself if you trip along the way. Your next food choice is always around the corner. And if you do, enjoy it and move on and refer to the above paragraph again. We are only human and if we are still going forward we are still making progress!

Make a goal each week that's achievable. Write down a goal and identify specifically how you intend to reach it. And stick with it because the best results will come when you fully adopt a whole food plant-based diet and it will become easier with time and the new norm for you and your family.

It is also important to remember if you are wanting to go plant-based because you want to reverse any illness or disease and you continue to eat animal-based foods in moderation, this isn't going to cut the mustard. It is a lot less extreme to change your diet than it is to have a coronary bypass surgery due to poor dietary choices. So, make those choices and remember food is either medicine or poison!

SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION

Hunger “we often mistake thirst for hunger” so try some water first!

- Constipation
- Very yellow urine
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Muscle cramps
- Dull skin

Always start with at least a glass of water before you reach for that coffee in the morning. I have about 400ml of water with a squeeze of lemon juice and a tiny pinch of sea salt in the morning before anything, to rehydrate and re-mineralise my body after a good sleep.

Now that we have a powerful “why” for adopting more plant-based foods into our diets, here are some tips as to how we can incorporate them.



ALTERNATIVES AND SWAPS

MILK: There are lots of plant-based milks out there, so try them out see which ones you like. Check the ingredients though. Only buy milks with water, salt and the plant it's made from. Tapioca is ok too. Avoid any E numbers and carrageenan as these cause inflammation.

CREAM: Cashew cream is a great substitute for cream and packed with more nutrients too. Combine cashew with a liquid like vegetable broth and blend in a high-speed blender until super smooth and creamy.

EGGS: For baking mix 1 tablespoon of milled flax seeds with 3 tablespoons of water until gelatinous. This equals 1 egg. Multiply the recipe for the number of eggs you need. You can also replace flax seeds with chia, using the same proportions. Chia seeds have a neutral flavour, whereas flax seeds give a nuttier taste.

For combining things like veggie burgers use corn starch, which is 2 tablespoons of corn flour with 2 tablespoons of water, mixed well. Multiply the recipe for the number of eggs needed.

SCRAMBLED EGGS: Try scrambled tofu jazzed up with some herbs and spices.

CHEESE: Our beloved cheese, quite often the hardest to give up but also a crucial step forward to living a healthier life. Try sprinkling nutritional yeast on meals, instead of parmesan, for that cheesy flavour. There are some great nut and seed cheeses out there, so keep an eye out for them. They are delicious.

FINALLY!

Whole food, plant-based diets are healthier for the entire family and as you begin your journey towards a better healthier life, you might get a couple of knock backs from the family not willing to change or embrace these lifestyle choices. Here are a couple of tips to help out.

Involve the entire family and make it fun. Although messy at times get your loved ones involved either cleaning potatoes, peeling carrots or weighing ingredients. This is a great way to lure the kids to the dinner table with excitement. This will pay back in dividends later along the line. Let them choose which recipes to cook that week, which will get them looking forward to meal times as well. This will also help educate them in all things food!

Most important you have to lead by example. As a parent, all eyes are on you so setting a good example is a must. If your children are seeing you enjoy all your veggies they will too, well that's the plan anyway!

When it comes to stocking your pantry, you don't have to go and buy all the ingredients under the sun. Start by picking a few recipes you enjoy cooking and your pantry will make its self over time. Don't forget to pick some other recipes or let the kids choose from time to time. Variety is the spice of life.

