Thinking about putting more plants on your

plate?

Here's some information about eating in a whole foods, plant-based way



Food is a central part of our lives. Meal times are an opportunity to gather with friends, colleagues and family, and to refuel our bodies.

In fact, what we choose to put in our mouth is one of the most powerful decisions we can make for our health and wellbeing—and we get this opportunity several times a day!

But it's not always easy to switch to a new way of eating.

The good news is that when we move towards eating more **whole**, **plant-based foods**, we often find we don't need to restrict our eating in order to shed excess weight and experience more vitality.

A balanced whole foods, plant-based (WFPB) diet is naturally low in fats and oils, delivers a good amount of protein, and over time supports our body to 'do its thing' naturally.

There are so many incredible plant foods to explore, and we are lucky to live in Switzerland, where these foods are fresh and readily available.

It might take a little time to experiment with new foods or new ways of cooking, and to find what works for you and your taste, but that's all part of the adventure!

The important thing is to aim for **progress, not perfection**!



Nutrition is fundamentally the biologically 'wholistic' process by which elements of food and water are used by the body to optimize health. It's the highly integrated reactions and events of countless food chemicals working together, as in a symphony.¹

How do I get started?

Without a doubt the key to unlocking the benefits of eating in a more plant-based way is to consume **whole foods**, because in our increasingly 'fast' and pre-packaged food environment, we often forget that **fiber is our friend**!

Fiber is a non-digestible carbohydrate found in all nonrefined carbs. It assists in regulating the body's use of sugars, and helps to keep hunger and blood sugar in check. It also helps us stay regular, and—best of all—**plants are packed full of it!**



What exactly are whole foods?



Eating whole foods means eating a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and legumes **in their natural**, **unprocessed form.**

So instead of choosing to drink a bottle of orange juice, which is mostly water and fructose, we'd eat a **whole orange**, which contains water as well as some fiber, which not only helps keep our bowel movements regular but actually assists in the absorption of Vitamin C. Likewise, instead of eating refined flour products (white bread, donuts, pretzels) we'd go for the **whole grains** like oats, quinoa, or a whole grain bread.

¹ T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies 2018



But fiber is only one angle from which to look at the whole foods picture.

If we step back and look at our **daily caloric intake**, it's helpful to look at **macronutrients**, which are the basic **nutrients** needed for our body to function. They are considered **the backbone of the human metabolism**.

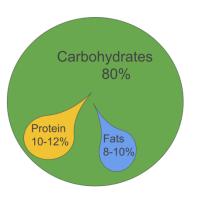
Macronutrients

Most people are familiar with **calories**, which are a measurement of **energy**. Our ideal caloric intake should be equivalent to our expenditure, and this should vary depending on our size, gender and age.

You can calculate yours here: http://www.bmi-calculator.net/bmr-calculator

Now let's look at **macronutrients as a percentage of our recommended daily caloric intake**. An ideal breakdown looks like this:

- fats (8-10%)
- protein (10-12%)
- carbohydrates (80%)



This breakdown is based on the US Recommended Daily Allowance—or **RDA**—which was established in the 1940s and is reviewed every 5 years. Speak to your doctor if you're living with a significant medical issue, though, as a different ratio might be recommended for you.



Western cultures and mainstream media are very focused on protein, and rightly so, as we need a minimum of 0.8g of protein for every 1kg of body weight. For example, I weigh 65 kilos, so I'd go for a bare minimum of 52 grams of protein.

The World Health Organization today says that when protein is 5% of our daily calories, it is sufficient,² and when you're eating enough plant calories, it's fairly easy to hit this protein target.

But don't be afraid to pile on more high-protein plant foods: it's more fuel for the immune system and health of our cells.

A good target to start with is the RDA of 10-12%.

Carbs

Carbohydrates are metabolized, or chemically broken down, and used as **the body's main fuel source**.

Carbohydrate doesn't just mean white foods like bread, rice and pasta. Carbs are found in vegetables and leafy greens, pulses, legumes, grains and fruit. A good example is blueberries!

So while a low-carb diet (which is trendy at the moment) may result in weight-loss in the short term, it means we'd need to eat *much more than* the recommended daily allowance of protein and fats to make up our caloric requirements, and this ultimately places undue stress on our bodies in the longer term.

Fats

Good sources of unprocessed **fats (or lipids)** include olives, nuts and avocado.

We should be able to get all the fats we require from eating whole foods.



² World Health Organization. (2007). Protein and Amino Acid Requirements in Human Nutrition: Report of a Joint WHO/FAO/UNU Expert Consultation. Retrieved from: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/trs/WHO_TRS_935_eng.pdf.

Protein

What about vitamins and supplements?

When you're changing your way of eating, it's advisable to get your doctor or a nutritionist on board as you transition, until you get the hang of it.

Supplements can be helpful in assisting your body to do its work, to detox, and to build strength. Once you're accustomed to a new way of eating and cooking and your body is in balance, you may find you don't need much extra supplementation.

Most experts who know about plant-based nutrition will recommend that taking a **Vitamin D** and a **B Complex** vitamin daily.



Why D and B?

Vitamin D is technically not a vitamin, as it is generated by our own body (which vitamins aren't). We need to absorb sunlight to do this, but often these days we don't get anywhere near enough sunlight to facilitate this process, so taking Vitamin D is advisable.

The **B vitamins**, especially B12, are vital for our nervous system and brain to function. These days, our planet's soils are depleted of many nutrients that plants would naturally be taking up as they grow—and thus passing on to us when we eat them. (To read more about B12, you can look at <u>this article</u>.)

Taking care of our gut

The other critical part of all this is of course our stomach!

When our gut is out of balance, we can experience bloating, inflammation, discomfort and all manner of immune challenges. On a very basic level, we need a healthy gut in order to absorb all the good nutrients from our food. Even the best foods can be ineffective when our gut is messed up.

There are a number of foods that are not great for people with digestion issues, as they promote inflammation. The culprits are (**refined**) **sugary**, **processed** (**low fiber**), **fatty** foods. It's worth doing a bit of googling or talking to your doctor to work out how to address this first, if you have challenges in the stomach department. Sometimes slowing down the introduction of new foods is helpful.

A note on changing our way of eating



It's often the case that until we start redesigning our diet, we don't realize how 'normalized' our palate and brain's dopamine (or 'pleasure') center are to the pleasurable effects of eating saturated fats and salt and dense animal products. (Find out more about this in the resources below.)

Sometimes it takes time to 'unravel' all this, and to find a 'new normal' as we adjust to a new range of tastes and textures.

There are also often **social** and **emotional challenges** associated with making changes to our lives, and especially our diets.

It's a good idea to discuss with your doctor or find a dietician or life coach who can help you address your challenges, if you feel you're not making any headway.



Resources

When making changes, it's also useful to start to surround yourself with books and information—and people!—that support your new direction. Here are some resources that might be of use.

Nutrition information online

A guide to WFPB eating by the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition: https://nutritionstudies.org/whole-food-plant-based-diet-guide/

nutritionfacts.org

nutritionstudies.org

pubmed.com database for medical studies

plantproof.com

guthealthmd.com



Cook books

The Plantpower Way by Rich Roll & Julie Piatt

The How Not To Die Cookbook by Michael Greger & Gene Stone

The No Meat Athlete by Matt Frazier & Stepfanie Romine

Plant-Powered Families by Dreena Burton

Deliciously Ella (various) by Ella Mills

Meal planner apps

<u>Daily Dozen</u> by Nutrition Facts <u>The Plantpower Meal Planner</u> by Rich Roll & Julie Piatt <u>Oh She Glows Recipe App</u> by Angela Liddon <u>Deliciously Ella</u> by Ella Mills

Other informational books

<u>The Complete Idiot's Guide to Plant-Based Nutrition</u> by Julieanna Hever <u>The China Study</u> by T. Colin Campbell and Thomas Campbell <u>How Not To Die</u> by Michael Greger <u>Food Rules: An Eater's Manual</u> by Michael Pollan

Audio/Video on nutrition and health

The Rich Roll Podcast

- -On whole foods, plant based diet with cardiologist Dr. Joel Kahn
- -On Alzheimers and diet with Drs. Dean and Ayesha Sherzai
- -On GMOs and gut health with Dr. Zach Bush
- -On longevity and diet with Dr. Valter Longo
- -On impact of diet on heart disease with cardiologist Dr. Kim Williams
- Plant Proof with Simon Hill (good one for gym-goers)

Nutrition Facts Podcast with Dr. Greger, MD

Dr. Douglas Lisle at TEDx: The Pleasure Trap (on food habits)

Breaking the Food Seduction by Dr. Neal Barnard

Documentaries on the plant-based landscape

Forks Over Knives (focus: health impact of dietary intervention)

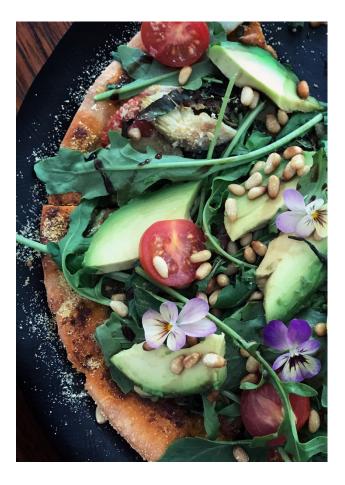
<u>Cowspiracy</u> (focus: environmental impact of current food industries)

What The Health (focus: the money and politics behind the food industry)

Medical experts online

This list is included because these are experts who have variously been teaching or doing studies—some of them for many decades—and they communicate about plant-based nutrition in a way that's easy to understand.

So why not start exploring? You have the power to make changes that could impact your life for decades to come!



Dr. Michael Greger, MD Dr. Zach Bush, MD Julieanna Hever, MSc, Dietician Dr. T. Colin Campbell, Biochemist Dr. Tom Campbell, MD Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, Physician Dr. Michelle McMacken, MD Dr. Dean Ornish, Cardiologist Dr. Joel Kahn, MD Dr. Neal Barnard Dr. Valter Longo, PhD Cell Biology, Longevity

Dr. Doug Lisle, Psychologist

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