

# Human Health and Plant-Based Eating

“There are variations on the theme of optimal diet for human health, but all of them are made up mostly of whole, wholesome plant foods.”

—Dr. David Katz

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## The Science on Plant-Based Diets

People who eat either a vegetarian or fully plant-based diet are at reduced risk of life-threatening health conditions, including ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, certain types of cancer, and obesity.<sup>1</sup> ([source](#)).

A global dietary shift to *less* meat would save an estimated 79 million human lives and avoid 5.1 million deaths per year. Estimates for a *fully plant-based diet* project closer to 129 million lives saved and 8.1 million deaths avoided.<sup>2</sup> ([source](#))

A global shift to more plant-based or fully plant-based diets by 2050 would save trillions of dollars in health care costs.<sup>2</sup> ([source](#))

## Heart Health

Compared to a typical diet, eating a vegetarian diet reduces the risk of coronary heart disease by 20-26%.<sup>3</sup> ([source](#))

Risk of dying from heart disease and stroke goes down by as much as 20 percent with a diet of more plant-based foods compared to animal-based foods.<sup>4</sup> ([source](#))

Not to mention, “Erectile dysfunction and our number one killer, coronary artery disease, are just two manifestations of the **same** disease: inflamed, clogged and crippled arteries.”<sup>5</sup> ([source](#)) When researchers put impotent men on a Mediterranean diet, which included an abundance of plant-based foods, 37% regained normal sexual function after two years.<sup>6</sup> ([source](#))

## Cancer and Diabetes Risk

The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends limiting consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork and lamb) and avoiding processed meats (such as hot dogs and deli meat) to help prevent cancer.<sup>7</sup> ([source](#))

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The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified processed meat as carcinogenic to humans, and red meat as probably carcinogenic to humans.<sup>8</sup> ([source](#))

Compared to a typical diet, eating a vegetarian diet reduces the risk of type II diabetes by 16-41%.<sup>3</sup> ([source](#))

## Chemical Build-Up

Studies have shown that chemical additives in animal feed likely accumulate in animal tissues (the meat people eat), potentially exposing consumers to unwanted chemicals such as veterinary drugs and heavy metals.<sup>9,10</sup> ([source](#)) ([source](#))

Pesticides have been shown to "bioaccumulate" (or build-up) in the fatty tissues of animals, potentially exposing consumers to these chemicals via consumption of food animals that have been fed grains treated with these chemicals.<sup>11</sup> ([source](#))

## The Protein Problem? Not a Problem

In 90 percent of the world's countries and territories, people eat more protein than they need<sup>12</sup> ([source](#))



The average American adult consumes about 66% more protein per day than is needed<sup>12</sup> ([source](#))



Plant-based foods can be easily combined to provide the full set of essential amino acids, as with rice and beans or peanut butter and bread<sup>12</sup> ([source](#))



*Plant-based solutions to address climate change.*

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## Appendix

- <sup>1</sup> Vegetarian Diets. J Acad Nutr Diet [Internet]. 2016 [cited 2017 Sep 12];116(12):1970–80. Available from: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resource/practice/position-and-practice-papers/position-papers/vegetarian-diets>
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- <sup>5</sup> Greger MMDF. Survival of the Firmest: Erectile Dysfunction & Death | NutritionFacts.org [Internet]. Nutrition Facts. 2013 [cited 2017 Oct 9]. Available from: <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/survival-of-the-firmest-erectile-dysfunction-and-death/>
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- <sup>9</sup> Yaktine AL, Nesheim MC, James CA. Nutrient and contaminant tradeoffs: Exchanging meat, poultry, or seafood for dietary protein. Nutrition Reviews. 2008.
- <sup>10</sup> Polskie Towarzystwo Magnezologiczne. N, K, P-L, E. H. Journal of elementology. [Internet]. Vol. 14, Journal of Elementology. Polskie Towarzystwo Magnezologiczne; 2009 [cited 2017 Oct 6]. 501-507 p. Available from: <http://agro.icm.edu.pl/agro/element/bwmeta1.element.agro-article-Of2909c5-1f06-48f0-9ece-25447545caf1>
- <sup>11</sup> Walker P, Rhubart-Berg P, McKenzie S, Kelling K, Lawrence RS. Public health implications of meat production and consumption. Public Health Nutr. 2005;
- <sup>12</sup> by Janet Ranganathan, Daniel Vennard, Richard Waite, Brian Lipinski TS. Shifting Diets for a Sustainable Food Future | World Resources Institute [Internet]. World Resources Institute. 2016 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.wri.org/publication/shifting-diets>