

Plant-Based Diets

Eating for Life

Leading health experts agree that going vegetarian is the single best thing we can do for ourselves and our families. A meat-free diet rich in complex carbohydrates, protein, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals provides optimal nutrition for both children and adults, forming the foundation for dietary habits that support a lifetime of good health.

Leading medical organizations agree that balanced plant-based diets are healthy and provide protection against numerous diseases, including our country's three biggest killers: heart disease, cancer, and strokes.

The American Dietetic Association states that vegetarians have "lower rates of death from ischemic heart disease; ...lower blood cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, and lower rates of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and prostate and colon cancer" and that vegetarians also tend to be slimmer than meat-eaters. Vegetarian foods provide us with all the nutrients that we need, minus the saturated fat, cholesterol, and contaminants found in meat and dairy products.



A plant-based diet has long-term benefits, too. It protects us against some of the leading killers in America today. Research has shown that vegetarians are 50 percent less likely to develop heart disease, and they have 40 percent of the cancer rate of meat-eaters. Plus, meat-eaters are nine times more likely to be obese than vegans are.

The consumption of meat and dairy products has been conclusively linked with heart disease, obesity, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's, asthma, and impotence. Scientists have also found that vegetarians have stronger immune systems than their meat-eating friends; this means that they are less susceptible to everyday illnesses like the flu. Vegetarians and vegans live, on average, six to 10 years longer than meat-eaters.

A plant-based diet is the best diet for kids, too:

Studies have shown that vegetarian kids grow taller and have higher IQs than their classmates, and they are at a reduced risk for heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other diseases in the long run.





Opposing Animal Cruelty

The green pastures and idyllic barnyard scenes of years past are now distant memories. On today's factory farms, animals are crammed by the thousands into filthy windowless sheds, wire cages, gestation crates, and other confinement systems. These animals will never raise their families, root in the soil, build nests, or do anything that is natural to them. They won't even feel the sun on their backs or breathe fresh air until the day they are loaded onto trucks bound for slaughter.

Animals on today's factory farms have no legal protection from cruelty that would be illegal if it were inflicted on dogs or cats: neglect, mutilation, genetic manipulation, and drug regimens that cause chronic pain and crippling, transport through all weather extremes, and gruesome and violent slaughter. Yet farmed animals are no less intelligent or capable of feeling pain than are the dogs and cats we cherish as companions.





The factory farming system of modern agriculture strives to maximize output while minimizing costs. Cows, calves, pigs, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and other animals are kept in small cages, in jam-packed sheds, or on filthy feedlots, often with so little space that they can't even turn around or lie down comfortably. They are deprived of exercise so that all their bodies' energy goes toward producing flesh, eggs, or milk for human consumption. The giant corporations that run most factory farms have found that they can make more money by cramming animals into tiny spaces, even though many of the animals get sick and some die. Industry journal National Hog Farmer explains, "Crowding Pigs Pays," and egg-industry expert Bernard Rollins writes that "chickens are cheap; cages are expensive."

They are fed drugs to fatten them faster and to keep them alive in conditions that would otherwise kill them, and they are genetically altered to grow faster or to produce much more milk or eggs than they would naturally. Many animals become crippled under their own weight and die within inches of water and food.

When they have finally grown large enough, animals raised for food are crowded onto trucks and transported over many miles through all weather extremes to the slaughterhouse. Those who survive this nightmarish journey will have their throats slit, often while they are still fully conscious. Many are still conscious when they are plunged into the scalding water of the de-feathering or hair-removal tanks or while their bodies are being skinned or hacked apart.



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