



Plant-Based Eating for a Healthy Lifestyle

Eating a plant-based diet means to focus on vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds, rather than on meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy foods. A plant-based eating approach is different from a vegetarian or vegan diet that may completely eliminate meat and/or animal products.

Plants are filled with nutrients and have numerous health benefits such as high fiber and low cholesterol. Plants have been shown to reduce the risk for chronic diseases including diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. A plant-based diet with the inclusion of lean meats is a sustainable and a healthful option.

A plant-based plate should be composed of three-quarters from plant sources and up to one-quarter from animal sources.

Plant-Based Recommended Foods

Dairy

- Low-fat milk or milk substitutes, yogurt, creamer, cheese and ice cream made from almonds, cashews, oats, soy and coconut
- If you choose to drink cow's milk or dairy products, make sure they are low fat

Fruits

- Fresh, frozen, dried and unsweetened canned fruits and 100 percent fruit juices with no sugar added
- All fruits are recommended including apples, bananas, berries, citrus fruits, pears, melons and stone fruits

Vegetables

- Fresh, frozen, canned (no-salt added) vegetables and 100 percent vegetable juices
- All vegetables are recommended including asparagus, broccoli, carrots, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, leafy greens, mushrooms, peppers, potatoes, squash, tomatoes and root vegetables

Bread and Grains

- Breads, cereals, crackers and pasta with a whole grain listed as first ingredient
- Maximize use of grains prepared in their whole form such as wheat berries, bulger, whole corn, brown rice, steel cut oats and quinoa

Protein

- Beans, legumes and lentils including black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, navy beans, soybeans, peas and pinto beans
- Nuts and nut butters
- Seeds including chia, flax, hemp, sunflower and pumpkin
- Meat and protein substitutes such as tofu, tempeh, seitan and veggie burgers

Fats

- Soft or tub margarine instead of butter
- Extra virgin olive oil or oils made from avocado, canola, flaxseed, grapeseed, safflower, sesame and vegetable

Meats

- Processed meats such as deli meats, cured meats, and hot dogs should be avoided
- Limit portion sizes of meat to one-quarter of the plate including beef, chicken, duck, lamb, turkey and pork
- Fish should be eaten 2 – 3 times a week
- Cooking methods suggested are air-frying, broiling, baking, roasting or grilling instead of deep-frying
- Serving size for meat and fish is 3 ounces or about the size of your palm
- About 8 – 9 servings of meats and fish are recommended per week

Plant-Based Meal and Snack Ideas

Breakfast

- Oatmeal with chia or flaxseeds
- Mixed berries
- Whole wheat toast
- Half of an avocado
- Cup of plant-based milk
- Sautéed hash browns, onions, peppers and tofu crumbles

Lunch

- Spinach and strawberry salad
- Walnuts
- Oil-based vinaigrette
- Brown rice
- Grilled chicken
- Roasted sweet potato
- Low-fat yogurt
- Turkey and tomato sandwich
- Apple slices
- Peanut butter

Dinner

- Salmon fillet
- Roasted asparagus
- Quinoa
- Cup of low fat milk
- Roasted pork chop
- Sautéed apples
- Broccoli
- Acorn squash
- Bean chili
- Slices of avocado
- Piece of cornbread
- Strawberries over low fat frozen yogurt

Snacks

- Piece of fruit
- Fresh veggies with hummus
- Whole grain crackers
- Tortilla chips and salsa
- Fig bar
- Nut, seed and dried fruit mix
- Popcorn
- Banana and peanut butter
- Sliced peppers and cucumbers



UH Outpatient Nutrition Services | 216-844-1499

Services available at UH Cleveland Medical Center, UH Ahuja Medical Center, UH Minoff at Chagrin Highlands, Landerbrook, Medina, Solon and Westlake health centers and the W.O. Walker Center in Cleveland.