

THE SECRET TO LOSING WEIGHT ON A PLANT-BASED DIET

The Secret to Losing Weight on a Plant-Based Diet

When you started your plant-based diet, you expected to lose weight. Now, you feel like you may have been misled. Your bathroom scale says you're heavier than when you started.

Eliminating or cutting down on animal products in your diet can help you lose weight. Numerous studies have found that vegetarians and vegans tend to have less body fat than meat eaters.

There are also many other health benefits to eating more plants. That includes lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, as well as reducing your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.

However, as you may have discovered, these outcomes are not automatic. **Learn how to make your plant-based diet lighter and healthier.**

Avoiding Common Pitfalls:

- 1. Limit processed foods.** With or without animal products, frozen dinners and packaged sweets tend to be high in sugar, salt, unhealthy fats, and calories. Opt for whole foods instead. **You can still buy convenient items like plain frozen vegetables and fruits.**
- 2. Monitor serving sizes.** Maybe you thought you could eat more when you gave up meat. Try shrinking your portions and take time to savor each bite. Plan your meals and snacks instead of grazing throughout the day.

3. **Dine at home.** Vegan and vegetarian options can still be fattening. Preparing your own dishes gives you more control over the ingredients.
4. **Be flexible.** On the other hand, you may have become too strict. **If you try to survive on salad greens and grapefruit, you'll miss out on essential nutrients and start craving sweet potato fries.**
5. **Consider your lifestyle.** Remember that your diet is just one part of taking care of yourself. Examine your other habits to ensure that you're exercising regularly, sleeping well, and handling stress constructively.

Making Smart Choices:

1. **Increase your fiber.** One major advantage of plant-based diets is that you're likely to eat more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. These kinds of foods are high in fiber, which helps you feel full while eating less and may even extend your life.
2. **Count calories.** If you want to lose weight, you'll still need to watch your calories. That will probably mean going easy on the dairy products, nuts, and seeds.
3. **Restrict fats.** Olive oil has many health benefits, but it's still about 120 calories for just one tablespoon. Use plant fats sparingly.
4. **Consume more protein.** Vegetarian and vegan diets can fulfill your protein needs, even if you're a serious athlete. **In fact, lentils have more protein than meat. Other smart choices include beans, peas, and soy.**
5. **Enjoy healthy treats.** Did you switch from ice cream to nondairy frozen

desserts? Many brands are still high in sugar and saturated fat. Snack on fruit and air popped corn instead.

6. **Change your cooking methods.** At close to 400 calories, a cup of breaded fried zucchini sticks has almost as many calories as a full meal. If you steam it, it's only 17 calories. You can also look for recipes that involve broiling, grilling, poaching, and baking.

7. **Stay hydrated.** Drinking enough water makes it easier to control your appetite and stay energized. Many fruits and vegetables have a high water content, so they'll help you stay hydrated. **Keep in mind that the more fiber you eat, the more water you need to avoid gas and bloating.**

8. **Seek balance.** Think of your diet as an eating plan you can stick with for life, instead of a temporary solution. You may also want to consult your doctor or a nutritionist to see if you need any supplements.

Nutritious and delicious plant-based diets come in many forms. Find a plan that can help you manage your weight and enhance your overall wellbeing.