

A Plant Based Diet for Good Health

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Adding more plant based meals, also known as eating vegetarian, is becoming a healthy trend that many Americans are beginning to experiment with and embrace. And as you may be aware, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) just released their recommendations for the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which is encouraging just that. One of the main problems the Dietary Guidelines is trying to address by way of recommendations is our tendency to consume more calories than we spend, resulting in being overweight.

It is no secret that the majority of Americans are overweight or obese. But what you may not know is that many of those falling into this category are still undernourished in several important nutrients. How does that happen, you ask? Because we are consuming calorie dense foods, that are not necessarily nutrient dense. Examples of nutrient dense foods include fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, whole grains and fish. Unfortunately, many of us are spending our daily calorie allotment on refined grains, high sodium, solid fats and added sugars. Unfortunately, this is showing to be the case for not just adults, but also our kids, tweens and teens.

Eating a plant based diet does not mean that you are sentenced to only soy burgers at every meal. A plant based diet is one that is rich in vegetables, fruits, beans and grains. And, you can still enjoy other sources of protein, but in smaller doses and in the form of lean cuts of meat, seafood, and low fat dairy. A combination of all of these foods is the best way to truly have a healthy well balanced diet. Eating a variety of healthy foods will help ensure your consumption of key nutrients as well.

To accomplish having a more plant based diet, take the focus off meat as being the center of the plate. Try filling half of your plate with fruits and veggies, one-fourth with a lean protein and one-fourth with a whole grain. If you can start by doing this for one meal per day, you will be on your way to a plant based diet! Do not try making the switch in one fell swoop. Take it slow and work up to eating more fruits and veggies and less meat and potatoes. You will begin spending fewer calories on more food, resulting in a nutrient dense way of life.