

Whole Food, Plant-Based Quick Start Guide

For Lasting Weight Loss and Robust Health

Includes 5 worksheets!

kurisko &co

Lee Kurisko, MD & Joyce Kurisko, MBA

Inspiration

From a temporary beach bum

The inspiration for this quick start guide was drummed up while on our honeymoon in Mexico. Lee and I spent ten days at the beautiful House of AIA Playa Del Carmen.

We slept in, worked out, ate amazing vegan cuisine, and talked shop about our dream of sharing our lifestyle tips with anyone interested in aging gracefully. Lee even found time to interview Amazon's #1 Best Selling Author - **Dr. Will Tuttle**.

So grab a cozy chair and perhaps a favorite journal, and be prepared to write down some life-changing goals. We hope to inspire you to make the necessary changes in your life for better health and well-being.

This beginner's guide is designed to equip you for transformation. You will learn about the basics of whole food plant-based (WFPB) nutrition and the importance of maintaining a healthy diet. Be sure to click on anything underlined to find informative links to more in-depth information.

We encourage you to supplement this guide with frequent visits to our website and social media accounts. You'll get access to our podcast, blog, recipes, and other excellent resources. Most importantly, we hope to meet you in our online forum;)

Lee and Joyce xoxo

Please note: This guide is for education only and is not medical advice. Talk with your doctor before changing any medications or starting a new eating or exercise plan.







ABOUT US

"... and then the day came when the risk to remain tight inside a bud became more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

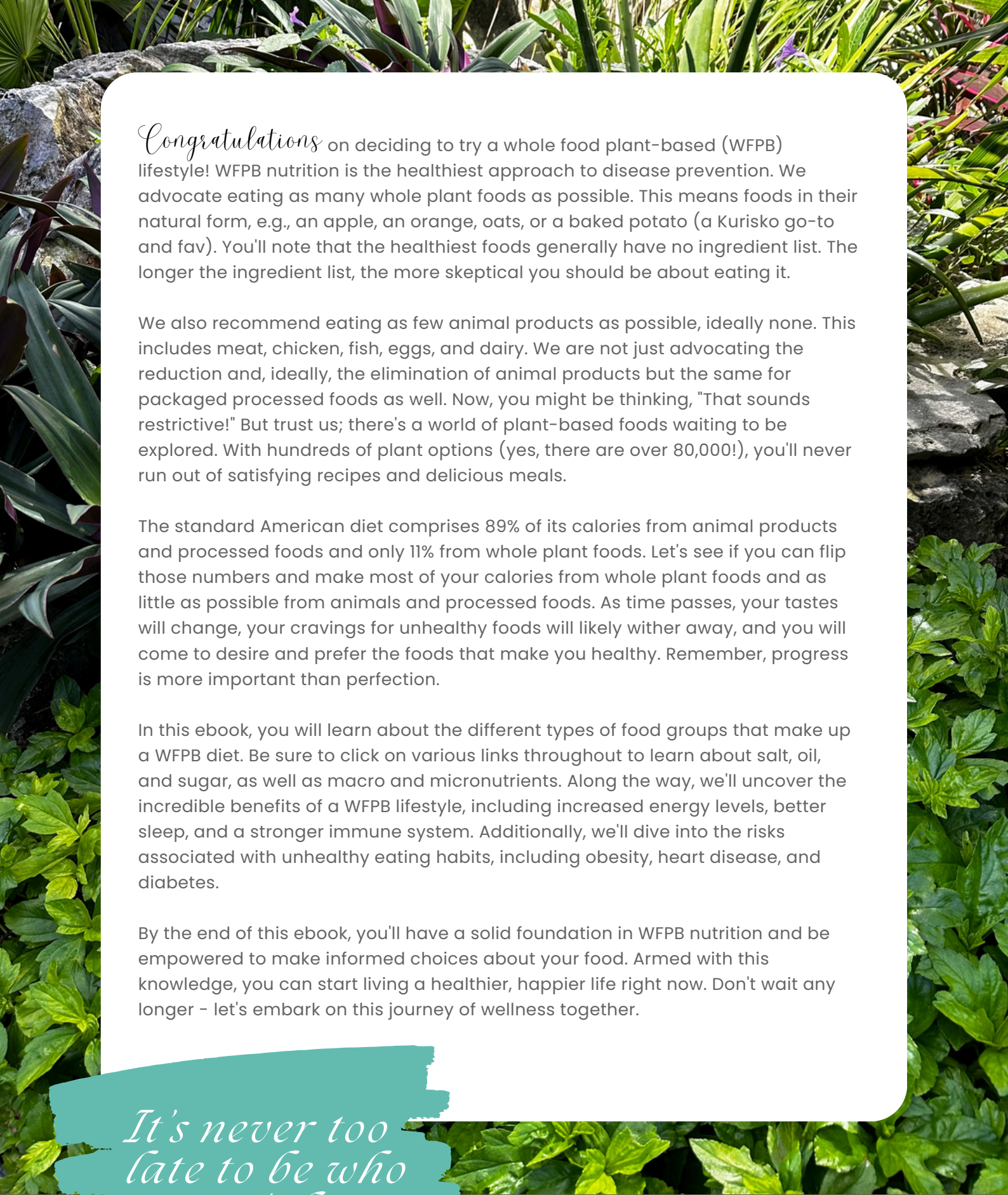
~ Anais Nin

Lee is a medical doctor with 35 years of experience in family medicine, ER, neuroradiology, and diagnostic radiology. He is also certified in anti-aging medicine. As the quintessential "hi-tech" doctor working in diagnostic imaging since 1993, Lee can attest to the modern-day sophistry of over-testing, over-prescribing, and over-treating many chronic conditions that could be better addressed through diet. He realizes the incredible power of promoting health and wellness by simply changing what is on the end of our forks. Lee was a guest on Chris Wark's Chris Beat Cancer podcast.

Joyce has spent her entire 30-plus-year career in healthcare as well. She has decided to leave behind the pharma, biotech industry to pursue her passion for wellness. Joyce is a Certified Health & Wellness Coach (eCornell) and holds a Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate from eCornell and the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies.







Congratulations on deciding to try a whole food plant-based (WFPB) lifestyle! WFPB nutrition is the healthiest approach to disease prevention. We advocate eating as many whole plant foods as possible. This means foods in their natural form, e.g., an apple, an orange, oats, or a baked potato (a Kurisko go-to and fav). You'll note that the healthiest foods generally have no ingredient list. The longer the ingredient list, the more skeptical you should be about eating it.

We also recommend eating as few animal products as possible, ideally none. This includes meat, chicken, fish, eggs, and dairy. We are not just advocating the reduction and, ideally, the elimination of animal products but the same for packaged processed foods as well. Now, you might be thinking, "That sounds restrictive!" But trust us; there's a world of plant-based foods waiting to be explored. With hundreds of plant options (yes, there are over 80,000!), you'll never run out of satisfying recipes and delicious meals.

The standard American diet comprises 89% of its calories from animal products and processed foods and only 11% from whole plant foods. Let's see if you can flip those numbers and make most of your calories from whole plant foods and as little as possible from animals and processed foods. As time passes, your tastes will change, your cravings for unhealthy foods will likely wither away, and you will come to desire and prefer the foods that make you healthy. Remember, progress is more important than perfection.

In this ebook, you will learn about the different types of food groups that make up a WFPB diet. Be sure to click on various links throughout to learn about salt, oil, and sugar, as well as macro and micronutrients. Along the way, we'll uncover the incredible benefits of a WFPB lifestyle, including increased energy levels, better sleep, and a stronger immune system. Additionally, we'll dive into the risks associated with unhealthy eating habits, including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

By the end of this ebook, you'll have a solid foundation in WFPB nutrition and be empowered to make informed choices about your food. Armed with this knowledge, you can start living a healthier, happier life right now. Don't wait any longer - let's embark on this journey of wellness together.

It's never too late to be who you might have been.



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THE ENVIRONMENT

Many authorities claim that animal agriculture is the number one cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Whether you agree that manmade global warming is something to be concerned with or not, there is no dispute that animal agriculture is the number one cause of animal habitat loss, land erosion and desertification, toxic runoff, deforestation, water resource depletion and species extinction. By adopting a WFPB diet we can all reduce our contributions to these problems. Consider watching Cowspiracy.



HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

GREEN LEAFIES

WHY WFPB?

Wt. Management - A whole food plant-based lifestyle is the most effective way to attain and maintain an ideal body weight long-term. Keto diets may initially promote faster weight loss, but only because of water and muscle loss. Both extensive American and European studies have shown that the only population as a whole that has a normal body weight are those that eat plant-exclusive diets. Consider watching "What Works Best: Weight Loss Drugs or Diet? - Dr. Neal Barnard

Diabetes - In the battle against diabetes, healthy carbs are not your enemy. Most doctors have a minimal understanding of nutrition because it is an afterthought in medical education. Too many physicians lack knowledge regarding the role healthy carbohydrates play in preventing and reversing type 2 diabetes. Even Type 1 diabetics can improve their diabetic control with a well-structured plant-based diet. For more information, watch Reversing Diabetes - PCRM Podcast.

Cardiovascular Health - The only diet ever proven to arrest and reverse heart disease is a WFPB diet. No other diet can make this claim. Patients with severe heart disease can improve symptoms in as little as two weeks. Within several months, sophisticated X-rays called angiograms will show the arrest of progression and, in some cases, the reversal of blood vessel narrowing. Check this out: The Esselstyn Heart Disease Program.

Digestion - Gallstones, diverticulosis, diverticulitis, and constipation are due to inadequate dietary fiber. The only sources of fiber in the human diet are plants. Research shows that GERD, inflammatory bowel disease, and irritable bowel syndrome can be significantly aided with a WFPB diet. A WFPB diet has also improved symptoms for serious inflammatory bowel diseases, ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's disease. To learn more: Plant-Based Digestive Wellness.

Brain Health - Animal food contains components that accelerate brain aging, including saturated fat, cholesterol, trans fat, and heme iron. Green leafy vegetables may be especially helpful in preventing dementia. A plant-based lifestyle can help prevent this devastating disease. The Brain Docs.



Cancer Prevention - Most traditional diets around the world that are based on whole plant foods have been associated with much lower rates of cancer than what we see in the US. This fact has been known for decades but ignored. A plant-based diet has the potential to stop the progression of prostate cancer in some cases. The blood of patients that have been on a plant-based diet for just a few weeks has been shown to be more effective at killing cancer cells. For further insight: Too Many Cancer Promises & Too Much Professional Arrogance.

Sexual Health - Cardiovascular health and sexual health are closely related. One seminal study demonstrated that a WFPB diet can arrest and reverse heart disease. And within weeks, many of the men in this study regained potency after starting a healthier diet. Erectile dysfunction affects one in four American men by the age of 60. New onset impotence in the 50s indicates a 50% chance of having a heart attack or stroke in the next two years. The common element between sexual function and cardiovascular disease is blood flow which is highly dependent on what you eat. Optimizing your body weight via a WFPB lifestyle can promote sexual confidence and the likelihood that couples engage in sexual intimacy.

Other Diseases- Research is showing that plant-based diets are likely instrumental in helping a wide array of other diseases. According to Dr. Dean Ornish, every disease studied with a nutritional focus seems to benefit from eating more whole-plant foods. A huge array of conditions, from impotence to multiple sclerosis to lupus, have some evidence of a therapeutic benefit from eating more plants. Unlike drugs, the side effects include good things like weight loss, more energy, and better skin.



ANIMAL WELFARE



Be kind to every kind



Animal Welfare - Before Joyce and Lee adopted a plant exclusive eating pattern, we, like most people, falsely believed that eating meat was normal and necessary. This is simply not the case.

Plant exclusive diets require 1/18 of the land and water of meat based diets (see this infographic).

Over 20 million land animals are slaughtered for food production every single day in the United States alone. You will no longer be complicit in this carnage when eating a plant based diet.

MAKING THE SWITCH TO A WFPB DIET

Transitioning to a plant-based diet can be accomplished quickly or gradually. Both have advantages and disadvantages, and there is no right or wrong way to go about it. It's important to note that the Standard American Diet can be highly addictive, leading to potential food withdrawal symptoms. However, with patience and perseverance, you can successfully navigate through this adjustment period (see our introduction to the pleasure trap below).



Lee and I opted for the quick approach, and the results were impressive. Within just a few days, Lee's blood sugar levels normalized, and he experienced a significant drop in body fat in a matter of weeks. In fact, he lost a remarkable 16 pounds and went from being lean to incredibly lean.

As for me, I also shed pounds rapidly. Those stubborn nine pounds that had been holding on tightly melted away, resulting in me dropping two dress sizes. And the best part? You can enjoy your meals without any strict restrictions on portion sizes. So, whether you switch quickly or ease into it gradually, know that a plant-based diet can yield amazing results for your weight and overall health. Embrace the journey and watch your transformation unfold.

Joyce

WFPB FOOD GROUPS



VEGETABLES
2 DAILY SERVINGS

Eat a wide variety! Enjoy them raw with or without hummus, steamed, cooked, or broiled. Be sure to consume at least two servings of dark green leafy vegetables every day. Optimally you'll want to eat more. "Green leafies" are particularly beneficial for blood flow which is good for the heart and, in males, can actually increase potency!

A serving is 1/2 cup of cooked or 1 cup of raw kale, spinach, arugula, or other dark green leafy vegetables. Don't forget to include vegetables from the cruciferous family as well such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and broccoli.

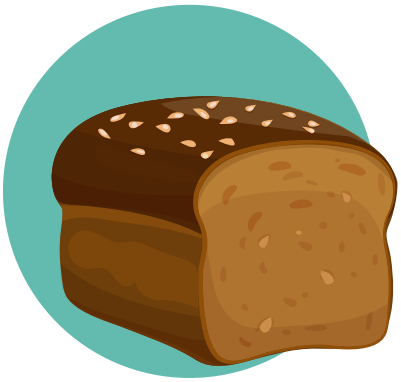


FRUIT
3 DAILY SERVINGS

Fruit - All of them are great for your health. Don't believe the internet myth that the sugar in fruit will negatively affect your blood sugar control and make you gain weight. The opposite is true. People that eat the most fruit tend to have the healthiest body weight and blood sugar control.

Be sure to eat berries regularly. They are particularly good sources of antioxidants and have anticancer properties. Aim for 1/2 cup of fresh or frozen berries daily. Aim for three daily servings of other fruits, e.g., an apple or banana.

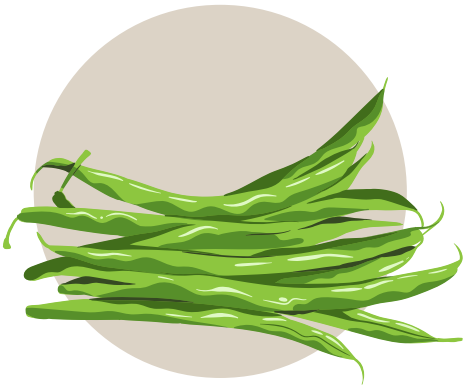
WFPB FOOD GROUPS



WHOLE GRAINS
3 DAILY SERVINGS

So many choices! Oats, whole wheat pasta, quinoa, bulgur, and brown rice. Steel-cut oats cooked in an Instant Pot are a near-daily staple in the Kurisko household, and they are ridiculously easy to prepare.

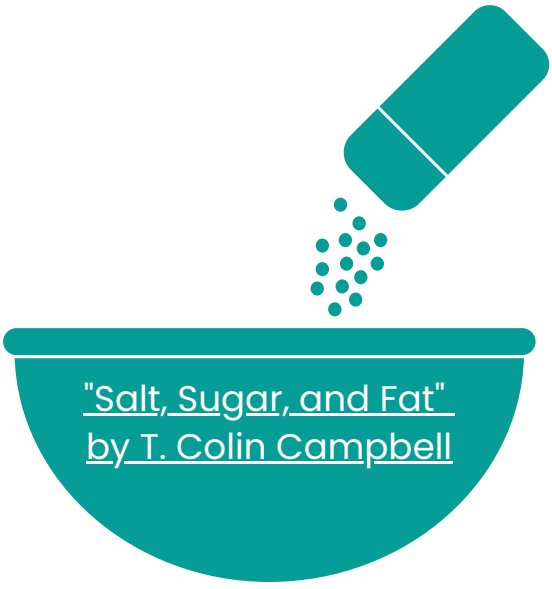
Bread can be a very healthy food, but most bread, even "whole wheat" bread, is prepared with refined flour. Try to avoid these and consider Ezekiel bread - a whole-grain option that is delicious and healthy. You'll find it in the freezer section of your grocery store. Because it lacks the artificial preservatives that most bread have, it must be refrigerated. If weight loss is your goal, you may wish to cut back on pasta and bread altogether due to their high caloric content.



LEGUMES
3 DAILY SERVINGS

These include beans, peas, and lentils. They are high in fiber, protein, and anti-cancer properties. If you are prone to gassiness from these types of foods, then go slow and build up your intake slowly.

Sample serving sizes are 1/4 cup of hummus, 1/2 cup of beans, or 1 cup of peas.



"Salt, Sugar, and Fat"
by T. Colin Campbell

WFPB FOOD GROUPS



NUTS & SEEDS
1 DAILY SERVING

These are very healthy but high-calorie foods. Interestingly, people that eat a small amount of nuts daily are slimmer than those that don't, despite the high calories. Having said that, the calorie count can pile up quickly, so go easy. Limit intake to one serving daily, such as 1 tablespoon of nut butter or about 1/8 cup of nuts or seeds.

Flax, hemp, chia, and walnuts are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids which are necessary for good health. A lot of nuts are high in Omega 6. You'll want a 2-3:1 ratio of omega 6:3. We often add these to our steel-cut oatmeal.

How to Get All Your Vitamins and Minerals From Plant-based Meals



MUSHROOMS
3 DAILY SERVINGS

Fantastic for immunity and cancer prevention. Don't be fooled into believing that you necessarily need high-end expensive mushrooms. Even just one humble button mushroom daily can greatly assist in breast cancer prevention.



SPICES
3 DAILY SERVINGS

Try to include a wide variety in your cooking. Spices have health-promoting properties. In particular, turmeric is a powerhouse of nutrition. Aim for 1/4 teaspoon of turmeric daily and other salt-free spices and herbs. Try to source from food directly and not capsules.

BEVERAGES

We emphasize plain water, herbal teas, and coffee. Coffee, in moderation, is associated with some health benefits. It may help prevent diabetes, gallstones, Parkinson's disease, and dementia. However, avoid caffeine late in the day. For most people, the caffeine in one cup of coffee consumed at noon will still be in your system at midnight, so be careful with your caffeine intake. Coffee can cause stomach upset, gastroesophageal reflux, along with sleeplessness. You may wish to consider eliminating caffeinated beverages if you suffer from anxiety. Joyce and I have cut back and found improved sleep.

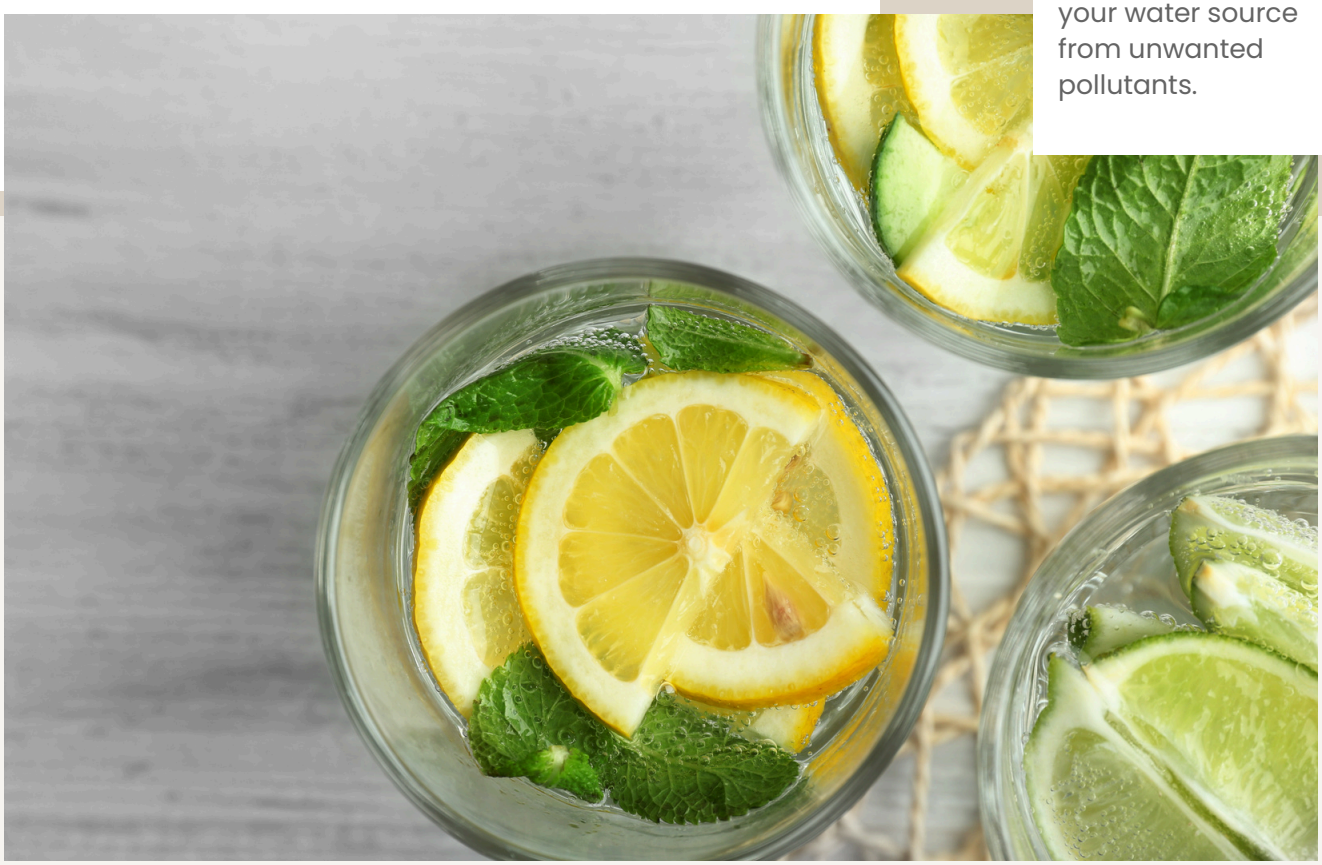
Generally speaking, drink to satisfy thirst rather than an arbitrarily defined amount. See 6 Tips To Be Water Wise for Healthy Kidneys by the National Kidney Foundation.

The low down on diet soda:

A 2014 study published in Nature - found a relationship between the artificial sweeteners used in diet soda and metabolic syndrome. Diet drinks may also negatively impact the gut biome and oddly enough - are associated with weight gain.

Consider adding mint, lemon, lime, or watermelon to your water for fresh and revitalizing refreshment. Read more at Shape.

We also recommend installing a reverse osmosis system to rid your water source from unwanted pollutants.



THE WEIGHT LOSS IS SUSTAINABLE



A WFPB diet is unlike a typical calorie-restrictive diet. Say goodbye to willpower burnout and the dreaded cycle of weight regain. Experience a surge in stamina and rapid recovery from intense exercise. The transformative effects of this eating style are undeniable. And with immediate rewards reinforcing your progress, motivation to continue is guaranteed. If you're currently suffering from high cholesterol, elevated blood sugar, or high blood pressure, expect a positive change within days! Lee normalized his blood glucose within a week after adopting a WFPB diet and dropped his cholesterol by over 100 points within a month.

Suppose you opt to ease into the diet. The results will be slower, but if psychologically, you think you can manage this better, then this is the approach for you. Consider changing just one meal at a time. Swap out bacon and eggs for a satisfying bowl of oatmeal and berries for breakfast. Trade in your burger and fries for a hearty bowl of beans, rice, salsa, and an apple at lunchtime. And when you're ready, say goodbye to steak and opt for a delicious meal of baked sweet potatoes, peas, and steamed green leafy veggies drizzled with balsamic vinegar. The potential variety is nearly infinite.

Better to be all in

In general, we are not fans of moderation. So if you ease into a WFPB lifestyle, make it your goal to be meat and dairy free. In the Adventist Health Studies (analyzing more than 8000 individuals), those consuming meat just once a week still had a 29% greater risk of developing diabetes.

CALORIE DENSITY -

THE “SECRET WEAPON” TO PERMANENT WEIGHT LOSS

Many people are motivated to lose weight and have been repeatedly frustrated in their efforts to do so. It just so happens that a whole food, plant-based lifestyle is one of the most effective and sustainable means to lose weight and get healthy.

Calorie density refers to the number of calories in a pound of food. There are a variety of physical cues that tell your brain that you have eaten enough. One of the most important, if not the most important, satiety cue is the total weight of food you eat daily. By eating foods that contain fewer calories per pound, you will automatically take in fewer calories while feeling full. For example, non-starchy vegetables are about 100 calories per pound. These are things like celery and green leafy vegetables. They are so low in calories that you could eat more than 20 pounds daily and not meet your caloric needs. Although feeling stuffed, you would be uncomfortably hungry. At around 300 calories per pound, fruit is also low in calories. Fruit is incredibly good for you, and you can eat unlimited portions, but they aren’t quite calorically dense enough to “stick to your ribs” and keep you sated.

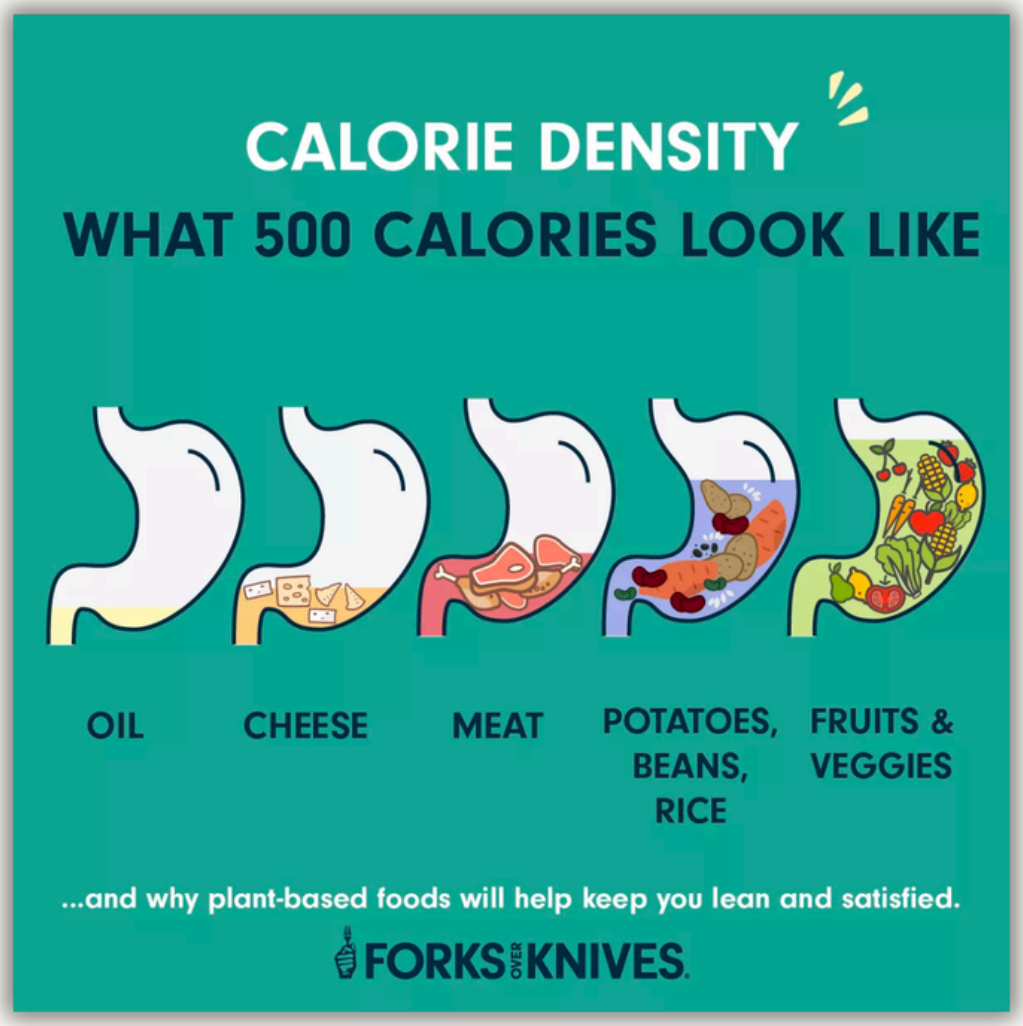
At the other end of the spectrum of calorie density, we have the oils. Olive oil has 4000 calories per pound or 120 calories per tablespoon. Although olive oil is purported to have many health benefits, too much daily intake can quickly add to your daily caloric total without adding to a sense of satiety. If you are trying to lose weight or are in our Diabetes Reset program, we recommend eliminating oil entirely. At home, Lee and I use a high-quality olive oil, and we use it sparingly.

The sweet spot for optimal weight loss and maintenance is a little under 600 calories per pound, averaged over all of the foods that you eat in a day. In fact, the World Cancer Research Fund and The American Institute for Cancer Research advocate 567 calories per pound as optimal for weight management and health. Highly physically active people may require more calorie-rich foods to meet their needs, but a little under 600 calories per pound is the sweet spot for most of us. Foods that fall in this range include beans, peas, corn, potatoes, rice, and lentils. This is where you want to get the bulk of your calories, and trust me, you will feel full and sated by adding these to your daily menu. You don’t need to get your calculator out - eat these foods ad libitum, and you will be fine. Joyce and I see no need for portion control regarding these food staples.

Do go easy on nuts and seeds. They are high in calories at ~ 3000 calories/pound. You may even want to eliminate them entirely if weight loss is your main priority.

To enhance weight loss, eat a giant salad comprised of greens and veggies like tomatoes, peppers, celery, mushrooms, etc., topped with a healthy dressing. Eat the salad before digging into your relatively more calorie-dense foods like beans, peas, rice, corn, and potatoes. Our favorite go-to salad dressing is a McDougall staple - simply combine brown mustard and maple syrup (adding water to thin if desired).

Watch Dietician Jeff Novick's YouTube video -
Calorie Density: How To Eat More, Weigh Less, and Live Longer

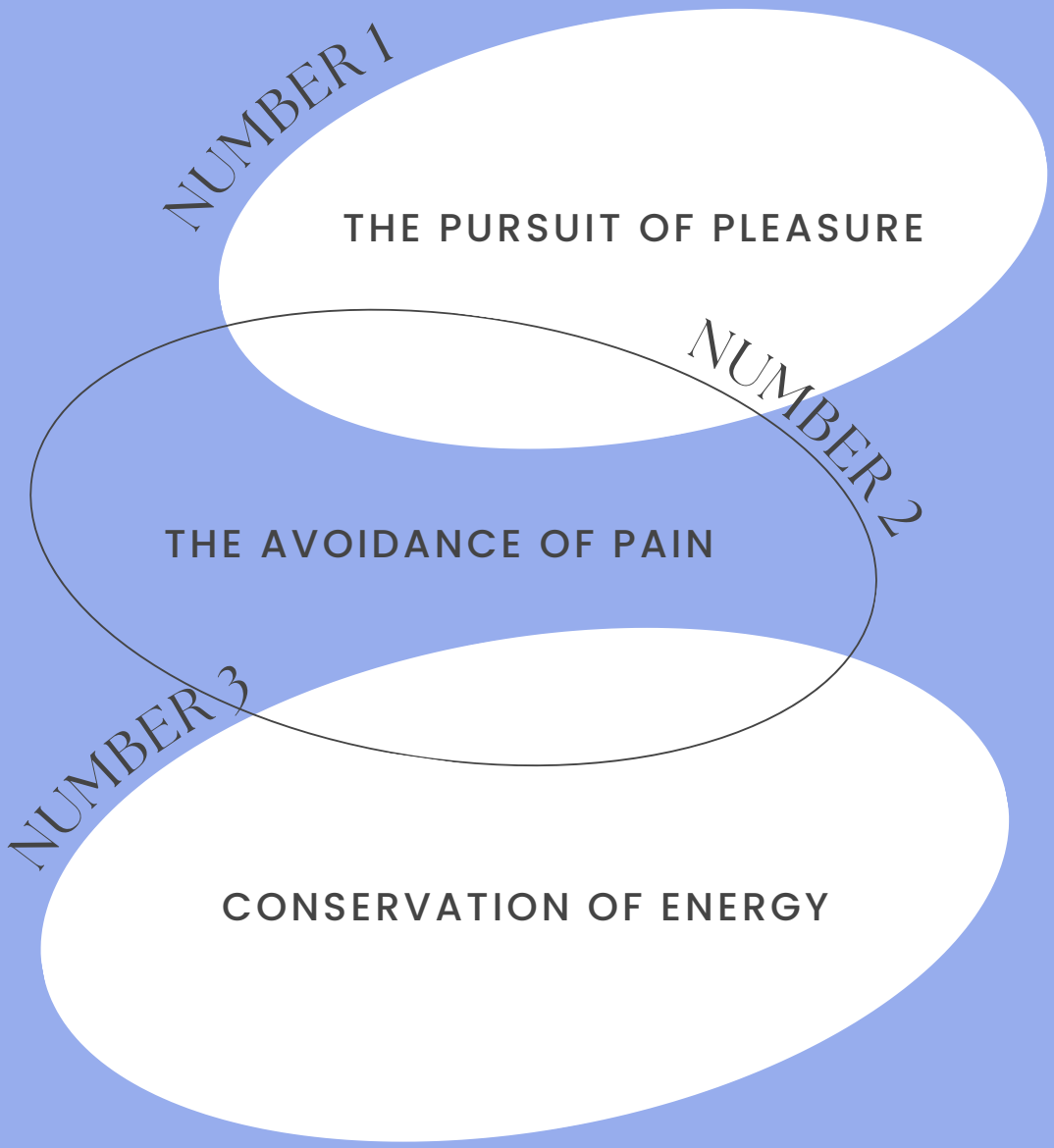


Just by switching to a plant-based diet, people tend to eat about 600 calories less per day, even when eating to satiety. Mitochondria are the microscopic powerhouses of our cells that burn energy. Mitochondrial activity is positively impacted by switching to a plant-based diet. Between eating less and burning more calories, the net effect is easy weight loss without unsustainable hunger.

Both the Adventist 2 and the EPIC-PANACEA studies have demonstrated that the only dietary demographic that has normal body mass indices (BMI) as a group on average are vegans. In the Adventist 2 study, the difference in body weight between the omnivorous women and the vegan woman was almost 40 pounds! How motivating is that! The likelihood that you'll be able to sustain a normal body weight is very low if you consume animal products. All animal products promote weight gain, and the worst offender of all is chicken!

THE PLEASURE TRAP

& THE MOTIVATIONAL TRIAD



Douglas J. Lisle PhD and Alan Goldhamer, D.C., in their book *The Pleasure Trap - Mastering the Hidden Force that Undermines Health & Happiness* - discuss the motivational triad above and how the pursuit of pleasure via food and sexual activity provided reinforcing dopamine hits that were of sufficient intensity to ensure the continuation of the human species. Today, our food is so saturated with salt, oil, and sugar (all addictive substances in their own right) that they over stimulate the dopamine system and we now turn to food for excessively reinforcing dopamine hits causing addiction to unhealthy food. It's a compelling reason as to why the Standard American Diet Is so hard to quit. Now you know! Turn this knowledge into power. The power to change!

WHAT TO EXPECT



Getting Used to Different Foods

When switching to a WFPB diet, you'll notice the adaptation of your taste buds to the more subtle flavors inherent in WFPB cooking over time. This is quite exciting!

The Standard American Diet (SAD) relies upon salt, oil, and sugar, which overpower the taste buds. Upon eliminating these types of foods, healthier foods may taste a bit bland. Don't despair. The adaptation to the subtler flavors will take between two weeks to potentially as long as 90 days, but the transformation will happen.

As an aside, the process of taste adaptation can be rapidly accelerated with a period of medically supervised water fasting. You'll soon discover how flexible your appetite can be. Your palate will adapt, and you'll be glad you made the change in time.

We never thought that we would see the day when we look forward to a plate of steamed green leafy veggies, but we do.

We have found that rather than enjoying our food less than before, we actually enjoy it more. It's like switching from a low-quality pocket AM radio to a high-fidelity stereo system. We can taste the subtleties of our food much more clearly than ever before. We get to eat as much food as we like (and we eat a lot!) and we maintain a healthy body weight while massively reducing our risk for diseases like heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Meanwhile, we can feel good about helping animal welfare and the environment. The plant-based diet is a win all the way around!



WHAT TO EXPECT, CONTINUED

Hunger

If you are feeling hungry on a plant-based diet, you may need to ingest more food. Whole plant foods are lower in calories per volume than animal-based or packaged processed junk foods. If you are hungry, eat more! It's not uncommon for people to double the volume of food they eat on a plant-based diet and still lose weight.

Weight Loss

Depending on how "normal" is defined, in the US, at least 74% of the population is overweight or obese. Because so many are overweight or obese, we perceive this as the norm. When someone we know loses weight, we may think they are too thin. The likelihood is that they are not. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of how much weight we carry for a given height. A BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is defined as normal. 25.0 to 29.9 is overweight, and 30 and above is obese. There are some obvious limitations to BMI. Lean, muscular individuals can fall into the overweight and even obese categories without having excess fat. Lee's BMI is 27, which puts him in the overweight category. Body composition analysis shows that he is actually unusually lean.

People often are alarmed at how much weight they lose. Imagine that in our society where almost everyone struggles with their weight! If you are happy with your body weight and don't want to lose weight, you can increase the volume of food that you eat and/or eat more high-calorie plant foods. Examples include dates, nuts and seeds, avocados, and dried fruit like raisins. These are all healthy foods that are high in calories. Most people need to go easy on the intake of these foods because they can promote weight gain, but if you are concerned that you are getting too thin from WFPB eating, add the more calorie-dense options. If you want to use olive oil - please do so sparingly, as pointed out earlier - it is a very calorie-dense option (we recommend fresh pressed olive oil). Most importantly, it would be best not to abandon the WFPB lifestyle because you have lost too much weight. The problem is easily fixed with the suggestions we have made.

Beans and Gas

Excess gas from beans is a reflection of the type of bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract. As time passes, the makeup of bacteria in your colon will change, facilitating the digestion of beans. If you are suffering from excess gas - slowly build up your intake of beans, and the gassiness will subside.
After a while, you'll note that your flatulence is not as offensively smelling.

Your WFPB Journey



Constipation

Only 3% of the adult US population meets the minimum daily requirement for dietary fiber, and that established requirement is likely far below what is optimal. In fact, rounded to the nearest whole number, the percentage of adult US males meeting the requirement is a horrifying ZERO percent! As a result, virtually everyone in the country is constipated to some degree. The lack of dietary fiber doesn't just cause constipation but has been implicated in a host of disparate diseases of the GI tract, like diverticulitis, to nervous system diseases like dementia and depression. On a WFPB diet, virtually all foods have fiber, and you will automatically start consuming enough. The change to WFPB alone will likely cure most people's constipation within a day or two. However, If you have trouble passing stool and go days between productive bowel movements, you may want to consider a laxative like magnesium citrate. Start with a low dose and gradually increase it until your stools are loose.

Why make such a recommendation? Your colon is likely filled with hard-dried stool if you are very constipated. Starting on a high-fiber WFPB diet, you will produce healthy stool behind the bulky, hard stool. You'll want to clear your colon to prevent abdominal cramping.

Only 3% of the adult US population meets the minimum daily requirement for dietary fiber.



Your WFPB Journey - What to Expect

Increased urination

Whole plant foods tend to be high in water content. The increased water content may lead to frequent voiding, but this is actually a good thing. Low fluid intake is a factor in the production of kidney stones. The high water content of plant foods is one reason plant-based diets protect against kidney stones.

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is critical for a healthy nervous system and blood. Vitamin B12 is a vitamin that most people get from animal foods. There are very few plant foods with B12. Spirulina, a type of algae, has a bit of B12 in it, but it is not well absorbed, and spirulina isn't something many of us consume regularly. It is common to labor under the misconception that animals produce Vitamin B12, and therefore we should eat meat. In fact - bacteria produce vitamin B12, and animals get it from eating plants containing this bacteria.

Before living in the modern sanitary world, it was easy to get enough B12 just by consuming produce from the ground with small amounts of dirt on it or drinking untreated water. Treated water today is devoid of vitamin B12. Those following an entirely plant-based diet are at risk of developing a vitamin B12 deficiency, given the sanitized food environment we now live in. The truth is that even meat eaters can be deficient because the ability to absorb B12 declines with age. The body can store a supply of B12 that may last months to even years, but eventually, this can run low, creating severe problems like dementia, psychosis, or anemia. We recommend taking a vitamin B12 supplement at 1000 micrograms twice weekly. Supplements are a vast topic, but suffice it to say that vitamin B12 is the one supplement everyone eating this way needs. Vitamin D may also be needed if you get little sun (see Sidebar Topics).

Immune Health

The evidence supporting WFPB nutrition and its positive impact on immunity is voluminous and continues to grow. the scientific community has discovered so much about a healthy gut biome and its interplay with immunity. Read more about it here.

Dealing with Friends & Family

We understand that it can be a tricky subject, especially when it comes to getting your family on board. In our own household, Joyce and I have fortunately found common ground when it comes to the food we keep in our home and what we eat.

We've seen cases where someone wants to switch to a whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet but faces resistance from their family. Our advice? Approach the conversation calmly and explain your reasons behind wanting to make this change. Share what's important to you - whether it's weight loss, improved health, the environment, or animal welfare. If you're lucky, your significant other will want to join you on this journey.

However, if they're not ready, don't worry. A strong relationship built on mutual respect means they'll likely support your efforts. Initially, other family members may not be fully on board either. But as they witness your health improvements and see the weight come off, they may become inspired to give it a try too.

Now, keeping animal and processed foods in the house for those who don't want to change can be a challenge. But don't fret! We're confident that as your taste buds adjust and you start feeling better, the allure of salt, oil, and sugar that are ever-present in the standard American diet will fade away. Trust us, you'll find true joy in your new cuisine and hopefully undergo a transformation that you'll love.

Lee



Medical Matters

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. In this condition, your body does not respond appropriately to insulin. This is the result of eating animal products and processed food. By clearing these foods out of your diet, insulin will quickly start to work properly. If you take medications for type 2 diabetes and start a WFPB diet, your blood sugar levels may drop too low. This can happen within days. Lee used to be pre-diabetic. It only took 2 or 3 days for his blood sugar to normalize. It can take longer to normalize, but in most cases, individuals will find they no longer need their diabetes medication. We recommend working with a physician knowledgeable about WFPB nutrition and its positive impact on reversing your diabetes. You'll need to monitor your A1C and will likely need to adjust your medications. The nutritional research regarding WFPB and Diabetes is monumental. If your physician is skeptical or unfamiliar, we recommend that they visit the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and the work of Dr. Neal Barnard **(www.pcrm.org)**.

Type 1 diabetes is a failure of the body to produce insulin. No dietary change can undo this, but insulin requirements will drop because your cells' sensitivity to insulin will improve. As stated above, blood sugars must be closely monitored to ensure they don't drop too low.

Hypertension is a significant issue in the US. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 47% of the adult US population has hypertension. A WFPB diet can play an instrumental role in dropping blood pressure. People who eat predominantly plant-based diets are much less prone to hypertension. We recommend monitoring your blood pressure and medications with a physician who is knowledgeable and supportive of your dietary changes.

High cholesterol is not uncommon in the US. A cholesterol level of 200 is considered "normal" in Western populations but still carries an increased risk for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the US (about one in five deaths). Being "normal" in a sick population is not something to aspire to. Ideally, total cholesterol should be below 150, with an LDL of 70 or less. At these low levels, heart disease is highly uncommon. Individuals who predominantly consume a WFPB diet usually have values in these optimal ranges. If you have been taking cholesterol meds, you may be able to reduce or stop them completely. Like all medications, there are potential side effects and risks, so reducing their usage is a definite win. Again, please consult with your physician.

Ready for support? Our Diabetes Reset program helps you put all of this into practice with a coach by your side. See Work With Us on page 37 to join the waitlist.



Getting Started



Rachael Brown Rocks. Her book is available on Amazon!

Kitchen Clean Out

If you live alone, this should be pretty straightforward. If you live with others that are not on board, try creating a WFPB haven in your pantry and refrigerator. Don't be surprised if you find family members snacking away at the beautiful fruit and veggie trays you'll be sure to make. That's a good thing!

As dietitian, Jeff Novick has stated, first, "get rid of the CRAP!" That is the Calorie Rich and Processed Food. You won't be tempted to eat it if it is out of the house. CRAP food includes meat, eggs, dairy, poultry, fish, and all packaged and processed food.

Batch Cooking

This is key to making this easy for yourself. When you cook, make multiple portions. When we make our steel-cut oatmeal, we cook enough in the Instant Pot for five days worth of breakfasts (see our recipe below). You can batch-cook potatoes, soup, chili, rice dishes, and more. We highly recommend investing in an Instant Pot to save yourself even more time. We use it daily.

Check it out:
Dr. Greger's Daily Dozen Guide
African American Vegan Starter Guide

Shopping List



Simplicity vs. Complexity

We tend to eat a lot of simple foods and Lee and I love what we eat. On our honeymoon we had access to exquisite vegan food daily. The food was tasty and complex with Michelin style presentation. However, after about five days, we were craving our oatmeal, steamed brussels sprouts and kale! Strange but true. The same will likely happen to you if you give it time.

Whether you keep it simple or complex, just be sure that you cover the WFPB food groups in approximately the amounts recommended. Over the course of a week aim to eat 30 or more different plant foods for optimal gut health. It's actually pretty easy to do. For example, we add raisins, flax, hemp and chia to our oatmeal and top it off with a cup of mixed fruit. Bam! That's 10 different plant foods right there. You'll find that eating 30 different plant foods over the course of a week is a piece of (vegan) cake!

THE ESSENTIALS:

- ✓ Kale and romaine lettuce
- ✓ Walnuts, raisins and dried fruit
- ✓ Oatmeal (we like steel-cut)
- ✓ Fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Mushrooms and Onions
- ✓ Potatoes: sweet, russet, golden and red (yummy!)
- ✓ Minced Garlic
- ✓ Tofu & low-sodium broth
- ✓ Spices: Cumin, basil, cinnamon, oregano, italian seasoning, parsley
- ✓ Quinoa, flax seed, whole wheat flour, hemp seed
- ✓ Beans, beans, and beans!
- ✓ Brown rice
- ✓ Diced tomatoes, paste and sauce, whole wheat pasta
- ✓ Avocado & Ezekiel Bread

Go-To Recipes





Lee's Steel Cut Oats

Combine 4 cups of steel-cut oats with 6 cups of water in an instant pot. Add 4 tbsps of hemp seed, ground chia seed, and flax. Throw in a handful of raisins. Cover and lock. Set for 10 minutes manual.

Lee's Quick & Easy Bean Mix

Combine 1 can of black beans and chickpeas in a bowl. Add 1 cup of sweet peas and mix in salsa and avocado. Top with turmeric.

No Fail Chili

This is one of Joyce's favorite batch cook items. Sauté onions in a splash of water or veggie broth in a large pot. Add chopped zucchini, celery, bell pepper, carrots, and plenty of chili powder. Cook to soften. Add your favorite beans, fire-roasted tomatoes, and a large can of whole tomatoes. Once it has cooked a while, add maple syrup, BBQ sauce, and/or salsa if you like. I sometimes add cocoa, mushrooms, and leftover veggies from the fridge.

Download the following free eRecipe app from PCRM:
21-Day Vegan Quickstart Guide

Visit Dr. John McDougall's site
www.drmcdougall.com/recipes/

BUSY *day?* HEAT & EAT FAVORITES!



Whole food plant-based meals, ready when you are.

On busy days, it helps to have WFPB meals on hand, especially while you transition to a whole food, plant-based lifestyle. A few brands we like right now:

PLANTSTRONG (Rip Esselstyn): ready-to-heat stews and bowls. Find them at Whole Foods or plantstrong.com.

LeafSide: 100% whole food plant-based and organic, with no added oil or sugar. goleafside.com

Daily Harvest: convenient frozen meals. Many are oil-free, so check the label.

- ✅ 100% WFPB
- ✅ Quick & easy
- ✅ Oil-free picks



Practicing Self-care

Taking care of yourself is essential for your overall well-being. Self-care involves any actions you take to prioritize your physical, mental, and emotional health. The benefits of practicing self-care are numerous, including improved physical fitness, better mental clarity, and increased emotional well-being.

There are countless ways to practice self-care, but the key is to find something that works for you and your individual needs. This could include sticking to a consistent sleep schedule, nourishing your body with healthy food, spending time outdoors, engaging in a hobby that brings you joy, or simply expressing gratitude. I love to take walks with our dog Buddy. I also try to incorporate two to ten minutes of silence into a corner of my day. It's a form of meditative prayer that I find so beneficial, especially in addressing my tendency towards anxiousness.

To start incorporating self-care into your daily routine, begin by choosing one practice to focus on each week. Pay attention to any positive changes you experience, and feel free to add in more self-care activities as you feel ready. Remember, taking care of yourself is a lifelong journey, so be kind to yourself and prioritize your well-being.

We turn not older with years,
but new every day..

- Emily Dickinson

At-home workout routine

20 minutes

Click here to checkout our workouts!



Keep your balance!



Strengthen your core.



Take a breath and cool down.

KEEP IT SIMPLE!



Remember to stretch.

Sidebar Topics

What about Exercise

Although exercise is essential for good health, surprisingly, it is not key to weight loss. The most significant leverage on weight loss lies in what you put in your mouth. The bottom line is that exercise doesn't put you much ahead in losing weight unless you do a lot. In the absence of any dietary changes, it takes about 300 minutes per week of moderate exercise to see any effect on body weight. Research suggests that exercise does help maintain and stabilize body weight, and we encourage you to exercise, but if your goal is weight loss, your number one priority is diet.

Generally speaking, more is better. Extremely high amounts of exercise can have some downsides, but that is outside this guide's scope. If you are entirely new to exercise, start with a ten-minute walk daily and build up from there. Rome was not built in a day. Even five minutes is a win if you haven't been doing anything. Build the habit and slowly increase the amount. FOR SUBSTANTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS, the US Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity or an equivalent mix of moderate and vigorous exercise weekly. Those are very ambitious goals. Aim for an amount you can reasonably incorporate into your lifestyle and not give up on.

As you build the exercise habit, ideally, you should incorporate strength training and stretching into your routine. Stay tuned to kuriskoandco.com for more information.

Sidebar Topics

What about Supplements

Avoid them except for vitamins B12 and D. Some supplements have been shown to be harmful rather than helpful. Actually, long-term studies have shown no health advantage to taking multivitamins (and have even been linked to excess mortality). We recommend using supplements that are 3rd party certified. Click here to learn more about 3rd party certification.





NO NEED FOR BOTTLES OF SUPPLEMENTS OR PROTEIN SHAKES. WFPB EATING PROVIDES LEE WITH ALL THE NUTRIENTS NEEDED FOR A HEALTHY BODY.

Sidebar Topics

What about Alcohol

You may not like to hear this, but there is no safe intake of alcohol. It's time to face the hard facts. Whether you like it or not, alcohol is carcinogenic. Shockingly, even just one or two drinks a day can increase the risk of breast cancer by a staggering 30 to 50 percent! But that's not all - alcohol is also linked to other types of cancer, including mouth and throat, larynx, esophagus, colon and rectum, and liver.

Think alcohol is good for your heart? Think again. The idea that a little alcohol offers protection against heart disease is no longer widely accepted by the scientific community. Furthermore, alcohol is nothing more than empty calories, sabotaging your weight loss efforts.

In Lee's work as a diagnostic radiologist, he has witnessed firsthand the damage caused by alcohol. He frequently encounters patients with cirrhotic livers, a condition caused by excessive alcohol consumption. He has performed countless procedures to drain liters of fluid from the abdomen of patients whose livers have been destroyed by alcohol. Tragically, the majority of these patients do not survive.

But the consequences of alcohol aren't limited to physical health. It can bring out the worst in people and lead to a range of social problems.

In light of these truths, we strongly urge you to limit your alcohol consumption as much as possible. Your health and well-being depend on it.

If you are struggling with Alcohol Use Disorder, we highly recommend the following resources:

This Naked Mind - book and online community
OAR Health and RIA Health. Both utilize naltrexone therapy - giving individuals a significant edge in beating their addiction.

Sidebar Topics

What about Sleep

Did you know that sleep might be even more crucial for your well-being than what you eat? According to renowned sleep expert Matthew Walker, Ph.D., inadequate sleep has been linked to serious health conditions such as heart disease, obesity, dementia, cancer, and diabetes.

But it doesn't stop there. Missing just an hour or two of sleep can cause a spike in your blood pressure and heart rate. On top of that, insufficient sleep can lead to overeating and even a decrease in the male hormone testosterone, impacting both your fertility and overall health. Women aren't exempt either, as it can disrupt menstrual cycles and impair fertility.

On the flip side, ensuring you have enough sleep can actually improve your immune system and your ability to fight off viruses.

So how can you ensure a restful night's sleep? It all starts with establishing a regular bedtime and waking up time. Creating a cool and dark sleeping environment can also work wonders. And don't forget the power of exercise, especially when done outdoors in the morning to soak up some sunlight.

And here's a surprising tip: taking a warm bath in the evening can actually lower your body's core temperature, setting the stage for a peaceful night of sleep. And if you find it hard to doze off, make it a habit to turn off all electronics a couple of hours before bedtime and indulge in a good book instead.

Remember, a good night's sleep is not only vital for your health but also for your overall well-being. So prioritize your sleep and reap the benefits it brings.

Click here to read more about the importance of **Sleep Hygiene**

Sidebar Topics

What about Salt

Salt (sodium chloride) is a significant health hazard. It raises the risk of high blood pressure, stroke, kidney disease, and stomach cancer, and most of it comes from packaged processed food. Plant foods give you all the sodium you need. In our home, Lee and I don't use regular salt. We season with herbs, spices, garlic, citrus, and vinegar, and when we want a salty taste we use NoSalt, a potassium-based salt substitute. Plant foods are naturally rich in potassium and low in sodium, and that balance helps lower blood pressure. If you have kidney disease or take certain blood pressure medicines, check with your doctor before using a potassium salt. Skipping iodized salt? Add a little seaweed, like nori or dulse, for iodine.

What about Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners

Because you are severely reducing or eliminating packaged processed foods, you will be reducing your intake of sweeteners. As part of the adaptation to a WFPB diet, you will begin to enjoy the flavor of food without much or, ideally, no added sweeteners. This adaptation will take time. Consider putting a bit of sugar or maple syrup on things like oatmeal because we want you to eat the food. As far as artificial sweeteners like aspartame, stay away from them. Studies show that they are entirely ineffective at promoting weight loss. The sweet taste without the normally associated calories messes up your brain's satiety mechanisms causing you to eat back the expected calories you didn't get. Worse yet, artificial sweeteners promote metabolic syndrome, which affects one-third of Americans. Metabolic syndrome comprises obesity, diabetes, high blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol. Aspartame may even have adverse effects on your brain. When it comes to aspartame, say no.

Sidebar Topics

Will I become protein deficient?

One of the most common myths about plant-based diets is that they lack sufficient protein. In reality, a well-balanced plant-based diet provides all the essential amino acids your body needs. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein, and while some plant foods may be lower in certain amino acids, combining a variety of legumes, grains, nuts, seeds, and vegetables easily meets protein requirements without the need for animal products.

Where Do Plant-Based Proteins Come From?

Legumes like lentils, chickpeas, and black beans are protein powerhouses. Quinoa, a complete protein, contains all nine essential amino acids. Nuts, seeds, and whole grains such as oats and brown rice also contribute to a protein-rich diet. Even vegetables provide small but meaningful amounts of protein that contribute to overall intake.

Avoiding Harmful Compounds

By choosing plant-based sources of protein, you not only meet your protein needs but also avoid harmful compounds found in animal products. One such compound is TMAO (trimethylamine N-oxide), which is produced when gut bacteria metabolize animal-based foods. High levels of TMAO are linked to an increased risk of heart disease and other chronic illnesses.

The Added Benefits of Fiber and Polyphenols

Unlike meat, plant-based foods are rich in fiber, which promotes digestive health, regulates blood sugar, and lowers cholesterol. Additionally, plants contain polyphenols—natural compounds with powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These compounds help protect against cancer, support immune function, and promote overall well-being.

Sidebar Topics

Protein (continued)

Do Americans Consume Too Much Protein?

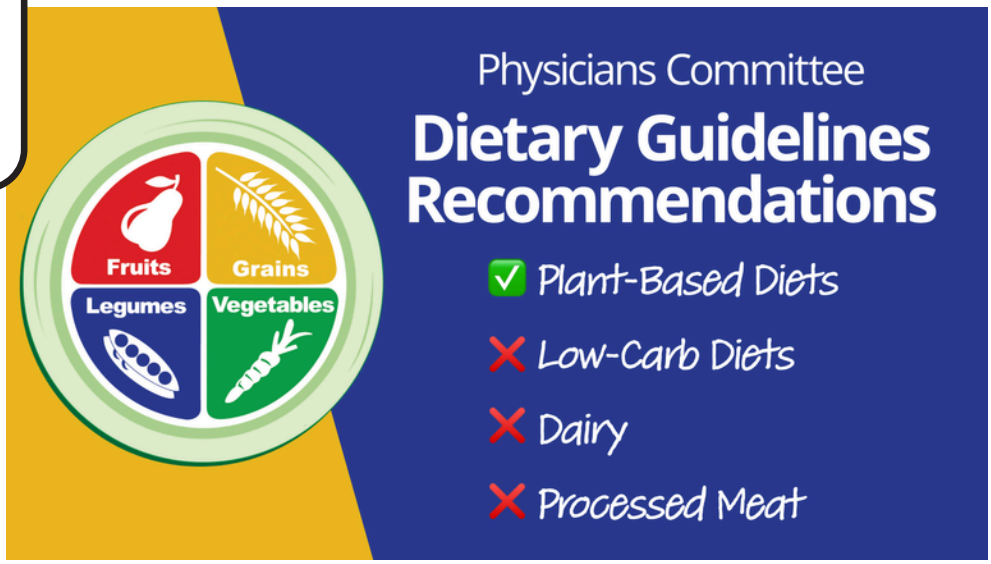
Surprisingly, most Americans consume far more protein than their bodies require. Excess protein, particularly from animal sources, doesn't get stored as protein. Instead, the body converts it into fat through a process called lipogenesis and a portion of the protein molecules are converted into carbohydrates. This excess can contribute to weight gain, metabolic dysfunction, and increased risk of chronic diseases.

The Bottom Line

A thoughtfully planned plant-based diet not only provides ample protein but also protects against disease while promoting optimal health. By embracing plant-based eating, you gain all the essential amino acids without the harmful side effects associated with animal-based foods—while also reaping the benefits of fiber, polyphenols, and other vital nutrients.

Here's what should be on your plate according to PCRM!

PCRM.ORG





In Summary

You now have a roadmap to adopting a vibrant, whole-food, plant-based lifestyle. By focusing on nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds, you'll provide your body with all the essential amino acids, fiber, and antioxidants needed to thrive. This approach not only fuels your body but also helps prevent and even reverse chronic conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension.

By reducing animal-based foods and embracing the protective power of plants, you'll eliminate harmful compounds such as TMAO (linked to accelerated heart disease), which will likely add years of healthy living to an increased lifespan. With easy-to-follow tips and links, we anticipate that this guide will simplify your transition and make healthy choices accessible and enjoyable.

Beyond just food, we aim to emphasize the importance of long-term sustainability. We encourage you to focus on mindful eating, better meal planning, and gradual shifts that promote lasting results. You'll feel empowered to make informed decisions that align with your health goals while embracing a lifestyle that boosts energy, improves digestion, and enhances overall well-being.

Your journey to optimal health starts now, one delicious, plant-powered meal at a time! When you're ready for support, turn the page to see how we can help.

Work With Us

Ready for more support? Lee, Joyce, and our team of certified health coaches are here to help.

Diabetes Reset Program (coming soon!)

Our coach-guided program to help you take charge of type 2 diabetes and prediabetes with whole food, plant-based eating, no oil, and real support every step of the way. Work alongside your doctor while we coach the lifestyle changes.

Get on the waitlist: email info@kuriskoandco.com →

1:1 Lifestyle Coaching

Pick the coach who fits you and meet one-on-one by video for lasting change in how you eat, move, and live.

Meet our coaches →

5-Session WFPB Jumpstart

Five coached sessions over five weeks to put this guide into action and build habits that stick.

Start your Jumpstart →

Health & Wellness Champions

Our free online community on kuriskoandco.com. Ask questions, share recipes and wins, and connect with others on the same path.

Join the group →

Free Newsletter

Recipes, tips, and news from Lee and Joyce, delivered to your inbox. Sign up at the bottom of our home page.

Subscribe →

Questions? Email info@kuriskoandco.com or call 833.KURISKO.



get in touch with us

REACH OUT TO US ANYTIME FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR COACHING PROGRAMS. WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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EMAIL	INFO@KURISKOANDCO.COM
PHONE	833.KURISKO (833.587.4756)
SOCIAL	@KURISKOANDCO

Lee and Joyce xoxo



HABIT TRACKER

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR HABITS CAN HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK AND ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS. FILL OUT YOUR TOP GOALS AS THEY RELATE TO OUR 4 PILLARS OF SUCCESS AND MARK THEM OFF EACH DAY YOU SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEM.

WEEK OF: _____

NUTRITION/EXERCISE/REST/ENGAGE	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
01	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
02	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
03	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
04	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
05	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
06	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
07	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
08	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
09	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

REFLECTION NOTES

SELF-CARE
INTENTIONS

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS

TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR

TODAY'S TOP GOALS

01

02

03

SCHEDULE

WATER

SLEEP

MOOD

NOTES

WEEKLY GOALS TRACKER

WEEK OF: _____

	MY GOALS	MY FEELINGS	DONE
MON			◯
TUE			◯
WED			◯
THU			◯
FRI			◯
SAT			◯
SUN			◯

WEEKLY MEAL PLAN

FROM: / / TO: / /

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
MON				
TUE				
WED				
THU				
FRI				
SAT				
SUN				

SHOPPING LIST

NOTES