

Shop Smart, Eat Well

CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Placer/Nevada Counties

Plant-Based Eating

What is plant-based eating?

In the past, plant-based was often used to describe a vegetarian or vegan diet. More recently, plant-based (or plant-forward) eating has been used to describe a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes foods that come from plants (vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, and seeds), but is not strictly limited to them. Meat may be included, but it's usually not the main part of the meal.

What are the benefits to eating more plant-based foods?

People may choose to consume more plant-based foods for a variety of reasons, including:

- Health benefits associated with eating more fruits and vegetables (i.e. decreased risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, and many cancers).
- Concerns for the environment.
- A potential for lower grocery bills and food costs. For example, a meatless chili using dried beans is less expensive than a chili containing meat or a textured meat substitute.

Are plant-based foods more nutritious?

Just because a product is plant-based doesn't necessarily mean it is healthier. Looking at the Nutrition Facts Label and ingredients will help you determine if a food or beverage is the right choice for you.



Plant-Based Protein Sources

It's easy to find plant-based sources of protein at the grocery store. Just look at all these options! These foods also tend to be high in fiber, vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients.



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Beneficial nutrients to look for in plant-based products include:

- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Vitamin D
- ✓ Vitamin B12
- ✓ Dietary Fiber
- ✓ Protein

Plant-Based Eating (continued)



How to Get Started

For a healthy eating style that includes more plant-based foods, focus on ways to add more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. For example:

- Designate a certain night or nights for meatless meals.
- Try substituting some or all of the meat in recipes with plant-based sources of protein, such as beans, tofu, tempeh or unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Include more vegetables and fruits without added sugars or salt in meals and snacks.

Sources: [*Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*](#) and [*American Heart Association*](#)



Veggie Pasta Salad

Makes about 6 servings

PREP TIME: 20 minutes + chilling

Ingredients

- 2½ cups uncooked whole grain pasta (any shape)
- 4 cups assorted cut-up vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, celery, bell peppers, zucchini, etc.)
- 1 tablespoon water
- ¼ cup green onions, chopped
- 1 (15 oz.) can beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup vinaigrette or dressing of your choice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese (optional)

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a microwave-safe dish, combine the assorted vegetables and water. Cover and microwave on high for 3 minutes. Drain.
2. Drain pasta and rinse in cold water. In a large bowl, combine the pasta, steamed vegetables, onions, beans, and cheese (optional). Toss with the dressing, salt, and pepper to thoroughly combine.
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes. Toss again before serving.

Recipe adapted from Colorado State University Extension, Let's Cook!

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