

# Plant-forward eating



A plant-forward style of eating is one that features plant foods as the star of most meals. Animal foods such as meat and dairy may be included but are not the main focus. There are many ways to be plant-forward and improve the health of your diet.

## HOW IT WORKS

Plant-forward eating is less of a diet prescription and more of a healthy food mindset. Each meal begins with the question: “what plants can I add to my plate?” Animal products should be a secondary consideration and eaten in small amounts.

A plant-forward diet focuses on:

- Whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, bulgur, whole wheat, millet, and oatmeal
- Plant proteins such as nuts, nut butter, seeds, soy, beans, peas, and lentils
- A variety of vegetables of every color
- Whole fruits
- Quality plant fats such as olive oil, avocados, canola oil, and nuts

## BENEFITS

Plant-forward eating has many benefits to physical health. Diets high in plant foods are linked to improved health and a lower risk of disease. Eating less meat reduces your risk of:

- Obesity
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High blood lipids
- Certain cancers

In addition, a plant-focused diet benefits the environment. Fewer animal products may translate to lower greenhouse gas emissions and more responsible land, energy, and water usage.

## GETTING STARTED

Gradual change over time is the best way to create healthy habits. It also helps to get family members on board with “plant forward.” Here’s how to get started:

- Take it one meal at a time. Start with just breakfast or lunch being meat-free.
- Find a few simple, meatless recipes to try. Look for those big on flavor.
- Add more of the plant foods you already love to your plate and shopping cart. Gradually branch out for more variety.
- Swap out the meat in a recipe for a plant protein like beans or tofu.
- Aim to make three-fourths of your plate plant foods.
- Reduce your meat portions by half.

