

Plant-Rich Eating Quick Reference

08/22



Health Benefit



Cardiovascular Disease:

- 24% reduction in ischemic heart disease mortality rates⁵
- Decrease LDL by 19-32% (equivalent to a statin)^{6,7,8}
- Decrease anginal symptoms & help resolve disease³
- Decrease systolic blood pressure by 5-26mmHg^{6,7,9,10}
- Reduce the need for hypertension medications^{6,7}

Diabetes:

- Decrease HbA1c by 1-2%^{8,12,13,14}
- Reduce the need for up to 2 diabetes medications^{4,8,10}
- Improve emotional wellbeing & quality of life with diabetes¹⁵
- Conversely, low plant-based index scores confer a 12-23% **increase** in Type 2 diabetes risk¹¹

Cancer Risk & Treatment:

- Decrease symptoms related to cancer treatment while working synergistically with cancer treatments²⁸
- Decrease risk of breast and colorectal cancers and cancer mortality²⁴⁻²⁷

Mental Health:

- Decrease depression risk by 32%¹⁶
- Decrease risk of and mortality from dementia^{17,18}
- Reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD^{19,20}

Osteoporosis:

- Protect against the development of osteoporosis³⁰

Gastrointestinal Health:

- Decrease bloating, heartburn, gas, constipation, and diarrhea³¹

Overall Health:

- Reduce overall mortality by 10% by switching 3% of protein from meat to plants³²
- Improve weight status, energy metabolism, & systemic inflammation³⁴

All references for this document can be found on our Plant-Rich Eating Guide (www.hamiltonfht.ca/en/what-we-offer/green-office-initiative.aspx).

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Planetary Benefit

Animal agriculture is responsible for:

- 14.5% of all human-caused climate change³⁷
- 70% of all global surface & groundwater use³⁹
- 80% of global agricultural land use⁴⁰
- 82% of antibiotic use in Canada⁴¹
- 40% of global methane emissions (traps 30x more atmospheric heat than CO₂)³⁸

Nutritional Considerations

General Recommendation: Consider a multivitamin with minerals supplement to help meet nutritional needs.

Additional supplements may be needed:

- **Iron:** Iron absorption can be inhibited. Additional iron supplementation may be necessary (e.g. menstruating women).
- **Vitamin B12:** Medications, GI issues, and degree of vegetarianism can affect B12 levels. Recommend B12 fortified foods (e.g. alternative milks, veggie burgers) 2-3x/day and use blood levels to guide supplementation.
 - Supplementation examples:
 - Adult Strict Vegan- additional 250-500mcg/day
 - Adult Correcting Deficiency- additional 1000mcg/day for 3 months & retest
- **Vitamin D:** Supplementation is recommended for all Canadians regardless of dietary intake: 1000 IU/day for adults, 600 IU/day for children >1 year
- **Calcium:** Use of a calcium calculator (www.osteoporosis.ca) is recommended. Adequate intake can be achieved with plant sources (e.g. fortified plant-based milks).

Protein: Add plant-based proteins to meals to meet daily protein requirements.

Free, online plant-rich eating groups available for patients.

Self-referral by calling 905-667-4852, emailing nutrition.groups@hamiltonfht.ca, or visiting www.hamiltonfht.ca/en/groups-workshops/going-green-plant-rich-eating.aspx.

Gender, age, ethnic background, and degree of vegetarianism may affect recommendations. Each patient's specific needs can differ. Individualized advice from a Registered Dietitian is optimal. For further information for adults see: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-healthy-vegetarian-eating.pdf>.