Why Eating More Plants Is Key To Health

Kristel de Groot, Chopra news

We all want to be healthy, but what does true health mean? Oftentimes, people think it's about their weight, the way they look, counting calories, dieting, and restriction. But true health is really about **feeling** your best.

Ask yourself: *Do you have the energy to do what you want to do in life?*

Eating plants fuels your body with the vital nutrients it needs to stay energized and healthy, and according to the CDC, 9 out of 10 people aren't eating enough of them.

Here are some reasons adding more plants to your diet can boost your vitality and simple practices to incorporate them into your diet.

Diversity is key

Your gut health is directly linked to the variety of nutrients in your diet. By eating a wide range of plants you encourage the growth of good bacteria and contribute to a more diverse microbiome, resulting in a healthier gut. Try counting the plants you eat and aim for 30 plants per week - inclusive of fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

As an added bonus, the *crowding out principle* suggests that simply by shifting your mindset to focus on what you need more of - fruits and vegetables - you will naturally start to eat less of the harmful food that can inflame your gut.

It's all about those micronutrients

While we have been encouraged to worry about our macronutrient intake—in other words, how many grams of protein, carbohydrates, and fats we are eating—the real power of nutrition lies in our micronutrient intake. These micronutrients are plentiful in plants and include key elements our bodies need, such as vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, enzymes and phytonutrients.

Superfoods can help!

You may have heard the superfood buzz ramp up in recent months and years, but they are nothing new. These nutrient-dense plants with specialized health benefits have been used as medicine in Ayurveda and other ancient wisdom traditions for centuries.

Superfoods are potent - with one small teaspoon of berry powder equating to a handful of berries - so they serve as an easy way to supercharge your daily meals. A few common superfoods include herbs like ashwagandha to destress, shatavari for hormone balance, and turmeric as an anti-inflammatory. Find the ones that support your specific needs and try adding them to your morning smoothie, oatmeal, water, lattes, snacks or even savoury meals.

Listen to your body

Your body is always talking to you and the best way to improve your vitality is learning to listen to its signals. Try asking yourself these questions:

- How do I feel after eating certain foods?
- Which foods make me feel more alive, give me more energy, and make me happier?
- Which foods make me feel tired and cranky?

Once you become aware, you can consciously decide to eat more of the foods that make you feel your best. Trust your intuition and internal wisdom. Most likely eating more plants will make you feel better in every aspect of your life. Remember, food is not your enemy, plants are here to nurture us. Be grateful and enjoy every single bite of food you eat.

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