

Monthly Health Challenge™



# Try Vegan-Friendly Foods

**CHALLENGE**

Eat plant-based foods for better health

How much do you know about the health benefits of vegan-friendly foods? Take this quiz.

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- Poor nutrition is a leading cause of chronic disease and early death.
- The average adult should eat 1-½ to 2 cups of fruit per day, and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables.
- A plant-based diet can help lower the risk for cancer, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
- Eating a little red meat doesn't really have an impact on heart disease risk.
- Legumes (beans) are a good source of protein – even better than red meat.



Want to live longer, feel better and lower your risk for chronic disease. Eat more vegan-friendly foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Research shows eating even a little red meat raises the risk for heart disease and other health problems.<sup>4</sup> For best health, stick with fresh, whole foods.

*Answers: 1. True. 2. True. 3. True. 4. False. 5. True.*

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Try Vegan-Friendly Foods.”
2. Create your own plan to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
3. Keep up this habit for a lifetime of good health.



“Eat your vegetables.” It’s a mantra North Carolina parents Penn and Kim Holderness use on their two kids. But it doesn’t always work.

A side of broccoli. A scoop of peas. Even something as simple as a carrot can trigger a dinner-table incident. Sometimes

there’s whining, crying, backtalk, and pure spin-your-head-in-a-circle evil...all because of vegetables.

Been there, done that? Picky-eating isn’t just a kid phase. Take a closer look at your own eating habits. Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables?

Probably not. Before you stick your foot in your mouth like it’s a juicy T-bone steak, chew on this. Only 9 percent of adults eat enough vegetables.<sup>1</sup> And fruit isn’t much better. Only 12 percent of adults eat enough fruit.

So what’s the big deal with eating fruits and vegetables? Turns out, they’re good for you. They’re low in calories and high in vitamins and nutrients. And research shows people who follow a vegetarian lifestyle are healthier and live longer.<sup>2</sup>

You don’t have to become a vegan – or even a vegetarian. But you can benefit from eating more plant-based foods. Take the month-long health challenge to *Eat Vegan-Friendly Foods*.

## The vegan-omics of healthy eating

It’s no secret that 70 percent of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese. And the leading cause of death? It’s not a mystery either. It’s heart disease. But both are easy to prevent.

Take a hard look at lifestyle habits, and research points to one factor above all others as being the key to a long and healthy life. That one thing is diet.

Follow a plant-based diet. Eat more vegan-friendly foods. And you’re going to live longer and be healthier. Research shows eating this way can help:<sup>3</sup>

- ✓ Reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke
- ✓ Improve cholesterol levels
- ✓ Lower blood pressure
- ✓ Reduce inflammation
- ✓ Prevent or control diabetes
- ✓ Improve gut health and digestion
- ✓ Lower the risk for certain types of cancer
- ✓ Support weight loss and weight management
- ✓ Protect the brain from age-related memory loss
- ✓ Increase longevity

**Video:**  
Do you want to have some broccoli?  
[tinyurl.com/ybe5kj9i](https://tinyurl.com/ybe5kj9i)



## 10 ways to eat more vegan-friendly foods

If you're already meat-free, keep up the good work. You'll avoid many of the health problems linked to the typical American diet (pizza, hamburgers, French fries, and soda).

If you're ready to admit your diet isn't perfect, try vegan-friendly foods. You don't have to give up all meat. Just work on eating more plant-based foods. Here's how:

**10 tips:**  
Healthy eating  
for vegetarians  
[tinyurl.com/  
zbpglxc](https://tinyurl.com/zbpglxc)

### 1. Order the salad.

Going out to eat? Skip the main entrees and go with a salad: romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, and an olive-oil dressing. Try fruit salad. Or make your own at home.

### 2. Go vegan for a day.

You may not want to become a vegetarian or follow a strict vegan diet. But try it for a day. Plan all your meals based on eating more fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

34 vegan-friendly recipe resources  
[www.vrg.org/  
recipes/](http://www.vrg.org/recipes/)

### 3. Fire up the grill.

But instead of slapping a steak over the flames, slice up some bell peppers, squash, pineapple, and zucchini. Put some ears of corn or asparagus spears on the grill. Baste your vegetables of choice with olive oil and season with lemon herb. Then grill for 10 minutes until they soften.

### 4. Make your own soup.

You can easily make your own soup loaded with vegetables in a slow-cooker. Just chop up your favorite veggies like carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and onions. Mix in a vegetable-based broth and some water, and let it simmer for a few hours.



### 5. Go nuts.

Eat a handful of nuts as a snack. Or add nuts and seeds to a salad. Try walnuts, almonds, cashews, or pistachios.

### 6. Enjoy the power of puree.

Add pureed fruits and vegetables to sauces, dips, and smoothies. (It's one way Penn and Kim Holderness get their kids to eat vegetables.) Blend up some mushrooms and spinach and add to marinara or pasta sauce. And if you like fruit smoothies, add your favorite greens to the mix. You'll get the health benefits and nutrients, but you probably won't even notice.

### 7. Eat chips.

No, not the kind of chips deep fried in oil from the snack food aisle. Make your own kale chips. Tear up kale leaves into bite-sized pieces. Place on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt. Then bake in the oven for about 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

**Vegan:** Does not eat any animal, or anything that came from an animal. This includes eggs, milk, cheese, and gelatin.  
**Vegetarian:** Does not eat anything that had a face or a mother.



### 8. Use your microwave.

Stock up on frozen vegetables like corn, carrots, snap peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and legumes. When you're ready to eat, you can pour some in a bowl, pop them in the microwave and enjoy steamed vegetables in just a few minutes.

### 9. Be a raw foodie.

Pick your favorite fruits and vegetables to eat fresh. Celery, cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, bell peppers, carrots, and snap peas are common favorites. So are bananas, grapes, apples, and oranges. Eat vegetables in place of the junk you used to eat like candy bars and donuts.



### 10. Try a new recipe.

Forget a childhood memory of turning your nose up to vegetables. Make it a habit or even a celebration to try a new veggie every month. Look up a recipe for how to prepare it and give it a try. The options are endless, even for vegetables that sometimes get a bad rap like eggplant, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, or broccoli.

## References

1. Lee-Kwan, S., et al. (2017). Disparities in state-specific adult fruit and vegetable consumption – United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 66(45): 1241-1247. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yaele4x2>
2. Orlich, M., et al. (2013). Vegetarian dietary patterns and mortality in Adventist Health Study 2. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 173(13): 1230-1238. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yabor7ku>
3. Craig, W. (2009). Health effects of vegan diets. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 89(5): 1627S-1663S. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y9a3dg5v>
4. Zeneng, W., et al. (2018). Impact of chronic dietary red meat, white meat, or non-meat protein on trimethylamine N-oxide metabolism and renal excretion in healthy men and women. *European Heart Journal*, eh799. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y82u442f>





# Try Vegan-Friendly Foods

## CHALLENGE

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### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Create your own plan to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to develop this healthy habit. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate vegan-friendly foods. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	
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\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I ate vegan-friendly foods

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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