

## WHAT DOES PLANT-RICH LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Follow these tips to the best of your ability to ensure you're eating a healthy, balanced diet:

- Try to eat at least five servings of varied fruits and vegetables each day.
- Start with eating more of your favorites (fried potatoes don't count!), then branch out to new varieties.
- Replace refined grains like white bread, white rice, and regular pasta with 100% whole grain varieties.
- Replace butter with plant-based fats and oils, such as olive or canola oil.
- Better yet, use whole sources of fats, like nut butters or avocado.
- Eat a serving of beans everyday. These include lentils, black beans, soy, baked beans, and chickpea hummus, to name just a few. Try to use these and other plant proteins in place of animal proteins as often as you can.
- Read the Nutrition Facts panel on all your packaged foods.
- Choose foods lowest in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugar and highest in fiber.
- Avoid fried foods (especially fried animal proteins), processed meats, and grocery store pastries to the best of your ability.



## HOW TO REQUEST BALANCED, PLANT-RICH MEALS

If you would like to receive meals that contain more health-promoting, nutrient-dense plants, just ask your meal delivery volunteer to record your name and preferences. Depending on your local organization, you may be able to arrange for tailored menus that meet needs. If your local food delivery organization does not serve options that suit your preferences, be sure to inform a volunteer and contact the local office.

Make your preferences known, and be persistent if necessary! There are resources available to help staff and volunteers provide more plant-rich options to clients.

**Interested in learning more about diet and healthy aging? Check out these resources for more on optimal nutrition in older age:**

- [NutritionFacts.org](https://www.nutritionfacts.org)
- [PCRM.org](https://www.pcrm.org)
- [CSPI.net.org](https://www.cspinet.org)

Contact [Balanced.org](https://www.balanced.org) for additional support and information.

Email:  
[menus@balanced.org](mailto:menus@balanced.org)



## PLANT-RICH AGING

YOUR GUIDE TO **INCREASED WELLNESS**



*"Eating a plant-based diet is the greatest gift of my life and since 'health is wealth,' I consider myself to be a very rich man. Too many people have forgotten what it feels like to feel good. Once you have felt this level of energy and vitality, you will never go back."*

*Bart Potenza, 82, New York*

## PREVENTING AND REVERSING CHRONIC ILLNESS

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Chronic illnesses make up the leading causes of disability, reduced quality of life, and premature death among older adults, approximately 80% of whom suffer at least one chronic condition. Managing these illnesses comes at a great personal cost; on average, older adults spend around \$500 out of pocket per year for prescription drugs.

However, in many cases, committing to simple dietary changes can drastically improve symptoms and quality of life while reducing dependence on expensive medications. That's because our nation's most common chronic illnesses are rooted in our diets, which can be both the source of and the solution to many chronic health issues. **Leading causes of death among older Americans, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, frequently develop as a result of consuming too few whole, plant foods over a lifetime.**

Fortunately, it's never too late to switch to a healthier, plant-rich way of eating to bring about relief from many chronic illnesses in a relatively short amount of time!

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*"After a lifetime of weight yo-yo-ing, there is NO WAY I would jeopardize or threaten the current state of well-being I have achieved through eating plant based. I feel exuberant nearly all the time. I haven't had a cold or the flu in a few years, I have regular bowel movements and no longer need statin drugs."*

Honey Leveen, 67, Texas



## AVOID OR LIMIT DISEASE-PROMOTING FOODS

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**Over-consumption of foods high in animal fats, cholesterol, refined sugars, and sodium lies at the heart of diet-related disease.** Such foods include pastries, most fast food items, full-fat dairy, eggs, meat, and fish. Processed meats especially, which are known to cause several types of cancers, should be eaten very rarely or avoided completely. These include hot dogs, sausages, smoked and cured meats, deli meats, chicken nuggets, and jerky.



## A DELICIOUS, PLANT-RICH SHIFT

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Most whole plant foods are excellent sources of protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants that you can't get from packaged foods or animal products. Yet the average American consumes a diet high in over-processed packaged foods, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and refined sugars, with fewer than 15% of calories coming from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and other whole plant foods. It's no wonder that older adults are often deficient in many essential nutrients contained within plants that help our bodies stave-off disease, boost our natural immunity, reduce inflammation, and live longer, fuller lives.

*"About ten years ago when I was 75, I started my journey into eating a vegetarian diet. At that time, my husband was well into the throes of Alzheimer's disease and I knew that I had to work harder to maintain my health in order to take care of him and also live a life without disease. I am 85 and I don't take any medications and my doctor says that I am healthier than most of his patients!"*

Margaret Lieblein, 85, Michigan/Florida

