



## A Diet Good for Your Health & Good for the Planet!

With reference to: Anahad O'Connor - Columnist for Washington Post. Jun. 10, 2024.



Can you eat a diet that's good for your health and good for the planet?

A new study suggests that it's possible. It found that people who ate mostly minimally processed plant foods such as nuts, beans, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and olive oil, along with modest amounts of meat, fish, eggs and dairy, had lower rates of premature death from heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases.

At the same time, their diets had a smaller environmental footprint because they consisted of foods that were grown using relatively less land and water and that were produced with fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

The study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, was inspired by a landmark 2019 report from the EAT-Lancet Commission, which designed a "Planetary Health Diet" capable of sustaining 10 billion people and the planet by 2050. The planetary health diet, in broad strokes, encourages people to eat more plants and whole foods alongside small portions of meat and dairy. It was designed to be flexible and adaptable to different cultural, culinary, and personal preferences.

The new report is among the first large studies to examine how eating within the contours of the planetary health diet affects a person's likelihood of dying prematurely from major diseases. The study analysed data on more than 200,000 men and women in the United States who were followed closely for over three decades. The new study found the following:

**Lower mortality risk:** People whose eating habits most closely adhered to the planetary health diet were 30 percent less likely to die prematurely compared to people who ate the lowest amounts of foods that form the basis of the planetary health diet.

**Less illness:** Planetary health eaters had a 10 percent lower risk of dying from cancer, a 14 percent lower likelihood of dying from cardiovascular diseases, a 47 percent reduction in the risk of dying from lung disease, and a 28 percent lower likelihood of dying of Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders.

**Lower infectious-disease risk:** Women whose eating habits closely aligned with the planetary health diet had a 38 percent lower risk of dying of infectious diseases.

*"Their diets had a smaller environmental footprint because they consisted of foods that were grown using relatively less land and water and that were produced with fewer greenhouse gas emissions."*

### Exercising to keep the brain young

medicalnewstoday.com May 26, 2024  
 Exercise greatly benefits brain health, improving cognition, mood and reducing the risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Several new studies have demonstrated the profound impact of exercise on various biological systems, further explaining its ability to enhance health and fight disease.

### Health effects of what we eat

nutritionfacts.org Jun. 20 2024  
 Researchers took a "review of reviews" approach to examine the overall impact of different food groups on health and categorized the data into two broad groups—plant-based foods and animal-based foods. The majority of reviews on whole plant foods indicate protective or neutral effects, while reviews on animal-based foods predominantly highlight deleterious health effects or, at best, neutral effects.

### Living a healthier lifestyle can help offset genetic heart disease risk

medicalnewstoday.com July 22, 2024  
 A study recently published in "Nature Human Behavior" looked at polygenic risk scores and lifestyles... The study found that adopting a favorable lifestyle was associated with just over a 14-fold reduction in early-onset coronary artery disease for people with the highest level of genetic risk and reductions in early-onset ischemic stroke and late-onset coronary artery disease, as well. The findings point to the importance of lifestyle interventions, particularly for younger people with a higher genetic risk for cardiovascular disease.

### Is all vegan food healthy?

nutritionfacts.org Jun. 6, 2024  
 No. People may choose plant-based diets for various reasons, including health concerns, animal welfare, or environmental reasons. A study suggests that "ethical vegans" might be more inclined to consume sugary and fatty foods compared to those motivated by religious or health concerns.



**Better planet health:** An environmental impact analysis found that this approach to eating was associated with 29 percent lower greenhouse gas emissions, a 51 percent reduction in cropland use, a 21 percent reduction in fertilizer use and 13 percent lower irrigation and water needs.

### How to follow a planetary diet

In the study, people whose eating habits adhered closely to the planetary health diet ate large amounts of the following foods:

Whole fruits and non-starchy vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, asparagus, cauliflower, cucumber and leafy greens. Peanuts and tree nuts such as walnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, cashews and pistachios. Legumes such as beans, lentils and peas. Chicken and other forms of poultry. Foods that are rich in unsaturated fats, like avocados, olive oil and sunflower oil. Whole grains such as brown rice, wild rice, oatmeal, quinoa and barley, as well as foods that are made with whole grains (for example, whole wheat bread and rye bread). Ate lower amounts of red and processed meats, eggs, soft drinks, fruit juices and sugary processed foods including candy, cakes, breakfast cereals and desserts.

### How healthy eating is also good for the planet

Food production accounts for about 30 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Much of that is driven by methane emissions from livestock, widespread deforestation, and emissions from food processing, farm machinery, the use of synthetic fertilizers and other aspects of agricultural production.

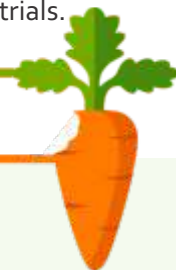
Most of the cropland in America is used to grow just two crops - corn and soy - that are fed to livestock. This practice of monoculture farming can degrade soil, reduce biodiversity and require more irrigation, pesticides and herbicides. Only about 5 percent of farmland in America is used to grow other vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes, Willett said.

"What this study shows is that we can both shift our diets to be far healthier than the average American diet and also at the same time substantial have less impact on slowing down climate change," he added. "We don't have to trade off planetary health for human health. We can have both - it's a double win."

The new study was observational, meaning it found correlations between what people ate and their risk of major diseases, not necessarily cause and effect. It's possible that other lifestyle behaviours could explain the findings. But the researchers took into account factors such as whether the participants smoked, exercised, drank alcohol, or had family histories of heart disease, cancer and other diseases. The health benefits of eating a diet high in nuts, olive oil, whole grains, fruits and vegetables have also been documented in rigorous clinical trials.



## Lentil & Quinoa Tacos



### Ingredients:

- |     |                       |      |                |
|-----|-----------------------|------|----------------|
| 1c  | dry green lentils     | 2t   | ground cumin   |
| 1c  | dry quinoa            | 1/4t | cayenne pepper |
| 1/2 | red onion, diced      | 1t   | garlic powder  |
| 3   | garlic cloves, minced | -    | corn tortillas |
| 4T  | nutritional yeast     | -    | chopped greens |
| 1T  | dried oregano         | -    | diced tomatoes |

### Method:

Separately **rinse** the lentils & quinoa. **Add** 2 cups (480 ml) of water to each in separate pots. **Bring** each to a boil, then **reduce** the heat to **simmer** until the water is absorbed.

**Rinse** the cooked lentils under cold water, then **add** them to a food processor and **pulse** to create a "meaty" texture.

**Sauté** the onion and garlic in a splash of water in a pan and **cook** until soft, fragrant, and slightly translucent.

In a bowl, **combine** all of the ingredients.

**Serve** the lentil-quinoa mixture as desired. Great on corn tortillas with chopped greens, diced tomatoes and your other favorite toppings. Guacamole goes well!

