

A man with a beard and a woman are smiling and eating watermelon. The man is on the left, holding a slice of watermelon to his mouth. The woman is on the right, holding a large slice of watermelon. They are in a kitchen setting.

VITAMIN

Vital health information in a minute

Thinking beyond meat

Benefits of a plant-based diet

Eating green is good for you – and good for the planet, too. But you don't have to go all vegetarian or vegan to get the benefits of a plant-based diet. Making small changes to cut back on meat and get more greens onto your plate can help your health and well-being.

Here are three benefits of eating less meat.

- 1. Improve your health.** Meat is usually high in cholesterol and saturated fats. Processed meats such as lunch meat, bacon and sausage are also loaded with sodium and preservatives. This all can add up to bad news for your health. Eating less meat can help reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity and many cancers.¹
- 2. Save your wallet.** Meatless meals are often cheaper because they're based on simple beans and grains, which generally cost less than meat.²
- 3. Help the planet.** Meat production uses more fossil fuels than growing vegetables. Producing meat also requires a lot of water. It can take 1,800 gallons of water for just one pound of beef and 500 gallons for one pound of chicken.³ Switching to a vegetarian diet – even just one day a week – can make a big environmental impact.

Sources:

1. American Heart Association. How does Plant-Forward (Plant-Based) Eating Benefit your Health? <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/how-does-plant-forward-eating-benefit-your-health> (accessed May 4, 2020).
2. WebMD. The Flexitarian Diet. https://www.webmd.com/diet/a-z/flexitarian_diet (last reviewed/updated February 18, 2019).
3. U.S. Department of the Interior. How much water does it take to grow a hamburger? <https://water.usgs.gov/edu/activity-watercontent.html> (accessed May 4, 2020).

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