

BMA

Nutrition Newsletter



“Plant-based diet does not have to mean Vegan”

-Jessica Murgueytio MS.RD.LD.CDE

## Plant-based Diets Done Right

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Eating more vegetables is a very common health message and we hear it so often that we may forget why it is preached so frequently. Multiple documentaries, books and social media messages about the benefits of a vegan diet have been circulating recently but instead of touting the benefits of a high vegetable diet, the messaging is more about not eating meat. While some may be intrigued and even try the jump to veganism, others think that the challenge is too extreme. I would personally and professionally prefer that the messaging would be more about how important it is to eat 50-75% of our diet from plants, versus the never-ending debate about the inclusion or exclusion of meat. You can be an omnivore and still obtain optimal health.



These five tips can give you new ideas of how to increase your intake of vegetables, fresh fruits, whole grains, legumes and other plants to gain the benefits of a plant-based diet without going vegan.

**TIP#1- Aim to make ½ of your dinner plate non-starch vegetables.** While this may sound easy enough it is rarely accomplished without a bit of planning. Including vegetables at dinner is common but before you serve yourself the protein and starch, fill up at least half of the plate with salad or cooked non-starch vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, mushrooms, etc... You can also do this at hot food bars by filling the large portion with vegetables and the two small compartments with protein and a whole grain or starch.

**TIP#2- Snack like a squirrel!** Fresh fruits and nuts are both plants and this naturally sweet and salty combination is not only filling but packed with antioxidants and minerals like zinc and magnesium. ¼ cup of mixed nuts and one serving of fresh fruit is less than 200kcal. Try a wide variety of nuts like walnuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, almonds and tiger nuts along with whatever fruit is in season for a calorie controlled, plant-based snack that is packed with fiber and nutrients.

