AMERICAN COLLEGE OF Lifestyle Medicine

NUTRITION

Diet Quality and Plant-Based Eating



What is Diet Quality?

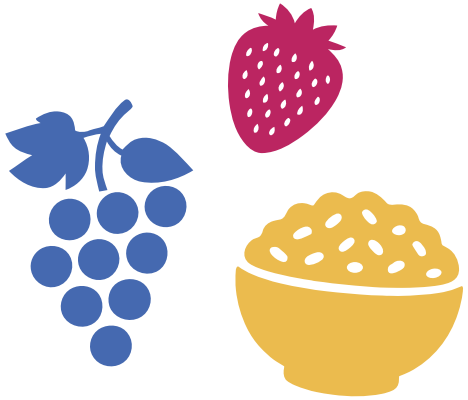
- Diet quality means how healthy your overall eating pattern is
- A high-quality diet gives your body the energy and nutrients it needs to grow, heal, and stay active at every age
- The best diets are based on whole, minimally processed foods—like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds, which contain fiber, water and antioxidants that protect against risk of disease

Why Does Diet Quality Matter?

- Poor diet quality is a leading cause of chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, leading to a lower quality of life and a higher risk of death
- Many people eat too much sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats, and not enough fiber, vitamins, and minerals from food
- Eating mostly plant-based foods can help you get more of the nutrients your body needs and less of what it doesn't

What Makes a Diet High Quality?

- Lots of vegetables and fruits
- Whole grains (like brown rice, oats, and whole wheat bread)
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Limited added sugars, salt, and unhealthy fats
- Fewer processed foods and animal products





Key Nutrients in Plant-Based Diets

Fiber: Only found in plant foods; helps with digestion and keeps you full

Vitamins and minerals: Like potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, and vitamins A, C, and E

Protein: Beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds are great sources

Healthy fats: Avocados, nuts, seeds, and olives



To learn more about plant-based nutrition for diet quality follow the QR code:

Learn how to cook delicious plant foods by scanning the QR code:

Tips for Eating a High-Quality, Plant-Based Diet

1. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal
2. Choose whole grains instead of white bread or white rice
3. Try a new plant-based recipe each week
4. Snack on nuts, seeds, carrots, or fruit instead of chips, bars, or candy
5. Drink water instead of sugary drinks

Common Questions

- **Will I get enough protein?**
  Yes! Plant foods like beans, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds have plenty of protein. So do many whole grains like quinoa and oats.
- **Do I need supplements?**
  Most people eating plant-based should take vitamin B12. Ask your healthcare provider if you need vitamin D or other supplements.
- **Is this safe for kids?**
  Yes, but make sure they get enough calories and nutrients. Talk to your healthcare provider for guidance.

Remember: Eating more plant-based foods can help you feel better, lower your risk of disease and early death, and give you more energy!