

The Benefits of Plant-Based Nutrition Chapter Summary

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Dietary Quality: The highest quality dietary pattern that offers optimal nutrition, addresses nutrients of concern, and avoids excess calories and fat is one based on unrefined vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes.



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Weight Management & Obesity: Plant-based diets help individuals circumnavigate the obesogenic environment because of the lower calorie density of plant foods, which naturally prevents overeating.



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Type 2 Diabetes: Many studies suggest that plant-based diets may be a practical solution to both treat and prevent type 2 diabetes, with potential for medication reduction and remission.



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Cardiovascular Disease: A plant-predominant diet can reduce risk for CVD and yield cardioprotective results to control, manage and even improve cardiac symptoms.



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Chronic Kidney Disease: For those with CKD, goals can center on slowing progression of kidney failure, minimizing uremic toxicity, diminishing proteinuria, and lowering the risk of complications.



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Enteral Nutrition: Plant-based enteral formulas are a well-tolerated option that can meet caloric requirements for patients with eating difficulties and offer high-quality nutrition for healing, gut health, and inflammation control.



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Reproductive Cancers: Plant-based diets appear to reduce cancer risk by reducing animal protein and fat, particularly from red meat, as well as adding protective fiber and antioxidants to reduce recurrence rates.



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Autoimmune Disease: Though millions suffer from various autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis, inflammatory bowel diseases, rheumatoid arthritis and type 1 diabetes, diet can be a powerful aid. Antioxidants and fiber from whole food plant-based diets can support healthy immune function as well as healthy weight loss.



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Longevity and Quality of Life: As demonstrated in the most long-lived populations, increased consumption of unrefined plant foods, and decreased intake of both animal and highly processed foods contribute towards increased longevity and reduced mortality.



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Nutrition Recommendations and Guidelines: Major medical professional associations support consumption of a minimally-processed plant-predominant diet for protection against chronic diseases including diabetes, heart, kidney and gastrointestinal, as well as obesity and certain cancers.

While medical professional associations, government bodies, and stakeholder groups across the U.S. and Canada have their own emphasis and focus when it comes to lifestyle and dietary guidance, a common theme does emerge: Eating more unrefined, plant-based foods is an important strategy in prevention of chronic disease, management of chronic conditions, and promotion of overall health.

ACLM has compiled relevant scientific evidence in this new publication series touting the impact of a whole-food, plant-based approach in multiple clinical situations. To learn more about how to implement nutrition interventions, check out the continuing education and event opportunities at lifestylemedicine.org/education.