

Plant-Based Living for Better Health

A Beginner's Guide to Supporting Your
Wellbeing Naturally



Wellness with Bridget



Welcome

Congratulations on taking your first step to creating a healthier lifestyle.

Research is definitely proving that what we eat affects our health and even more so that a whole-food plant-based lifestyle can prevent, manage and in some cases reverse chronic disease.

In this document, I will be referring to the most common chronic conditions and sharing with you briefly how implementing a whole-food plant-based lifestyle can help.

What is a plant-based?

“plant-based” means eating foods that come from plants.

What is the difference?

- Vegetarian - fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, dairy, no meat
- Plant-based - fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, no dairy, no meat
- Whole-food, plant-based - fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, no dairy, no meat, and no processed foods



Why a lifestyle and not diet?

I believe that once you have decided to adopt a plant-based diet and experience positive lifestyle changes, it becomes a lifestyle rather than another fad diet.



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Diet Diary

Before we start, my suggestion is to fill out a diet diary, recording everything you eat and drink over 3 - 5 days.

This is an interesting exercise and it will create your baseline if you decide to change your "diet".

| | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Breakfast | | | | | |
| Lunch | | | | | |
| Dinner | | | | | |
| Drink & Snacks | | | | | |



Weight Management

There are so many diets out there as well as diet pills, I am sure you, like me, have tried them all, well almost all of them, but still battle to maintain a healthy weight.

- Sometimes excess weight can be a side effect of the medication/s you are taking for a chronic condition.
- Some of us are told it is in our genes.
- Sometimes excess weight can be because a processed meal is way too convenient.

Whatever your circumstance may be, deciding to switch to a whole-food plant-based lifestyle will change your life.

Weight management and a plant-based "diet"

- Plants are loaded full of essential nutrients.
- Plants provide fiber needed to keep things moving, help remove toxins and heavy metals from the body, and some fibers act as prebiotics while others improve digestive health.
- Plants do not contain trans and saturated fats



Studies have shown that, through commitment and perseverance, following a whole-food plant-based "diet" will produce results, and that is WITHOUT adding exercise or reducing portion size!

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Heart disease, cholesterol levels and hypertension

High cholesterol levels and hypertension have long been associated with an increased risk of heart disease.

- Cholesterol - The main factors that cause high cholesterol levels are, in fact, eating foods containing trans-fatty acids, saturated fats, animal protein, and highly processed food, as well as a diet absent of whole-plant foods. Statins are widely used as a cholesterol-lowering drug, but it does not come without side effects.

Cholesterol and a plant-based "diet"

Cholesterol levels respond favourably to diet change, studies have shown within 3 weeks of switching to a whole-food plant-based "diet" rich in fiber, cholesterol levels can improve that. Fiber acts like a sponge in the body, soaking up cholesterol and escorting it out of the body. Are you eating enough fiber?



- Hypertension - Diet and lifestyle are major factors that contribute to elevated blood pressure. People who follow a plant-based lifestyle have lower blood pressure and therefore have a lower risk of developing hypertension.

Hypertension and a plant-based "diet"

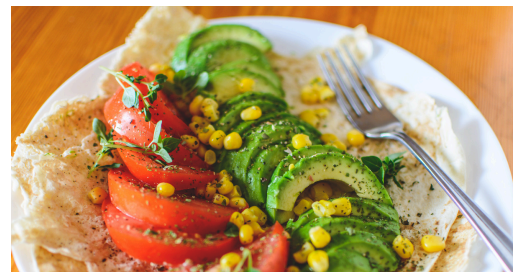


Management of hypertension is ideally weight management, eating a whole-food plant-based "diet" and exercise. Hypertension left unmanaged is both the cause and result of kidney disease.

- Heart disease - Therapy options for heart disease are; drugs, stents, and surgery, these can be medically necessary but really all they do is act like a band aid to the problem.

Heart disease and a plant-based "diet"

- Eating a whole-food plant-based "diet" along with exercise will enable you to start correcting the root cause.
- Plants do not contain animal saturated and trans fats.
- Eating whole foods instead of processed foods.
- Fiber consumption will naturally increase as plants contain fiber.



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Diabetes type 2.

I am sure you have been told that Type 2 diabetes can be prevented and possibly reversed with diet and exercise.

The most common symptom predisposing someone to type 2 diabetes is excess weight, so it is obvious that weight management plays a very important part in this section.

If you have type 2 diabetes, I am sure you are already aware that the pancreas and insulin are key players here. So, if high levels of body fat lead to insulin resistance, then losing weight and exercising will, therefore, improve insulin sensitivity.

It has been recorded that people who eat a diet that contains animal saturated fat, animal fat, and animal protein are at a higher risk of being diagnosed with diabetes. However, this risk is decreased in people whose diet is rich in fiber and vegetable fat.



Type 2 diabetes and a plant-based “diet”

So what about diabetes and carbohydrates?

Well, there are two kinds of carbohydrates, simple and complex carbohydrates.

- Simple carbohydrates are what we call “empty” carbohydrates because they have been stripped of all their nutrients and, once consumed, are stored straight in your fat cells, contributing to excess weight. These are foods such as white flour, pasta, white sugar, processed foods, and baked goods.
- Complex carbohydrates are the ones you are encouraged to eat as they are rich in fibre, which is like gold to the body because it helps regulate the blood sugar levels.



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Arthritis

We know that this is an excruciatingly painful inflammatory disease, limiting the quality of life.

Arthritis is a group of diseases (osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout are the common ones) causing swollen and painful joints. The main causes of arthritis are: inflammation, damage to joint cartilage through wear and tear, excessive exercise, and trauma.

Studies have proved that the following foods cause

- Red meat
- Sugar
- Fat
- Salt
- Caffeine
- Nightshades
- Dairy
- Animal protein



Arthritis and a plant-based “diet”

A study was done in 2015 with people who had osteoarthritis found that people who change their diets to a whole-food plant-based “diet” were reported to have reduced their pain significantly within 2 weeks, and at the end of the study (6 weeks) they were reported to have had more energy and better physical mobility. The study concluded that a whole-food plant-based diet significantly improves the pain and function of those who suffer from osteoarthritis.

There is a strong link between excess weight and osteoarthritis, and this is not due to the amount of pressure on the joints. Fatty tissue within the joints promotes a potent source of pro-inflammatory chemicals that induce the breakdown of cartilage; therefore, the more overweight you are, the more inflammatory chemicals there are around the joint.

I conclude with a case from Dr Greger where it is reported that a woman who suffered from joint inflammation so badly she was on potent medication, once she stopped eating animal protein, reported significant improvement in symptoms.



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I am sure you have noticed a trend that diet plays an important role in most chronic illnesses that plague the Western world.

By eating a whole-food plant-based “diet”, you are able to support overall well-being and help improve certain health outcomes, depending on your commitment.

Gentle Note

This guide is intended for educational and wellbeing purposes only and should not replace personalised medical advice from a qualified healthcare professional. Always consult your GP or healthcare provider before making significant dietary or lifestyle changes.



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About Bridget.

Bridget is a wife, a mum of two teenagers, a sister, and a daughter.

About 10 years ago, she thought she had her busy lifestyle under control (or so she thought), as a wife, a mum and a corporate employee who wore many hats. Health and nutrition have always been a passion of hers; very seldom was she sick. Everyone would always comment on how healthy she was with her food choices and lifestyle.

Then, Bridget was diagnosed with hypothyroidism.

This diagnosis was hard to accept, so she was on a mission to find out how she could restore the function of her thyroid. It became her passion to study nutrition, to learn how the body works, and to find out how to get to the root cause of disease. It was through studying as a Nutritional Therapist that she learned the power of a whole-food plant-based lifestyle.

After adopting a plant-based lifestyle herself, she has regained her energy, living pain-free, the disease symptoms are slowly improving, and her zest for life has returned.



It's definitely a lifestyle not a diet.

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