

How to Plant2Thrive with Plant2Health – The concise guide

Whether you're looking to lose weight, improve your health, manage a chronic illness or just get healthy and maximize your longevity, this is your quick go-to guide.

The information will be simplified in the form of straight forward guidelines to follow. While the vast majority of people will thrive following these guidelines, people with other preexisting medical conditions may require further tweaking and consultation. Please reach out to me @ dan@plant2health.com for assistance if you have questions.

Caution: *If you currently are taking medication for diabetes or blood pressure, changing your diet will result in rapid improvements to your blood pressure and/or blood glucose levels – this can lead to hypoglycemic reactions or overly low blood pressure (possible fainting) if medication is not adjusted and reduced accordingly. Consult your physician and reduce your doses along the process.*



Plant2Health

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Welcome, new planter! I'm thrilled to offer you a path to optimal health, maximum longevity and a way of life that eliminates most of the need for healthcare, now and moving forward. Let's get you started off on the right foot.

Where do we begin?

First, we start at understanding the basic principles that need to be followed in order to unlock the maximum benefits. A word about cheating before we dive in: you can reach some measure of results without following the plan strictly, but in order to get the best results you should strive to stick to the plan 100%, even if it takes you time to get there. Sticking to the plan will yield amazing results, as your body thanks you for fueling it with the right kind of foods. We all have the potential to heal ourselves and achieve amazing health at any age, if we just understand how. Just keep in mind your "Why" – why do you want to do this? What is your purpose? For me, the goal was to achieve great health – to be healthy, for myself and my loved ones. When I ditched the age-old pursuit of "losing weight" is when it finally clicked with me – and I lost all the weight and got healthy. Focusing on health is a great goal to have in mind. And lastly, when you cheat, ask yourself who you're cheating? The answer is of course, you're only cheating yourself – out of the great health and outstanding results you deserve. Try the plan for a month and see how you feel. No need to commit for a lifetime upfront.

The most decisive factor in determining your long term health is what you eat. Exercise cannot outrun poor food choices.
-Dan

∞THE FOUR PILLARS∞

These are the basic foundations you should always think of – the four pillars on which this plan rests upon, and on which your health and longevity will build up to a magnificent bastion:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole Grains
- Legumes

While I'm sure this may sound intimidating at first, rest assured that there are so many rich, delicious choices, succulent meals and mouthwatering dishes that can be prepared within these four pillars: soups, stews, "stir-fry", casseroles, salads, air-fried without oils, bean spreads and dips, even cakes, cookies and ice cream – which are all compliant. The key words you should look for when looking for recipes online is whole food plant based no oil, abbreviated as WFPBNO. If you are looking to lose weight, it is recommended to avoid or limit healthier fats as well, such as avocados, nuts, seeds, coconut and nut and seed butters (such as almond butter, peanut butter etc.).

In order to make the plan work, you need to know the following: eat vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes (beans, peas, lentils etc.) in their whole, unprocessed or minimally processed form, without any oils of any kind. Minimally processed means you should default to the whole, untampered plant – with the obvious exception of cooking (without oils), steaming, baking or “frying” and “stir-frying” using water or vegetable broth (again – no oils) instead of oil. This is NOT a raw food diet; the best scientific evidence available suggests that a diet of both raw vegetables and fruits as well as cooked foods delivers the best health outcomes, and more importantly, it is much more sustainable and easier to stick to in the long run. If a way of eating is unpleasant, particularly difficult or unsatisfying you will find it difficult to stick to it, and see your efforts go down the drain when you give up. The way of eating I promote, which is scientifically supported as the healthiest and most health promoting way of eating known, is a sustainable and sensible diet, though challenging because of the many processed and artificially stimulating foods of our modern times.

Get familiar with whole grains and legumes, both of which are associated with longevity and good health in population studies. Whole grains does not mean lots of “healthy” bread – although bread is allowed I advise to limit your intake or even avoid it, as the other whole grain alternatives will be more satiating and less calorically dense – try quinoa, oats, buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, barley, millet, tef, rye, and corn. Always choose the unrefined, unprocessed variety – a whole grain is always better than a ground grain. A slice of bread is less healthy and less satiating than if you were to eat the same amount of wheat groats.

Legumes are a real super food – they have been indicated as the common denominator amongst the healthiest and longest lived populations in the world. I highly recommend eating legumes every single day, and eating a variety of legumes – beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas, soybeans – each having many different varieties and tastes. They reduce your blood pressure, help control your blood sugar levels and even bind cholesterol and fat in the gut to be removed from your body. They should be a staple in your household, whether canned, frozen, dried and cooked, from a jar (I’ve seen those personally), and hopefully all of the above. I usually buy dried legumes, soak them overnight, cook them until soft and freeze most of them for future consumption. While this practice is time consuming, it is the cheapest option and it’s really convenient to have cooked legumes on hand at any time. I double up with a nice variety of canned beans.

Vegetables – often the pain point of many people who try to avoid them – I understand. I used to be someone who seriously disliked vegetables, and have grown to like many of them eventually. Keep in mind that you can eat them cooked or steamed as well, in a soup or stew, just make sure to have plenty. Vegetables are key in your success, you should strive to eat them, but do not make them the majority of your diet unless you absolutely love them. They should be about half of what you eat, but no more. The rest

should be **starchy unprocessed foods** like whole grains, potatoes, sweet potatoes and legumes. Corn and squashes work too. These are **critical** for a sense of fullness and satiety, as you cannot, I repeat – you cannot sustain yourself on broccoli, kale and bell peppers. The non-starchy vegetables should be no more than half of what you eat every day. If you do not make sure that half of what you eat is starchy grains, beans, corn, potatoes etc. – you won't succeed. You won't feel full or satisfied, and you'll blame the way of eating which has "failed you". On the other hand, you should not go overboard with the starchy foods and neglect to eat vegetables and fruit – and then wonder why you're not losing weight. Eating fruit and vegetables should be a daily habit. Fruit is healthy and should not be avoided, but please try not to overdo it, as it's easy to get carried away and overeat. Aim for about five pieces of fruit per day, allowing some flexibility.

Living without animal products

But how can I live without meat, dairy, fish and eggs? The answer is: you will be much better off without them. In fact, these foods, combined with the ultra-processed and refined food products sold in stores, are the root cause of many illnesses, including diabetes, obesity, hypertension, heart disease, coronary artery disease, atherosclerosis, colorectal cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer – to name a few. Solid science shows that not only can you thrive on a healthy plant based diet; you will be cutting your risk for a multitude of common diseases dramatically. We have been conditioned to think that you can't live without meat, eggs and dairy, but when you examine this closer, you'll find nothing more than marketing campaigns behind these claims, backed by multi-billion dollar industries. These industries have seen their sales decline somewhat in recent years, as people start to understand the benefits of going plant based, and in response the industries have been fighting back with skewed studies which they fund, trying desperately to find an angle showing that their products have any kind of benefit, or that not eating their products will lead to catastrophic health results – all of which are patently false and can easily be shown as the empty claims that they are.

Breaking away from a lifetime of familiar foods may sound daunting. We have been raised (myself included) eating animals and their byproducts as part of our normal fare, and that comes with a heavy baggage of memories, childhood tastes and family traditions around the dinner table. I ate everything without any discrimination for the first thirty years of my life, choosing by taste and preference. I know that it may seem like a massive undertaking, but I assure you, the rewards are staggering. Not only will you be doing the best possible thing you can do for your own health and longevity, you will also be sparing thousands of animals from terrible fates, and helping slow down global warming and the climate crisis, which is fueled in large part by the animal agriculture industries. Don't think about it as a lifelong commitment; for now you're only

dipping your toes in the water to get a feel for it. Try it for a month and see how it goes. What are your favorite foods that do not have animal products in them? You may start by thinking of those and adding other dishes to them as you go along. Your food doesn't necessarily have to be a gastronomic masterpiece, worth of a five star Michelin rating. It can be as simple as rice and beans with a side of steamed vegetables (the frozen variety); Quinoa and corn with a side of broccoli; bulgur and lentils with a nice salad on the side; boiled potatoes and peas with some steamed cauliflower; and those are just off the top of my head. Take short cuts – use the frozen, canned, pre-made foods available to make everything more accessible. Keep fresh fruit for snacks; buy the pre-washed salads and pre-cooked brown rice. Use tomato puree with spices to create delicious sauces.

Always Be Prepared – Or Prepare To Fall

A key factor in your success is how prepared you are. By this I don't mean sleeping with a can of beans under your pillow, but rather knowing what you need to be well fed throughout the day, minimizing your exposure to unhealthy foods and making sure you keep satisfied and full on the good, healthy, unprocessed plant foods so that when that slice of pizza is offered, that cake is pushed on you or the candy bars start calling your name, you will be less susceptible to answer that call.

But first – let's talk about what you should do, ideally, to insure your success. For the highest chances to succeed, it's best to recruit your loved ones for support, and if they're willing – have them join you for the trial month. They only stand to gain health, so if at all possible, get everyone on board with you, and ride it out together.

However, please don't turn this into a turf war. If you see your roomies are less than willing, or even outright against it, let them be, and just ask that they not get in the way of your little experiment.

Out of sight, out of mouth: the best way to avoid eating foods that will make you unhealthy and contribute to weight gain is to get rid of them, if possible. Yes, that means throwing them away. If it really pains you to throw out food, you can either donate it to a charitable cause of your choice or, if that's not an option, wait another week until you start and don't buy animal products and processed foods. But know that for the best chances of success you should have cupboards stocked with the right kind of foods, so that you don't find yourself diving into that bag of chips (or crisps, if you're from that part of the world) or tearing through that whole package of cookies, or worse – cheese.

Stock your pantry with canned beans, peas, lentils, corn and so on; have stocks of dried whole grains – brown rice, quinoa, bulgur, millet, whole wheat couscous, barley and so on; keep dried legumes – beans, chickpeas and lentils to soak and cook.

Keep your refrigerator stocked with fresh vegetables and fruits, but most importantly – make some food, even the simplest kind – boiled potatoes, some cooked grain, a simple bean stew, a nice chili, a soup with vegetables and legumes. Whatever you prefer, just have food available, so that when you get hungry, you'll eat. This is not a diet of starvation; it is a healthy way of living, one where you eat until you're comfortably full. Steam some vegetables, cook some rice, crack open a can of beans, and you'll see things going your way very soon. I lost 82 lbs. along my journey, simply by eating the right foods – and I didn't even exercise (I did walk around, because I had dogs to walk).

How will you be prepared? This means taking food with you everywhere you go. I'm serious – you shouldn't leave home without compliant foods. Take an insulated bag with an ice pack if need be. Don't leave things to chance – you will get hungry, you will find non-compliant food out there, and you will slip and fall. Have your food with you and keep your stomach full and yourself away from harmful foods.

Weight Loss – The Natural Way

Whole plant foods are naturally more calorically dilute as opposed to meat, dairy, eggs, oils and processed foods which are calorically dense. What this means is that you will be eating a large volume of healthy foods to satiety, but in fact eating less calories naturally, without dieting or limiting yourself. It is absolutely recommended to eat until you are comfortably full. (This does not mean you should go crazy and try to stuff as much food as you can until you feel sick – that is not recommended and will not lead to good health. Eat until you feel comfortably full, and then stop).

But beware – not all foods are created equal. Bread is much more packed with calories and much less satiating than brown rice, barley or quinoa. You will get more bang for your caloric buck eating buckwheat as opposed to whole wheat bread – yes, even the healthy ones. This doesn't mean bread is bad for you, but if you're trying to lose weight, choose wisely.

Avoid the naturally calorically dense whole foods – nuts, seeds, peanuts, nut butters, avocados and dried fruit which packs a surprisingly high caloric punch. Again, it's not that these are unhealthy foods – they're just denser in calories. It makes more sense to eat the lower density foods which are just as healthy but will fill you up more due to sheer volume.

As mentioned before – please make sure you're not swinging the pendulum too hard the other way, meaning creating a diet around celery, broccoli and kale – you can't possibly reach adequate caloric intake on non-starchy vegetables and even fruit if you're not eating any beans, peas, lentils, potatoes, squashes, whole grains etc. – you're on the wrong path. Try to find a happy medium where you're having somewhere between half

to three quarters of the starchy foods – which are essential for long lasting energy and satiety. If your focus is weight loss – make it half and half.

A key point is again to stay away from all form, shapes and sizes of Oil. It doesn't matter if it's a pristine olive oil from the olive groves of the rolling hills of Spain; Oil is a processed food, it is the most (#1!) calorically packed food and it will pack on the weight and impede your progress, as well as harm your health. Stay away and make sure to read the ingredients (if you must eat packaged foods; it's best to stick to the whole, unprocessed foods which do not need labels as they only have one ingredient).

What To Eat – An Example

- **Breakfast:** the whole food breakfast of champions is oatmeal. Use rolled oats or steel-cut oats, not the instant kind, and you can either do overnight oats (required soaking in liquids the night before, served cold) or hot oats – cooked in a pot or heated in your microwave oven – takes a few rounds and required you to be there and watch – it tends to boil over. Add cinnamon, a little bit of sugar or some sweetener, your favorite plant milk and hot water (three parts hot water, one part plant milk). You can add berries or some other fruit like a banana.
What if you don't like oats? Try fruit, oil free hash browns (on a griddle), some people even have vegetables for breakfast – for the hardcore planters 😊
Avoid anything fried and yes, do stay away from breakfast cereals as they are high in calories and processed. There are some rare kinds that really are unprocessed and do not contain oil, sugar, nuts and seeds and only include oats and other whole grains; you're welcome to use the actual bulk ingredients and make your own healthy homemade cereal. Granola, muesli and other breakfast grains contain oils, sugars, dried fruit and nuts and seeds which will pack on the weight.
- **Snack:** have some fruit, or take pre-cut veggie sticks (carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers etc.).
- **Lunch:** So many possibilities. Try a bean burrito with vegetables and salsa; bean chili with brown rice; stir-dry with chickpeas, vegetables and corn; a lentil stew on top of quinoa with steamed veggies (Indian Dahl is superb); a thick potato soup with onion and garlic; peas and corn with barley and anything else you can imagine. There are lots of ideas out there. Simple works too: a couple of sweet potatoes and a couple of pieces of broccoli will do the trick too.
- **Snack:** repeat the previous idea – fruit or veggie sticks. If you're really hungry, it's OK to have a potato, some brown rice or some other hearty food.
- **Dinner:** keeping dinner a bit lighter is a good idea. I usually go for a nice big salad with a variety of greens and veggies, add some legumes on top and flavor with vinegar and lemon juice. Do not use any oil on your salad or oil based dressing. I also have a couple of potatoes and/or sweet potatoes on the side.

- **Sweet treat:** once in a while, try some nice cream. You take ripe bananas, slice them up, put them in a box and freeze them. They need to spend a minimum of 24 hours in the freezer before you use them. In a food processor or high-powered blender put the frozen bananas, add a little bit of plant milk, and blend. Try to keep the amount of plant milk to a minimum as the more you add, the runnier the consistency will be. It's amazingly good and feels like a sinful treat, but it's not bad for you – just don't go overboard and have it every day. Twice a week won't hinder your progress.

Even If You've Never Succeeded Before

I know many of us have tried and failed, whether our goals were weight loss or just eating healthier. The missing ingredient was the real understanding of what to eat and what not to eat – which I have learned from leading physicians and nutrition experts when I started my plant based journey. Once you understand what to do and what to avoid, all you need to do is stick to it and be consistent.

Even if you've tried and failed a thousand times, many people have tried variants of this WFPBNO way of eating and achieved spectacular results – myself included. This is not a way of eating for the strong willed super human – it's the natural diet of human beings, what we are supposed to eat – simple, unprocessed, whole natural foods.

Even if you don't exercise – which I didn't for the first two years – the weight just melted away and my health kept improving. Trust that your body knows what to do if you give it the right fuel – it will heal, inflammation will subside, excessive weight will dissipate, and many health issues will go away. Our bodies are not designed for the crazy ups and downs of the animal food laden, high processed food extravaganza which is all too common in our modern lives. We're meant to eat simple, natural – and it can still be satisfying and delightful.

If you need help, if you feel you're not getting it right – reach out to me and I'll do my best to help: dan@plant2health.com

Healthy tip: beets and green leafy vegetables are the superstars of the vegetable world, they improve heart health and boost athletic performance. I recommend having a whole beet and a large amount of leafy greens every day.