The Sustainable Diet Series

Plant-Based Foods and Plant-Based Diets

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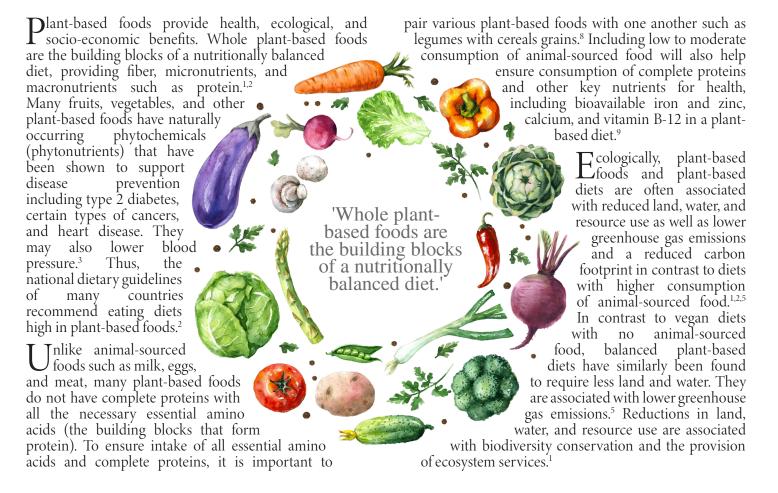
PLANT-BASED FOODS are those derived from plant sources, including fruits, vegetables, seeds, whole grains, nuts, and legumes.

PLANT-BASED DIETS are not vegan or vegetarian diets,^{1,2} but rather diets primarily composed of a variety of whole plant-based foods that are minimally processed along with lower proportions of meat and dairy.¹

KEY POINTS

- **I. PLANT-BASED FOODS AND PLANT-BASED DIETS PROVIDE** fiber, micro- and macronutrients, and phytochemicals which promote health and contribute to disease prevention^{3,4} which may indirectly lower healthcare costs.⁴
- II. PLANT-BASED DIETS SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY through reductions in land and resource use, biodiversity conservation, and providing ecosystem services. 1.2.5.6
- **III. PLANT-BASED FOODS** such as grains and legumes are generally lower in cost than other whole foods.⁷

WHY ARE PLANT-BASED FOODS IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINABLE DIETS?



 \bigcap lant-based foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables are often higher in price compared to other food groups. However, P seasonal offerings are frequently more affordable.² Further, canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables are often lower in cost and include many of the same benefits as their fresh counterparts. In addition, plant-based proteins such as legumes and whole grains are often substantially less expensive than many animal-sourced foods. Further, grains and pulse crops (legumes that include dried peas, beans, lentils, and chickpeas) have a long shelf life, making them convenient and cost-effective choices for purchasing in bulk. Plant-based diets, given their health benefits, are associated with notable healthcare cost-savings nationally and globally.^{2,4}



1. EAT A DIVERSITY of fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds, whole grains, nuts, and legumes.

- 2. With over 30,000 edible plant species containing **4,000 PHYTOCHEMICALS,** Explore new recipes with different plant-based foods to try new flavors and meet taste preferences.³
- **3.** Eat animal-source foods in moderation.
- 4. Substitute or compliment meat-based entrees with a variety of plant-based proteins, including beans, lentils, chickpeas, buckwheat, amaranth, and quinoa. Enhance recipes with a sprinkle of plant-based proteins such as chia seeds, hemp seeds, and nutritional yeast.

5. Bake your own bread using flours made from whole, ancient, and sprouted grains, as well as afternative flours made from pulses or nuts.

Institutional Practices to **PROMOTE** PLANT-BASED Foods

- 1. Focus your menu offerings to support diverse plant-based diets that provide exciting flavor journeys.
- 2. Source seasonal, fresh, local, AND MINIMALLY PROCESSED plantbased foods.
- 3. FEATURE ENTREES MADE OF PLANT-**BASED PROTEINS** or a mix of plant-based proteins with meat, such as hearty options like lentil and beef burgers.
- 4. Use signage to celebrate the **SUSTAINABILITY ATTRIBUTES** and other interesting information regarding plantbased foods featured on your menu.

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