

# RDs Share Their Plant-Based Eating Tips

## MaLinda Coffman, MS, RD, LD

- Start your grocery store trip in the produce isle. Only shop on the outside of the store. This helps eliminate most processed foods and helps your cart contain fresh foods. Fruits and vegetables should fill up the bottom of your cart.

## Noreen Gallo, MS, RD, LD

- I encourage people to try to start by having one plant-based meal a day and work towards more. I don't push for complete vegetarianism because I have found that it can be a turn off. Rather I start slow and have them work towards several meals a week.
- I encourage clients to replace the meat in a casserole with 1/2 beans and 1/2 meat at first. They realize the texture is similar and often progress to all beans on their own.
- I warn clients that not all meat free foods (especially the packaged products) are healthy just because they are meat free. I encourage them to read food labels and try to follow the 5 ingredient rule (try to stick to foods that only include 5 ingredients).
- I point out to clients that if they have celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity they need to watch out for TVP, etc. as this can still contain gluten.
- I try to inform them of several very good websites on the net that give solid information pertaining to a plant-based diet. There is so much misinformation that this is extremely important.
- I have a private Facebook group that I lead and much of the discussion is around this topic. I find that the info sharing of recipes and experiences is so helpful and supportive for people as they try to make a change.
- Lastly, I explain to people that simply cutting back on meat will not make a healthy diet. They need to look at the whole picture and strive toward a balanced, healthy diet.

## Pam VanKampen, RD, CD

- Use leaf spinach as a base for almost any dish, i.e. under spaghetti, enchilada, etc... really anything, it adds a lot of color and enhances the flavor of most foods. If you don't like your food touching, put it on the side, but spinach on most plates or sandwiches, tacos, etc... is easy and a great way to add dark greens. It is also great with scrambled eggs or in omelets.
- Eat beans, all varieties of lentils (kidney, black, northern, butter, etc.); they can be added to any meal and can be eaten cold or heated up. Beans on tacos, as a side with eggs or in burritos, on salads, in rice, just plain, add to low-sodium canned soups to increase the fiber and protein content and make the meal expanded to 2 meals. Puree and added to baked good instead of the fat this raises the fiber and protein content and makes the baked item moist and filling and more nutrient dense.

## Bev Benda, RD, LRD

- On Sunday afternoons, turn on some good music and invest an hour to chop up veggies and prepare "food for the week": homemade veggie soup, a veggie tray, and a "Big Perpetual Salad." This way you have "ready to go" options to get you through the week for lunches, meals and side dishes!

### **Serena Garges, RD, LDN**

- Try a new plant based food or a new way of preparing a plant based food each day. You will end up trying many different ways to eat and cook fruits, vegetables, beans, and grains. You may surprise yourself with how good it can be.
- Be open to adding different spices and herbs, it can really tantalize the taste buds! Every day you can have a mini food adventure trying new foods and flavors while becoming healthier.

### **Kylie Harmison, RD**

- Make produce the first stop at the grocery store! It is more likely that you will stock up on fruits and vegetables if your cart is not already full.
- Always keep individual size portions of fruits and vegetables on hand. Add one of each in your lunch box every day. Simple examples include: apples, oranges, bananas, plums, pre-portioned grapes or berries, carrots, celery, sliced peppers, pre-cut broccoli or cauliflower.
- Pick your own! Research local apple orchards and berry patches to see what is available for picking each month. Stock up on berries and freeze them to use throughout the year.
- Eat a salad before your meal. Keep them interesting by making different types of salads and making your own dressings. Consider using spinach, kale, or cabbage for a base instead of regular lettuce.
- Make smoothies! There are lots of great smoothie recipes available and they are a great way to use over-ripe fruits and vegetables. Add a half of a banana for a creamy texture.
- Buy in bulk. Purchase more when there is a good deal on a certain fruit/vegetable or when something is especially delicious. Most fruits and vegetables keep well in the freezer and then you will always have them on hand.
- Mix frozen vegetables (without added salt or fat) into whole grain pasta dishes to add color, flavor, and bulk.
- Grow your own herbs! Many are easy to grow in small spaces and growing your own can significantly reduce costs.
- Cook dry beans (pinto, kidney, black, garbanzo, etc.) in a crock pot to have on hand for the week to add to salads, wraps, soups, tacos, pasta, etc.
- Make a healthy stir-fry. Cook fresh or frozen carrots, broccoli, bell peppers, water chestnuts, and any other veggies you can think of in a small amount of olive oil. Add cooked brown rice and serve with a light Asian dressing.

### **Jane Becker, RD, LD**

- No time to slice fresh veggies for a salad, add frozen peas or frozen mixed veggies instead. They will be defrosted by lunch and ready to top with your favorite dressing. Before adding the frozen veggies to your salad, give the bag a good squeeze or drop it on the counter to break up the frozen chunks of vegetables.

### **Patricia Partain, MS, RD, LDN**

- Being in the South: Promote a “twisted” Southern menu-any dry bean (minus salt pork), turnip greens (ditto on pork), coleslaw (vinegar-oil dressing), cornbread (w/oil) & peaches.

### **Danielle Krueger, RD, CD**

- Pumpkin in chili—you will never notice it is in there.
- The 'in' thing lately is sweet potato fries—you can make your own in olive oil with a little cinnamon, yum.
- Encourage stir fry—always a great way to get the extra vegetables in in one dish.
- I love beans and encourage them in so many things. I especially like to tell people how to include black beans in their brownies.

### **Heather Klug, MEd, RD, CD**

- Since most people have a hard time remembering to eat fruits and vegetables each day, I recommend to my clients to eat a fruit or vegetable (or both!) at each meal and snack. That way they'll get 5 or more servings in each day. Repeat this day after day and you have a positive healthy habit.
- Green leafy vegetables are especially hard for many people to eat. I recommend sticking a large handful of spinach or kale in fruit smoothies. You'll never know it's in there and get a boost of several vitamins and minerals.

### **Linda M. Sorensen, MS, RD**

- I encourage patients to use avocado (or guacamole) or hummus as a spread on their sandwiches instead of butter/margarine/mayonnaise and to use romaine leaves instead of a bun.

### **Kathryn Bennett-Chambliss, MS, RD, LDN**

- Never a "white bagel" or sandwich: add the tomato, lettuce, cucumbers, and other vegetables.
- Avocado spread vs. mayo.
- Hummus with baby carrots, pepper, cucumbers or other vegetables is two-fold veggie snack!
- Cauliflower "rice or mash" is a great non-starchy vegetable.
- Stir fry/sautéed vegetables to pasta for a meatless meal (and then as a side with the next meal); add beans or cheese.
- Roasted veggies—anything you have—are great to have in the refrigerator for sides, with pasta, rice or on sandwiches.
- Salsa is great for many items like baked potato or a bagel.
- Use salad base for leftover hot foods such as chicken, fish, beans – convenient too for busy schedules.
- Apples with peanut butter is a great satisfying snack or part of a meal.
- Add grapes or nuts to that chicken salad.
- Sweet potato or yam dessert with a bit of brown sugar, nutmeg/cinnamon and ground nuts vs. cake/cookies.
- Stuff dates with cream cheese (a tad of spice, ground nuts) for a great finger food dessert.
- Cooked/baked apples or pears—leave the skin on whether baked whole, halves or cut and cooked on the stove.

### **Madalyn Friedberg, RD, CDN**

- Shop the outer aisles of the supermarket.
- Avoid the center [aisles of the supermarket] where the processed foods live.
- Get on Vegetarian websites.
- Make your plate 1/2 veggies, 1/4 grains, and 1/4 protein (beans, soy, and if you must some animals) add some fruit and there you go.
- When dining out: inform your server that you are following a plant based diet, that you don't want to eat animals; you will be surprised at what the server can offer you that is delicious and healthy.

### **Christy McFadden, MS, RD, CSO**

- A tip I use to help my patients incorporate a plant-based diet is by discussing how small one serving of something is and then having them give ideas on how they could add this small amount to something they commonly eat. Often as an example I will use adding broccoli to macaroni and cheese or adding pureed pumpkin to spaghetti sauce. This adds more nutrients and phytochemicals without a "pile" of vegetables on the plate.

### **Whitney (Stevens) Franco, CSP, RD, LDN**

- For a great, versatile egg substitution, mix 1 Tablespoon of ground flaxseed with 3 Tablespoons of cold water. Let sit for about 30 minutes (to equal 1 egg). Great for baked goods, veggie or black bean burgers!
- Enjoy a quick breakfast wrap: whole wheat tortilla, almond butter, thinly sliced Fuji apples, and a drizzle of honey or Agave nectar.
- Surprise your dinner guests with this green goddess garlic pasta: thinly slice 3 zucchinis into "spaghetti" noodles. Sautee 4-6 cloves garlic, spices such as oregano, rosemary, and basil, 12 oz. coconut milk, 1/2 t. salt and 1 t. pepper. Throw in zucchini and cover to soften "noodles".
- For a post-workout refreshment, blend a handful of ice, 1 small cucumber, and honey or Agave nectar to taste. So refreshing!
- Need a new snack idea? Toss one can of rinsed chickpeas with a few spoonfuls of olive oil and any of your favorite spices to taste. Bake at 450 for 10 minutes!
- Hunting for a zesty sauce for your veggie dish? Try a handful of fresh cilantro, 1/2 squeezed lemon, 1 garlic clove, and 1/4 cup of mayonnaise (vegetarian mayo).
- Power up your good old spaghetti sauce in no time with frozen spinach, chopped zucchini, or cooked lentils.
- Enjoy a sultry dessert full of plant-based goodness: Blend 1 avocado with 3/4 c. cocoa powder. Add vanilla extract and agave nectar to taste.
- Don't let black bean burgers scare you! In a food processor, add 14 oz. can black beans, 1/4 c. diced onion, 2 cloves garlic, 2 Tablespoons cumin, 2 "flaxseed eggs" (see above #1), and 3/4-1 cup toasted wheat germ. Form patties and let cook for 6 minutes per side on med-high heat in frying pan.
- You won't believe it until you try it: Process one frozen banana, slightly thawed until creamy as a perfect substitute for ice cream. Unbelievable!

### Sheila Ginsberg, MS, RD, CDE

- I introduce people to green smoothies. I have a sample made and I ask them to taste it without seeing it. They get hooked! It is an easy and flexible way to get some greens in. If possible, we make a smoothie together so they can see how simple it is. Hands-on or demo gives them more confidence than just getting a recipe.

### Julie Warden, RD/LDN, CDE

- Baked spaghetti squash mixed in with or instead of pasta.
- Shirataki noodles in place of pasta.
- Mini food processor chopped fresh peppers in marinara sauce.
- Ground flaxseed meal added to cornbread.
- Homemade muffins with whole wheat flour, canola oil, walnuts, ground flaxseed meal, touch of honey and fruit of choice.
- Oven toasted veggie burger atop salad of mixed greens, dried cranberries, pecans, balsamic vinegar & olive oil.
- Crockpot chili made with frozen veggie crumbles, dark and light kidney beans, homemade salsa.

### Anna Stadler, RD, LDN

- **Plan** what your snacks and meals will be, don't leave it up to last minute decisions.
- **Prepare** foods during your free time so that when time gets crazy, you are ready to go!
- **Hide**-puree, chop, or dice vegetables into smaller pieces to hide them in dishes and stuffed foods to increase taste and nutrition without the family noticing.
- **In season**- Find the best deals on in season fruits and vegetables.
- **Color play**- play with the natural colors, add black beans to brownies, cauliflower to mashed potatoes.
- **Frozen**- frozen fruits and vegetables are cheaper and last longer.
- **Grill**- go places with vegetables most people don't think of, take them to the grill, smoker, add different flavors and spices.
- **Veggie flours**- look for bean flour to make breads and dishes with. Adds a great source of vegetables to your breaded products.
- **New**- not everyone likes all vegetables, try to taste a new vegetable every week, find the ones that you can't live without!
- Make them **Fun!!!**

### Sharon Lehrman, MPH, RD, LD

- Add veggies to your traditional recipes. Try adding a can of pumpkin puree to your favorite chili recipe. You can't taste the pumpkin at all, but it boosts the nutrient profile and gives it a fabulous texture!

### Bella German, MS, RD, CDN

- If you have chewing difficulties, prick your hard fruit with a fork and put it for 3-4 minute in a microwave.