

TEACHING CLIENTS THE “HOW & WHY” OF A FLEXITARIAN EATING STYLE

Sponsored by:



Presented by:

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN, CSSD
Author of *The Flexitarian Diet*
October 20, 2022 | 2-3 p.m. ET

OBJECTIVES

1. Highlight ways to describe the Flexitarian eating style to clients.
2. Share Flexitarian benefits to motivate clients.
3. Review how all food groups fit in a Flexitarian eating style.
4. Explain practical ways to help clients adopt and enjoy the Flexitarian eating style.

FAQ #1

**WHAT IS
FLEXITARIANISM?**

WHAT IS FLEXITARIANISM?

Flexitarian = Flexible + Vegetarian

Focus is ADDING more plant foods without restricting or excluding any food groups.

The emphasis is on FLEXIBILITY because it bends to individual preferences and lifestyle.

FAQ #2

**IS FLEXITARIAN
A "DIET" OR
"LIFESTYLE"?**

6 REASONS FLEXITARIAN IS A LIFESTYLE



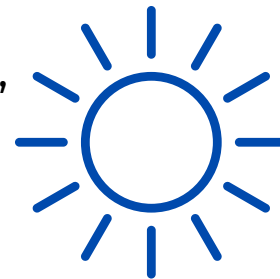
Meals factor in both health + enjoyment (nutrition + joy!)



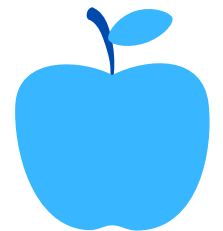
No diet rules to interfere w/ social events, dining out, or travel.



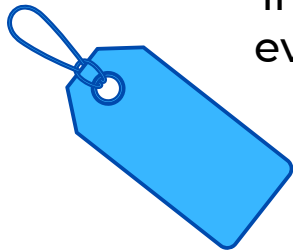
Food choices based on feeling good, not scale outcomes.



Use hunger & fullness cues, not weighing or measuring food.



Focus is adding nourishing foods, not restriction of foods.



Foods are NOT labeled "good" or "bad." Nothing is off limits.

FAQ #3

**HOW POPULAR
IS FLEXITARIAN
EATING?**

POPULARITY OF FLEXITARIAN EATING

60%

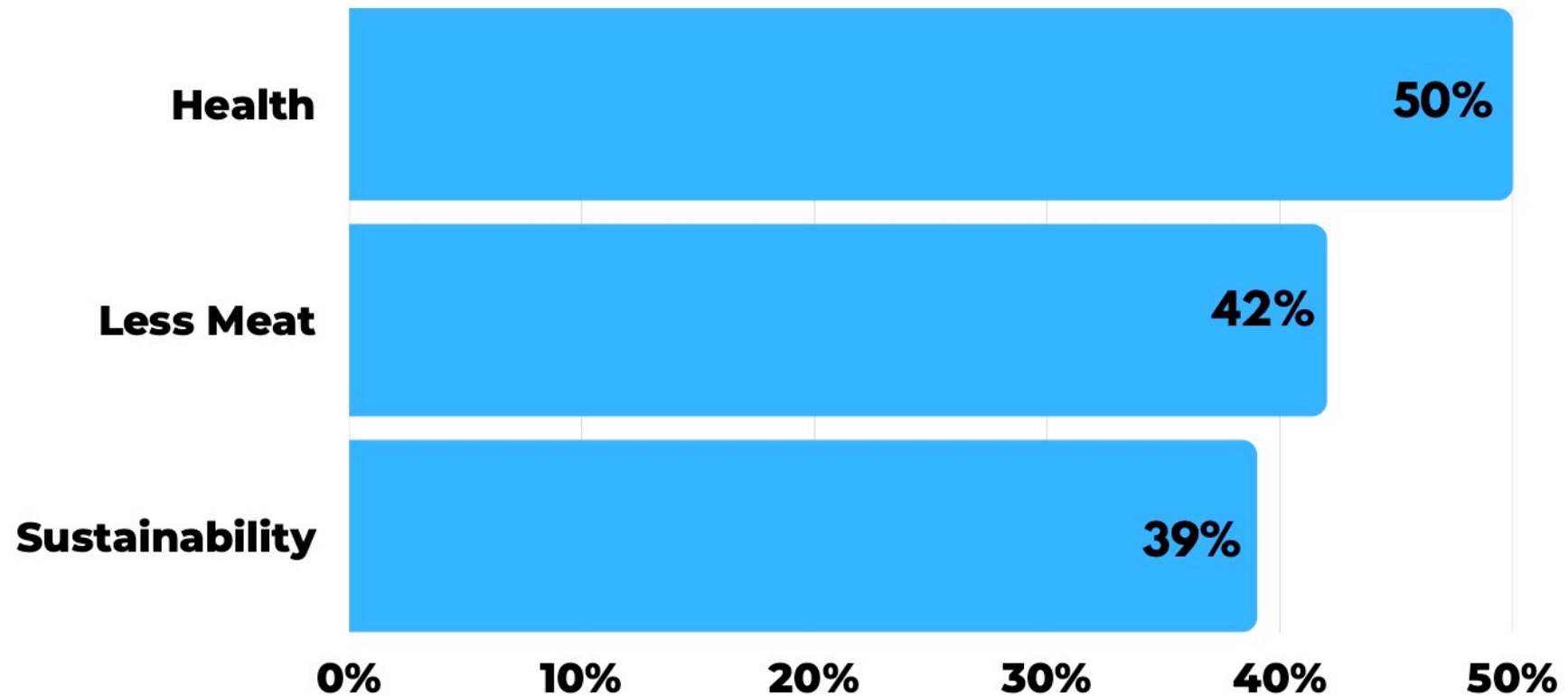
Americans say they're transitioning to a more flexitarian/semi-vegetarian lifestyle (up from 31% in 2018)

FAQ

#4

**WHAT MOTIVATES
PEOPLE TO EAT
FLEXITARIAN?**

TOP 3 MOTIVATORS FOR FLEXITARIAN EATING



FLEXITARIAN EATING & HEALTH BENEFITS

Flexitarian Diets and Health: A Review of the Evidence-Based Literature (included 25 studies)

May be associated with:

- Weight management
- Metabolic health such as blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol

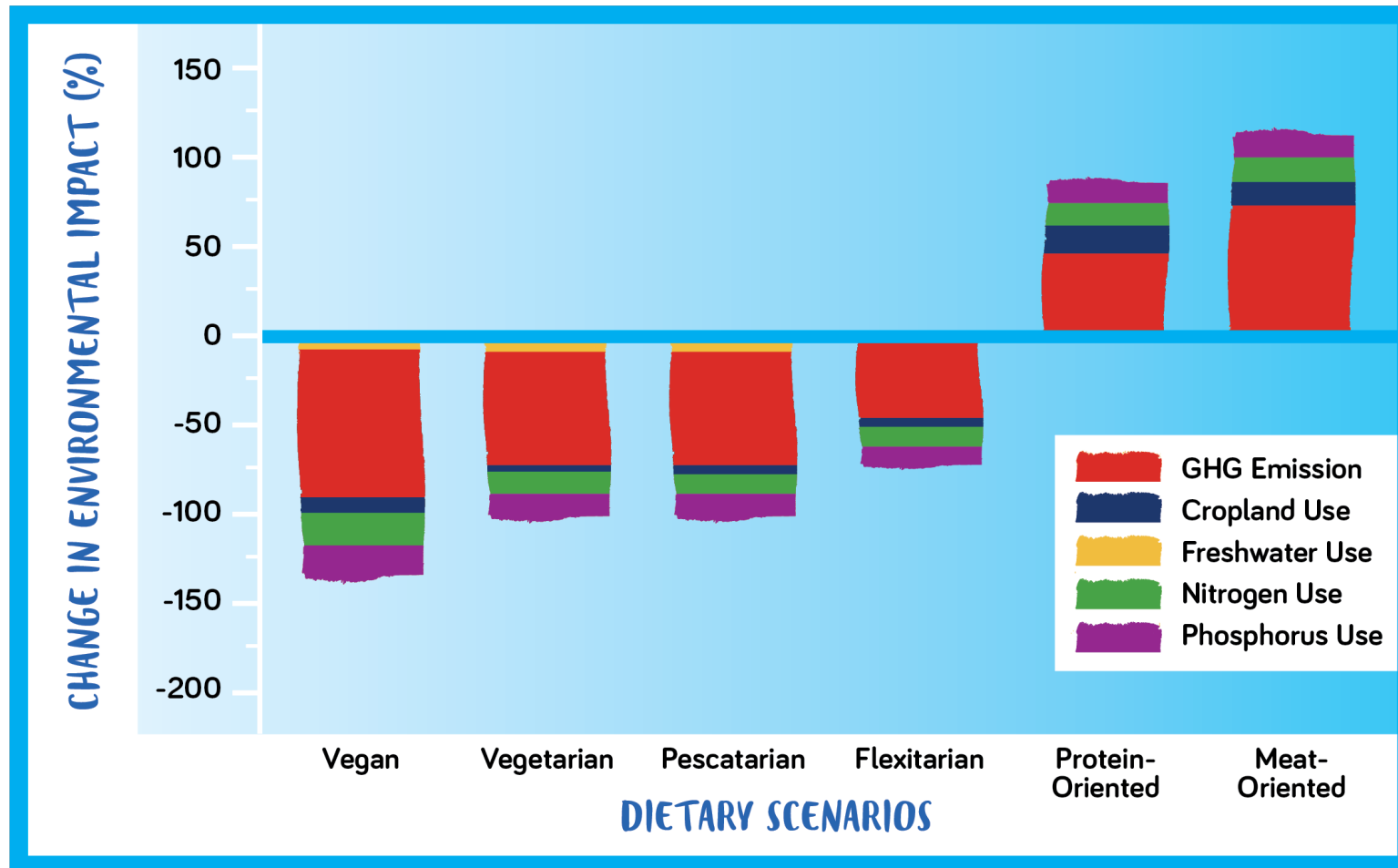
FLEXITARIAN EATING & THE GUT

Eating habits of **1,800** adults evaluated!

Flexitarian eating pattern was associated with the **highest gut microbiome diversity** when compared to the standard American diet.

More restrictive diets were among the **worst** in terms of their impact on the gut microbiome.

FLEXITARIAN EATING & SUSTAINABILITY



“Dietary change scenarios and implications for environmental, nutrition, human health and economic dimensions of food sustainability.”
Nutrients, April 2019.

FLEXITARIAN EATING & AFFORDABILITY

14%

less expensive than
standard US diet

"The global and regional costs of healthy and sustainable dietary patterns: a modelling study." Lancet, November 2021.

FLEXITARIAN EATING & SOCIAL BENEFITS



FAQ

#5

**WHAT DO
FLEXITARIANS EAT
COMPARED TO
OTHER EATING
PATTERNS?**



U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).

DAILY PROTEIN PATTERNS (2,000 calories)

Food Category	Healthy US-Style	Healthy Medi-Style	Healthy Vegetarian	<i>FLEX</i> “Estimates”
Dairy (servings/day)	3	2	3	3
Protein Total	5.5 oz-eq/day	6.5 oz-eq/day	3.5 oz-eq/day	6 oz-eq/day
Meat, Poultry, Eggs (oz-eq/week)	26	26	3 (eggs only)	13
Seafood (oz-eq/week)	8	15	0	8
Nuts, Seeds, Soy (oz-eq/week)	5	5	pulses: 6 soy: 8 nuts/seeds: 7	pulses: 6 soy: 8 nuts/seeds: 7

USDA DGA 2020-2025; Page 157-162

Blatner DJ. The Flexitarian Diet: The Mostly Vegetarian Way to Lose Weight, Be Healthier, Prevent Disease, and Add Years to Your Life. New York, NY: McGraw Hill; 2008.

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FLEXITARIAN "PROTEIN MIX"



Beans & lentils



Dairy



Eggs



Poultry



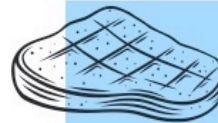
Nuts & seeds



Soy foods



Fish



Red meat

FLEX FOOD GROUP GUIDANCE

ADD

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds

MAINTAIN

Dairy, eggs, fish

REDUCE

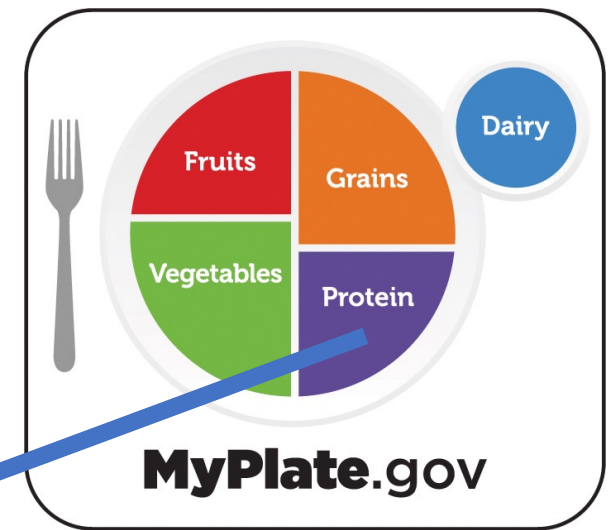
Red meat, pork, chicken, turkey

FAQ #6

**ARE NUTRIENT
DEFICIENCIES
COMMON IN
FLEXITARIANS?**

FLEX DOESN'T CUT OUT FOOD GROUPS

Deficiencies are uncommon because no food groups are cut out.



Main difference is in the PROTEIN category. Flex aims to get more plant proteins.

PREVENT NUTRIENT GAPS WITH FOOD

1. Protein, Iron, Zinc

Dairy, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds

2. Calcium, Vitamin D

Dairy, fortified plant-based milk alternatives, broccoli, kale, almonds, certain mushrooms

3. Vitamin B12

Dairy, fortified plant-based milk alternatives, fortified nutritional yeast

4. Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Fish, flaxseeds/oil, walnuts/oil, chia seeds



FAQ #7

**WHAT TIPS DO
YOU HAVE TO
HELP SOMEONE
BECOME MORE
FLEXITARIAN?**

FLEXITARIAN STARTER STEPS

STEP ONE: REPORTION PLATE

STEP TWO: SWAP PROTEINS

STEP THREE: TRY NEW RECIPES

STEP ONE: REPORTION



STEP TWO: SWAP

Make Favorite Meals with a Swap

Pulse Math: 1 ounce meat = 1/4 cup pulses



Steak, Chicken, Fish

-or-

Beans, Lentils

Dairy Yogurt

-or-

Plant-Based Yogurt
Alternative

MAKE YOUR PROTEIN FLEXIBLE!

ANIMAL PROTEIN		PLANT-BASED PROTEIN
Chicken breast	↔	Tofu cutlet
Hamburger	↔	Bean burger
Lunchmeat sandwich	↔	Tahini and veggie wrap
Meat sauce on pasta	↔	Tempeh marinara on pasta
Chicken stir fry	↔	Edamame stir fry
Steak burrito	↔	Black bean burrito
Ground beef tacos	↔	Lentil tacos

STEP THREE: RECIPES

Try 1 New Flexitarian Recipe Each Week



FAQ

#8

**WHAT ARE SOME
FLAVOR BOOSTING
TIPS FOR PLANT-
BASED RECIPES?**

ADD UMAMI FOR FLAVOR



DE-BITTER TECHNIQUES FOR FLAVOR

“Coffee Principle” = Add Sweet or Fat



BRIGHTEN TECHNIQUES FOR FLAVOR

Add Acid: Citrus, Yogurt, Vinegar



FAQ #9

**WHAT WOULD
A DAY OF
FLEXITARIAN
EATING LOOK
LIKE?**

SAMPLE DAY 1



B: Avocado Toast:

whole grain toast + avocado + spinach + egg



L: Kale Ranch Bowl:

chicken **or** chickpeas + chopped kale/tomatoes + roasted sweet potato cubes + yogurt ranch dressing (*dairy or plant-based alternative*)



D: Tacos:

seasoned white fish **or** lentils + corn tortillas + cabbage slaw + guacamole + salsa/yogurt (*dairy or plant-based alternative*)

S: apple + walnuts
cucumber + hummus

SAMPLE DAY 2



B: Peanut Butter Oatmeal:

oatmeal made with milk (*dairy or plant-based alternative*) + peanut butter + chopped apple



L: Burrito Bowl:

chicken **or** black beans + chopped romaine/peppers + brown rice + guacamole + salsa/yogurt (*dairy or plant-based alternative*)



D: Mediterranean Plate:

chicken **or** chickpeas + cucumber/tomato/feta salad + lemon-dill brown rice + yogurt tzatziki

S: grape tomatoes + mozzarella stick
blueberries + yogurt (*dairy or plant-based alternative*)

SAMPLE DAY 3

B: Green Smoothie:

milk or yogurt (*dairy or plant-based alternative*) + rolled oats + banana + spinach



L: Sesame Ginger Bowl:

chicken **or** edamame + coleslaw mix + quinoa + sesame ginger dressing



D: Burger Night:

beef **or** bean burger + sweet potato fries + veggie dippers w/ + yogurt ranch dressing (*dairy or plant-based alternative*)



S: carrots + almond butter
dark chocolate + berries

THANK YOU!

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN, CSSD

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