



# Plant Based / Vegetarian Diets

## Nutrition tips from DuPage Senior Citizens Council and Kane Senior Council

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## Eating Plant-Based and Vegetarian

Many people choose to eat less meat or follow a completely plant-based diet.

While a plant-based diet may not be for everyone it is important to understand the benefits and perhaps try to incorporate some items for better health.

However you choose to eat, make sure that you choose balance.

Try some plant-based items soon to see if you might be able to put them into your weekly rotation.

### There are different types of plant-based diets

#### Semi-vegetarian (or flexitarian)

- Includes eggs, dairy foods, and occasionally meat, poultry, fish, and seafood. This is a great first step to trying to eat less meat and more vegetarian items.

#### Pescatarian

- Includes eggs, dairy foods, fish, and seafood, but no meat or poultry.

#### Vegetarian

- Includes eggs, dairy foods, and occasionally meat, poultry, fish, and seafood. This is a great first step to trying to eat less meat and more vegetarian items.

#### Vegan

- Includes no animal foods, both in terms of animal products and byproducts.

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## 8 Helpful Tips For Starting A Plant-Based Diet

- Eat lots of vegetables. Fill half your plate with vegetables at lunch and dinner. Make sure you include plenty of colors in choosing your vegetables. Enjoy vegetables as a snack with hummus, salsa, or guacamole.
- Change the way you think about meat. Have smaller amounts. Use it as a garnish instead of a centerpiece. Fill up on whole grains and vegetables and only eat a small 1-2oz portion of meat
- Choose good fats. Fats in olive oil, olives, nuts, nut butters, seeds, and avocados are particularly healthy choices.
- Cook a vegetarian meal at least one night a week. Build these meals around beans, whole grains, and vegetables.
- Include whole grains for breakfast. Start with oatmeal, quinoa, buckwheat, or barley. Then add some nuts or seeds along with fresh fruit.
- Go for greens. Try a variety of green leafy vegetables such as kale, collards, Swiss chard, spinach, and other greens each day. Steam, grill, braise, or stir-fry to preserve their flavor and nutrients.
- Build a meal around a salad. Fill a bowl with salad greens such as romaine, spinach, Bibb, or red leafy greens. Add an assortment of other vegetables along with fresh herbs, beans, peas, or tofu.
- Eat fruit for dessert. A ripe, juicy plum, a refreshing slice of melon, or a crisp apple will satisfy your craving for a sweet bite after a meal.

Eating meat can be part of a balanced diet but so can plant based proteins!  
Check with your doctor or dietician to see if your diet is healthy for you.