

# Plant-Based Dietary Sources and Weight Management

Umuş Ozbey Yucel\*

Department of Nutrition and Diet, Amasya University, Amasya, Turkey

**Corresponding author:** Umuş Ozbey Yucel, Department of Nutrition and Diet, Amasya University, Amasya, Turkey, E-mail: umus.yucel@gmail.com

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## Description

Reduced use of salt and animal food sources in the beginning and increased availability of plant-based food sources whole grains, natural products, veggies and nuts have been linked to a lower incidence of atherosclerosis. The same holds true when substituting olive oil and other oils high in unsaturated fats for spread and other animal or tropical fats.

### Vegetables and organic products

The fundamental principles of effective weight-loss programs, succinctly outlined in ten words, emphasize consuming plant-based foods, increasing physical activity and reducing intake. A modifier in five words further advises transitioning away from unhealthy foods. Adhering to these principles significantly decreases the risk of common diseases like heart disease, diabetes, stroke and osteoporosis. These guidelines encapsulate the essence of dietary recommendations from various health organizations and legislative bodies. Despite evolving advice on food, these core principles remain unchanged for fifty years, allowing enjoyment of food pleasures. While general dietary recommendations exist, tailored eating plans target specific health needs, such as hypertension or obesity. Evidence suggests substituting high glycemic foods with whole grains. A poor diet poses significant risks for chronic diseases, contributing to millions of deaths annually worldwide. The Western diet, rich in red meat and processed foods, contrasts with the Mediterranean diet, associated with better health outcomes. A healthy diet supports overall well-being by providing essential nutrients and energy, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while limiting processed foods. Both plant-based and animal-based sources can meet dietary requirements, with Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> supplementation for vegetarians. Various nutritional guidelines aim to educate individuals on maintaining health through proper nutrition, issued by medical and governmental institutions.

## Impact of dietary cholesterol

Consumers generally understand the components of a healthy diet but find food labels and media diet advice confusing. Concerns about high cholesterol were common until the mid-1990s. Recent research emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL) and Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol when considering cholesterol's potential health effects. Different types of dietary fats have varying impacts on blood cholesterol levels. For instance, polyunsaturated fats typically reduce both LDL and HDL cholesterol levels, while monounsaturated fats tend to lower LDL and raise HDL cholesterol levels. Saturated fats usually increase HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol or both, while trans fats generally raise LDL and lower HDL cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol is primarily found in animal products like meat, eggs and dairy, but its effect on blood cholesterol levels remains controversial. Some studies suggest a connection between dietary cholesterol intake and serum cholesterol levels, while others do not. Vending machines have faced criticism as avenues for unhealthy food marketing in schools, yet regulation is limited, making it difficult for consumers to discern the true health merits of products claiming to be healthy. Efforts have been made, such as proposals to restrict advertising for high-fat, high-salt or high-sugar products and government-funded campaigns, like the British Heart Foundation's "Food Thought," aimed at discouraging unhealthy eating habits. Nutrition labels are mandated in certain countries to help consumers make informed choices based on relevant nutritional information. Leading health organizations advocate for plant-based diets rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits and a variety of colorful non-starchy vegetables and fruits, known to offer protection against cancer. This diet is low in energy density, potentially preventing weight gain and related diseases. Additionally, limiting sugary drinks, energy-dense foods, fast food and red and processed meats further promotes health and longevity. Overall, experts and health policies endorse this healthy diet as a means to reduce the risk of chronic diseases and cancer.