



# The Meatless Movement

Meats are a nutritious food in moderation, but too much meat may have a negative impact on health. The average healthy adult woman needs approximately 46 grams of protein daily (the RDA level), or the equivalent of about 5 ounces of meat, eggs or cheese. Most of us tend to consume much more than that, but fall short on fruits and vegetables. Meatless Monday is a campaign aimed at reducing American's meat intake in order to improve an individual's physical health and that of the environment.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the meat industry produces nearly one-fifth of manmade greenhouse gases worldwide. Additionally, about 1800 to 2500 gal-

lons of water are used in the production of a single pound of beef. By cutting back our meat consumption, we can potentially conserve water and reduce our "carbon footprint."

In terms of our physical health, reducing meat intake and increasing plant foods may reduce the risk of heart disease via increasing dietary fiber and reducing saturated fat intake. Decreasing consumption of red and processed meats may also help protect against colon cancer.

If you love meats, don't despair! There is certainly no reason that you need to give up meat altogether. However, choosing perhaps 1 day a week to go meatless can have significant benefits for the environment and for your health as well if you replace

the meat you would have eaten with plant foods. Concerned that you might not get enough protein? Be sure to include protein-rich plant foods such as nuts, beans and whole grains. Two tablespoons of peanut or other nut butter (or 1/4 cup of whole nuts) provides as much protein as an ounce of meat. A 1/2 cup of beans also supplies as much protein as an ounce of meat. If you have diabetes and are concerned with carbohydrate content, focus on high protein eggs and nuts as your main meat substitutes.

Not convinced that you want to go meatless for a day each week? Try simply reducing meat portions by using smaller amounts of meat in mixed dishes such as stir-fries, soups or casseroles. For example, try making chili with half the usual amount of meat; replace that amount of meat with more beans. For more information and recipes, visit [www.meatlessmonday.com](http://www.meatlessmonday.com).

## Nutrient Spotlight: Zinc

Zinc is an essential mineral for humans. It is a component of nearly 100 enzymes, acts as a regulator of gene expression, is essential for proper growth and sexual development, and is also necessary for proper immune function and healing. The RDA for adult women is 8 mg/day, and recent evidence shows that the median daily intake is about

9 mg/day among American adult women. A Tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL) has been established at 40 mg/day for adults. There has been much interest in the use of zinc supplementation to help reduce the severity and duration of the common cold. Studies are not conclusive, but indicate that zinc lozenges or

nasal gels may be helpful. They work by actively killing the cold virus in the mouth/saliva or nasal passages. Zinc lozenges may be worth a try to ease cold symptoms, but long-term use is not recommended as the amount needed to be effective generally exceeds the UL and can interfere with copper absorption over time.

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## Fall Means Back to School: Tips for Feeding Your Family Right

Fall means back to school, football games, dance practice, parent-teacher meetings and hectic schedules! Getting a healthy meal on the table for the whole family can certainly be a challenge. Here are a few tips that may help:

- Plan meals in advance for the week. For especially busy evenings, plan to have something that can be prepared super-fast (such as the Chickpea and Spinach Curry recipe below) or have something that you've prepared ahead of time such as a casserole or a one-pot slow-cooker meal.
- If dinner will be served a little later than usual, be sure everyone has access to a healthy snack to tide them over. Good snack foods to keep around the house might include low-fat microwave popcorn, hummus dip

with carrot sticks, whole grain crackers and cheese, fresh fruit, yogurt tubes, and nuts or trail mix.

- Try substituting whole grains where possible in recipes; use whole wheat pasta and brown rice in place of their white counterparts.
- Try out some new vegetables. Kids only like green beans and potatoes? It's fine to serve those regularly, but also try and work in a new vegetable once or twice a week. Some enticing choices might be roasted carrots or butternut squash, stir-fried broccoli, or steamed cauliflower with cheese sauce. Let kids serve themselves; don't force them to try things. It may take several trials or exposures, but some new family favorite vegetable choices are likely

to emerge over time.

- Kids can be very helpful in the kitchen. Depending on the age of your child, some ideas might include peeling carrots the night before or when they get home from school, setting the table, unloading the dishwasher or helping prepare a soup or casserole on a Sunday afternoon for the week ahead.
- Try to eat together as often as possible. A good goal is to set aside at least one day each week that the family will eat together. Mark it on the calendar and emphasize it as an important commitment. Make meal times pleasant and meaningful by sitting down at the table, minimizing other distractions, and keeping the conversation topics light (no lecturing!).

## Nuts May Improve Diabetes Management

A recent study featured in *Diabetes Care* indicates that daily consumption of nuts can help to improve control of type 2 diabetes. Subjects were divided into 3 groups and received a daily snack of either 2 ounces of nuts, a muffin only, or a mixture of muffin and nuts.

Those who ate the nut snack only had significant improvements in their blood glucose based on glycosylated hemoglobin values (HbA1c) and significantly reduced their LDL cholesterol levels (the "bad" cholesterol). Those who had the muffin

snack only saw no improvements, but those receiving the muffin-nut mixture did significantly reduce their LDL cholesterol levels.

Nuts in this study and in previous studies have not been associated with weight gain. In fact, nuts have been found to potentially aid in weight loss, possibly because they can curb hunger when eaten in between meals.

So, if you are looking for new ways to help improve your diabetes control, consider replacing a snack or a carbohydrate serving with 2 ounces (or about 1/2 cup) of nuts daily. Nuts

also taste great when added to salads or vegetable dishes such as sliced almonds with green beans or pecan halves with roasted broccoli.



*Mixed, dry-roasted, raw unsalted...almost anyway you like them, a daily dose of nuts can help to improve blood glucose.*

## Chickpea and Spinach Curry

### Ingredients:

1 cup coarsely chopped onion  
1 ½ tablespoons chopped fresh ginger  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
1 ½ teaspoons sugar  
1 ½ teaspoons red curry powder or paste (such as Thai Kitchen)  
1 (19 oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained  
1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained

4 cups fresh spinach  
½ cup water  
¼ teaspoon salt  
Cooked brown rice or toasted pita bread wedges  
Plain non-fat yogurt for serving, optional

### Method:

Combine onion and ginger in a food

processor; pulse until minced. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion mixture, sugar and curry to pan; sauté 3 minutes. Add chickpeas and tomatoes; simmer 2 minutes. Stir in spinach, water and salt; cook 1 minute or until spinach wilts. Serve with a dollop of yogurt, if desired.

Recipe Source: *Cooking Light*