



# communicating Food for Health

## Are Vegetarian Diets Healthful?

by James J.  
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The short answer is that, while population studies do often find that a diet lower in animal products is usually lower in saturated fat and cholesterol and results in lower serum cholesterol levels and less coronary artery disease, such population studies cannot demonstrate causation. They must be interpreted with caution because of confounding variables. For example, vegetarians are more likely to be more affluent and more active than non-vegetarians. They are also less likely to smoke or drink heavily. So it may be these other variables, rather than simply the avoidance of animal products, that leads vegetarians to be healthier on average than those that eat meat.

A study of Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) by Dr. Fraser and colleagues at Loma Linda University was published in the June 2013 *Journal of the American Medical Association of Internal Medicine* and got around some of these confounding factors by focusing on a population of people in

which the more vegetarian subjects were not much different in regard to these other confounding variables. This study measured what the subjects were eating, put them in various "vegetarian" groups, and then observed them over a 6 year period, comparing their relative risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and total mortality to non-vegetarian SDA subjects who also had a similar healthful lifestyle. The groups were classed as "vegan", "semi-vegetarian", "pesco-vegetarian", "lacto-ovo-vegetarian", and "non-vegetarian". On the surface, it seems like a very interesting study examining the impact in SDA subjects of eating these various "vegetarian" diets compared to SDA subjects who ate meat regularly. The results showed that the "vegetarians" were less likely to die (particularly from CVD) than the meat eaters. The relative risk of dying over the next 6 years was 15%, 8%, 19%, & 9% less, respectively for the various "vegetarian" groups than it was the non-vegetarians (1). Sadly, the

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*Professional Member Edition*

### Research

Dr. James J. Kenney explores the research about vegetarian diets.

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## *Calorie-dense, nutrient-poor foods promote obesity, even if they're not from animals*

authors failed to tell us what criteria were used for putting people in these various groups, and they provide no data about the nutritional breakdown of what these various groups actually ate.

There is little reason to believe that avoiding all or most animal foods is not the key to a healthful overall diet -- it can move people away from many of the foods in a typical modern diet that raise LDL-C levels in the blood and promote more atherosclerosis. A strict vegan diet would have no cholesterol and likely be much lower in saturated fat than a diet high in fatty animal products. However, vegan diets are also lower in vitamin B-12 and can result in higher homocysteine levels. Higher homocysteine levels have been associated with more CVD and Alzheimer's disease. Vegan diets also tend to be lower in long chain omega-3s, calcium, zinc, and iron than diets containing animal products. What is clear is that a vegan and/or vegetarian diet, in and of itself, does not automatically equate to a healthful diet. Regardless of whether or not some or all animal products are eliminated from one's diet, the principles of a healthful diet remain the same. Eliminating all animal products alone is certainly not a clear-cut way to assure one's diet is healthful, nor is a more vegetarian diet alone the key to optimal health. A vegan diet will eliminate cholesterol, as

this dietary insult comes only from animal foods. However, a vegan diet will not necessarily be of much value for preventing even high cholesterol levels and CVD. Why? Because a vegan diet could still be high in saturated fat or trans fats if the vegan chooses to consume a lot of coconut oil or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. So even a vegan diet could provide large amounts of cholesterol-raising fats. A lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet could easily be even higher in saturated fat and cholesterol than one with more meat and less fatty dairy products and eggs. A vegetarian diet may be just as high or higher in added salt as a typical American diet and may be even higher in refined grains and sugars than a diet with few or no animal products. And even if a healthful, more vegetarian diet is consumed, that alone cannot assure optimal health. Why? Other lifestyle-related factors such as inactivity, tobacco smoke, and excessive alcohol consumption will all undermine health and promote disease even if one is following a healthful diet low in salt, "bad" fats, cholesterol, and refined carbohydrates.

A 2006 review by Dr. Appleby compared the health effects of vegetarian and vegan diets and found that while vegans weighed a bit less on average and had lower serum cholesterol levels, they were also more likely to have low intakes of vitamin B12, calcium, and

omega-3 fatty acids and on average have higher serum homocysteine levels. In addition, while the vegetarians had a slight reduction in mortality from heart disease, there was no significant difference in cancer rates and little difference all-cause mortality (2).

**Bottom Line:** A typical modern diet is likely to contain far too much saturated fat and cholesterol for optimal health. Most or all of these atherogenic dietary components typically come from animal products. So cutting back on fatty dairy products, eggs, and meats is generally a step toward a more healthful diet. However, switching to nonfat dairy and egg whites is likely to be more healthful than replacing fatty dairy products with processed foods rich in refined grains and/or sugars. A healthful diet can certainly contain small amounts of foods like omega-3 rich seafoods, nonfat dairy, and egg whites. In addition to avoiding foods high saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol, it is also important to avoid too much salt, refined carbohydrates, and refined fats and oils. Calorie-dense, nutrient-poor foods promote obesity and other metabolic ills, even if they contain nothing from an animal.

### **Sources:**

1. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.6473
2. Proc Nutr Soc. 2006 Feb; 65(1): 35-41



## "Gluten-Free" Standardized on Food Labels

Well, it's official. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has finalized the definition of the term "gluten-free" and is regulating its use on food labels. No longer can manufacturers simply slap that label on their foods without following proper guidelines first.

### The Guidelines:

According to the FDA, "the term 'gluten-free' now refers to foods that are either inherently gluten-free or foods that do not contain any ingredient that is:

- A gluten-containing grain (e.g. spelt wheat)
- Derived from a gluten-containing grain that has not been processed to remove gluten (e.g. wheat flour)

- Derived from a gluten-containing grain that has been processed to remove gluten (e.g. wheat starch), if the use of that ingredient results in the presence of 20 parts per million (ppm) or more gluten in the food"

Foods that contain an unavoidable bit of gluten must keep that presence to less than 20 ppm.

### Why Bother with Gluten Labeling?

More than 3 million Americans have been diagnosed with celiac disease, an immune reaction to gluten. Countless others are facing gluten intolerances and sensitivities. This labeling guideline will make it easier for them to find foods that they can eat safely.

Since there are no pharmaceutical cures or treatments for celiac disease, the only way to live with the disease comfortably

is to avoid all gluten. These guidelines will help make that easier for everyone who cannot eat gluten.

### What's the Timeline for Implementation?

Manufacturers will have one year to get everything up to speed and comply with the regulations.

### Do ALL Manufacturers Have to Follow These Guidelines?

No. These guidelines only apply to FDA-regulated foods and dietary supplements. Note that this new rule does not apply to foods labeled by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau.

For more information, visit <http://www.fda.gov/> or [www.foodandhealth.com](http://www.foodandhealth.com).

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# Celebrate Dessert Month In Style



## Blueberry Pandowdy

Serves: 4 | Serving Size: 3/4 cup

3 cups blueberries  
1/2 cup grape juice  
1/2 tablespoons corn starch  
3 low-fat cereal bars

Combine blueberries, grape juice, and corn starch in a glass baking dish. Stir well.

Crumble low-fat cereal bars into chunks and sprinkle them over the top of the blueberry mixture.

Cover the dish and microwave on high until bubbly. This should take about 10 minutes, though it will be closer to 15 if you use frozen berries. Serve hot.

### Chef's Tips:

This dessert is extra delicious with a small dollop of whipped cream.

You can also bake the pandowdy at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. If you sub in frozen blueberries, the pandowdy will take about 35 minutes to bake.

### Did You Know?

The pandowdy is a great American dessert from the 1800s. There is some question as to its exact origins, but the basic idea behind its creation is that a pie is given a rather “dowdy” look by being sprinkled with pieces of crust, rather than covered completely by a whole piece of pie crust.

Some juices have more added sugar than juice! Be sure to pick out a 100% fruit juice to use in this recipe.

Corn starch helps the ingredients meld into a tasty filling.

### Nutrition Facts

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Serving Size 3/4 cup  |                      |
| Servings Per Batch 4  |                      |
| Amount Per Serving  |                      |
| <b>Calories</b> 201   | Calories from Fat 23 |
| <b>% Daily Value *</b>  |                      |
| <b>Total Fat</b> 3g   | <b>3%</b>            |
| Saturated Fat 0g  | <b>2%</b>            |
| Trans Fat 0g  |                      |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg  | <b>0%</b>            |
| <b>Sodium</b> 87mg  | <b>3%</b>            |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 45g   | <b>14%</b>           |
| Dietary Fiber 3g  | <b>13%</b>           |
| Sugars 25g  |                      |
| <b>Protein</b> 2g   | <b>4%</b>            |
| Vitamin A 12%   | • Vitamin C 31%      |
| Calcium 2%  | • Iron 11%           |
| * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs. |                      |

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# Dive Headfirst Into Fall



## Lemon Pepper Butternut Squash Medallions

Serves: 4 | Serving Size: 3 slices

1 butternut squash, seeded and cut into 1/4 inch slices  
1 lemon  
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning  
Granulated garlic, to taste  
Black pepper, to taste  
1 tsp olive oil  
1/2 cup shredded fresh spinach  
1 slice provolone cheese, julienned  
Canola or vegetable oil spray

Preheat your oven's broiler. Lightly spray a rectangular glass or stoneware baking dish with canola or vegetable oil spray.

Place squash slices across the bottom of the dish. Squeeze lemon over the slices and then sprinkle with Italian seasoning, granulated garlic, and black pepper. Broil until tender, about 20-30 minutes.

Remove the squash from the oven and arrange it on a platter. Drizzle with olive oil, then sprinkle with spinach and strips of provolone cheese. Serve hot.

### Chef's Tips:

This dish goes great with pasta, grilled or roasted chicken, lasagna, or pizza.

Meyer lemons are sweeter than traditional lemons -- they're the best lemon to use in this dish. If you don't have a Meyer lemon, use half of a regular lemon instead. Experiment around until you get the flavor that works best for you.

If you don't have any Italian seasoning, use a combination of dried basil and oregano. Mess with proportions until you have a mix that you really like.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 slices  
Servings Per Batch 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 96 Calories from Fat 28

% Daily Value \*

**Total Fat** 3g **4%**

Saturated Fat 1g **6%**

Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 5mg **1%**

**Sodium** 69mg **2%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 16g **5%**

Dietary Fiber 5g **19%**

Sugars 3g

**Protein** 3g **6%**

Vitamin A 347% • Vitamin C 40%

Calcium 11% • Iron 5%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# How Do The Greeks Eat Greek Yogurt?

Greek yogurt is so creamy that nonfat and low-fat versions still taste like an indulgence. It's amazing as an ingredient but also delicious on its own. Did you know that Greeks are purists when it comes to their yogurt? Plain yogurt is still the bestseller in the Greek market. After meals, many Greeks serve a platter of yogurt that is passed around, family-style, with each person helping themselves.

So yes, yogurt is great served plain, and the Greeks are very fond of it that way. However, plain is not the only option. If you'd like to dress your yogurt, try some of these other approaches -- they're all common in Greece...

- With honey and walnuts
- With fruit preserves and fresh fruit
- With beets for a traditional salad
- As an accompaniment to grilled meats
- For dips like tzatziki (yogurt with garlic and cucumber) or melitzanosalata (eggplant and garlic with yogurt)



## Traditional Greek Beet Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 pound beets pre-boiled beets
- 3/4 cup crushed walnuts
- 1 cup Greek yogurt low fat or non-fat
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Prepare the yogurt dressing by mixing the yogurt with the garlic, olive oil and vinegar. Add salt to taste.
2. Cut the beets in small bite size cubes and place in large shallow bowl.
3. Add almost all the walnuts except 1-2 tablespoons, and mix with the beets.
4. To serve: Either empty the yogurt dressing over the beets and sprinkle with rest of the walnuts.

or

Blend the beets with the yogurt dressing- the dressing will have a pink color.

*By Elena Paravantes, RD*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# Transitioning to the Mediterranean Diet

The *New England Journal of Medicine* recently published a study about the Mediterranean diet. The results of that study indicate that an energy-unrestricted Mediterranean diet could lower the risk of certain cardiovascular events by 30% among high-risk individuals.

The idea that the Mediterranean diet is good for the heart isn't exactly new. In fact, studies about this diet and its effects on heart health have been going on for over 60 years. Starting with the Seven Countries study and continuing from there with several large observational studies, research has repeatedly shown that **compliance with the Mediterranean diet appears to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease.**

So, what is the Mediterranean diet?

The Mediterranean diet has roots in the Greek (particularly Crete) and Southern Italian approaches to eating during the 1960s.

One of the key tenets of the Mediterranean diet is that **vegetables are a main course.** The high consumption of vegetables is a key feature of the Mediterranean diet. For example, the Greeks consume almost a pound of vegetables a day. In order for this to be accomplished, vegetables like green beans, peas, eggplant, artichokes, and okra are all cooked in olive oil with tomatoes and herbs. This dish is often accompanied by a bit of bread and feta cheese. The best part?

This meal offers over 3 full servings of vegetables!

Another characteristic of the Mediterranean diet has to do with timing. The main meal is eaten around 2:00 pm each day, rather than in the evening.

Home cooked meals are a staple. **The Mediterranean diet is about real, fresh, and seasonal ingredients.** Now, if you're going to follow the diet, you don't have to cook from scratch every day, but incorporating a few healthful meals that you can prepare yourself is a great idea. Start with vegetable stews, roasted fish and bean dishes will greatly improve the diet.

Olive oil is key to the Mediterranean diet. Many of its benefits appear to come from the "good" monounsaturated fats and polyphenols in the olive oil. In order to get the health benefits of olive oil in your diet, **replace saturated and trans fats with olive oil.** Remember to consume fats in moderation.

*By Elena Paravantes, RD, author of the blog <http://www.olivetomato.com/>*



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# As Seen on TV: Crazy Diet Trends

You've seen it on TV. The results are amazing, a breakthrough, nothing short of miraculous. But should you part with your money and try what seems to be too good to be true? If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. In fact, many of these diet plans are downright harmful -- keeping calories and nutrients so low that your body burns muscle right along with fat. And those supplements... well, you can't know for sure what's really in them, since those manufacturers don't have to follow the same rules as food or drug manufacturers. Don't waste your money or put your health at risk before getting the lowdown on these popular programs.

## **The Plan: Sensa**

**The Claim:** Losing weight is as simple as sprinkling a tasteless powder on your food. You don't need to change your diet, count calories, or do anything else differently.

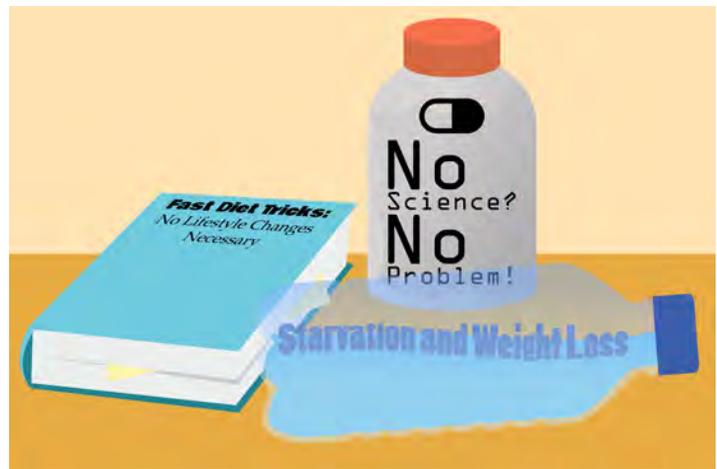
Sensa works with your sense of smell to trick you into feeling full.

**The Scoop:** The only evidence of Sensa's effectiveness comes from the company itself. No research has been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

## **The Plan: The Master Cleanse Diet (aka Lemonade Diet)**

**The Claim:** This 10-day cleansing diet will rid your body of toxins and about 10-20 pounds.

**The Scoop:** The only food you are allowed is a drink you make yourself from water, real maple syrup, lemon juice, and cayenne pepper. Plus, you have to take nightly laxatives. Over the course of a day, you will consume just 500-800 calories, which is the reason for the weight loss. The diet results in inadequate



nutrition and loss of lean body mass. The laxatives are not necessary to detoxify your body, but they could result in the loss of good-for-you bacteria in your intestines.

## **The Plan: Wheat Belly Diet**

**The Claim:** Eliminating wheat is the holy grail of weight loss.

**The Scoop:** The diet described in this book is a low-carbohydrate diet. These diets tend to result in more rapid initial weight loss when compared to other diets. However, they do not result in greater weight loss over time. Giving up wheat could lead to either a more healthful diet or a poor diet, depending on the foods replacing wheat products. For example, if you trade wheat-containing junk foods like cookies for wheat-free varieties, your diet has not improved. If you trade those foods for fruits and vegetables, you will have a more healthful diet and will likely consume fewer calories, which will then cause weight loss. You're better off eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

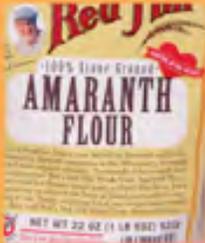
*By Jill Weisenberger, MS, RD, CDE*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# Gluten-Free Whole Grains

## So... What Are the Right Grains?

Lots of grain foods are gluten-free. Stock up on whole grain varieties of...



Amaranth



Buckwheat



Corn



Millet



Quinoa



Brown rice

According to MyPlate, people should make at least half of all the grains they eat each day whole grains.

That sounds like a straightforward premise, right? However, when you can't eat gluten, getting healthful whole grains into your diet can be a bit tricky.

### What is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein composite in many grains and grain-based foods. You'll find it in foods made with wheat, barley, spelt, and rye. Sometimes gluten is also found in medicines, cosmetics, and even vitamin supplements.

### Who Would Need to Avoid Gluten?

People with celiac disease or other gluten allergies, sensitivities, or intolerances all need to avoid gluten.

There are roughly 3 million Americans with celiac disease and countless others whose bodies cannot tolerate gluten for other reasons.

There is no pharmaceutical treatment or cure for celiac disease and other gluten sensitivities. The only way to live a healthful, normal life is to avoid gluten entirely.

### Do Whole Grains Have to Go Out the Window?

You can still eat whole grains when you're avoiding gluten. It's just a matter of choosing the right grains.

### What Are the Right Grains?

Lots of grain foods are gluten-free. Stock up on...

- Amaranth
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Corn
- Millet
- Quinoa

None of those whole grain foods contain gluten. Oats are also gluten-free, but there's a catch. Most oats are contaminated with barley, thanks to the way they're grown and processed. So if you go for oats, be sure to pick up a variety that is certified as gluten-free.

There are lots of gluten-free alternative foods out there. Thanks to the Food and Drug Administration's labeling rules, it will soon be easier to find even more foods that don't contain any gluten at all.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: